



INTERIOR DESIGN

made

EASY



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In the Beginning

I started writing this book after having blundered my way through the remodeling and redecorating of my entire house. To say that it was a fixer-upper is a bit of an understatement.

All I can say is that it's a good thing that it wasn't on any historical houses list. Otherwise I might have been stuck with pink cabbage rose wallpaper and green paisley trimmings in my living room. And in my dining room. And in the master bedroom.

Yes, I believe the previous owner had a slight fixation on pink cabbage roses and green paisley. Suffice it to say that it's a jolly good thing I could see beyond those to the house beneath, otherwise I might even now be living in some high rise flat with no garden and absolutely nothing to recommend it besides its glorious view.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not condemning high rise flats out of hand. Up until very recently I was living in one of these soulless apartments. The only soul it had was from my meager attempts at redecorating, but since I wasn't interested in living there permanently I didn't even bother overly much with that either.

So while I wasn't living out of cardboard boxes after three years, like my best friend and college roommate was, I still hadn't gotten around to making it something which I could call home. Which was in fact quite telling, and should have warned me that I wouldn't be staying there for too long.

I even redecorated our college dorm to make it feel more homey! The fact that I hadn't done that here should have told me that I would be ready to move on soon. Anyway, I never was one to crave the big city lights and the excitement of perhaps being mugged two blocks from my home.

No, instead it seemed to my concerned city-is-better-living friends that I had temporarily succumbed to insanity and instead seemed to prefer cabbage roses and green paisley! I know it might seem like I'm fixated on these two color schemed choices but really, you had to have seen it.

At a guess cabbage roses and green paisley are alright on their own, but team them together, and not only once, but almost all over the house wherever it could be managed, is just too much for me to bear with any semblance of calmness.

Anyway, that was a good reason for my city-living-city-loving friends to think that I might have lost a few marbles in my attic – not literally mind

you – and one of the chief reasons I took great pleasure in showing them my finished efforts.

You must understand that I'm not an interior designer and didn't even think that I had an artistic bone in my body, so I am justifiably proud of my achievements. I am after all, the person who can stare blankly at a Picasso and see nothing of interest, I can also be listening to a moving piece of classical music and remain unmoved, and as a clincher I'm not too fond of anything that Shakespeare wrote either!

On the other hand, I love Monet, I can listen to a rousing performance of Mozart, and I simply love Oscar Wilde. Although, I have to say that I still can't wrap my head around any kind of poetry.

Anyway, what I was trying to say before I got sidetracked was that my previous experiences with anything artsy (Picasso, Shakespeare et al) left me stone cold and bored to tears, which contributed to my feelings of being completely soulless where anything artistic was concerned.

Having now discovered this hereto hidden artistic bone within myself, not only do I now appreciate something that's artsy and classical, I also managed to redecorate my whole house with this untapped well inside me!

Not too shabby as far as I'm concerned. And let me just say right now that my house warming was something that I will treasure for the rest of my life. A bunch of more dumbfounded friends I have yet to see!

As I was saying, cabbage roses and green paisley aside, I took on the massive job of not only redecorating the entire house, but also remodeling most parts of it, which is why it was a good thing that the house wasn't on the endangered houses list.

By the time I got through with it only the shell remained even remotely like the original. Everything else had transformed or merged to become something else.

Very simply, this book started out by my recording decorating ideas and my day's failures. This was a two fold reason actually. The first being for me not to repeat my abysmal failures again and thereby waste time and effort. And the second being so that I again didn't waste time going over a previously researched decorating idea.

By the time I was done with my whole project, I barely had any money left in the bank I was clinging by my teeth to my job, and I was close to admitting myself into the nearest infirmary. I had, as usual bitten off more than I could chew, and it hadn't helped that I fired my decorator within a week of hiring her either!

Not to speak ill of anyone, but what she really saw in my house was a place for her to showcase her ideas and push mine gently to the side. I was having none of that! I didn't want to get stuck with today's contemporary version of cabbage roses and green paisley. (Hmm, maybe that should be my own particular mantra?)

So I ended up dealing with everything myself, and it was a jolly good thing that my new boss was understanding and living only two doors down from me! I could have been in a lot of hot water otherwise. And I mean a lot of hot water.

Not only had I blown most of my savings on buying this monstrosity of a house, I had changed jobs and moved clear across town as well. Actually, it more like clear across state.

So there I was recording everything in my journal each night overseeing every aspect of remodeling and redecorating by myself, and winging it back and forth between work and home to make sure that nothing went too drastically wrong.

Not to put too fine a point on it but I was like a demented and thoroughly wet hen for those few months (it seemed like a few eternities at that time!), and by the time I was done, Alan, my boss, bless his soul gave me time off to recuperate. Which is how we got to this point really.

With nothing to do but live with my own company for a few weeks, I had nothing better to do than to browse for some insane reason through my copious notes. And what I came out with eventually, to cut a longer story short, was this book, this work of art on my own work of art.

Hopefully you don't think me too immodest, but I truly am proud of everything I've accomplished to date. I only hope that by reading this book you'll come away with a few insights into the remodeling world, a few decorating ideas and a bellyful of laughs at my ineptitude.

Oh, and I have to say that I dedicate this book to my boss, Alan: without your understanding support I couldn't have achieved half of what I set out to do.

Everyone else helped too, but really guys, he's my boss and without him I'm out of a job!

Introduction

If you managed to find your way through the rabbit warren of rambling spiel that was my attempt at an introduction then you probably (hopefully) have an idea of where I intended to go with this book, but if you got lost don't worry. This section is dedicated to you and to helping you sort out through the various sections.

I realize that's what the table of contents might be there for, but it's not always clear cut is it? So here goes, and hope and pray that I don't put cabbage roses and green paisley in this section as well! (I swear I'm not fixated on it!)

Anyway, you can expect to find decorating ideas and tips that can help you in your endeavors. And since most of these are what I researched and went into while doing my own redecorating and remodeling they are quite comprehensive. However, that doesn't claim that I was able to manage to describe or even mention every single decorating idea, theme or style.

That would be close on to an impossible task simply for the reason that with so many talented people and so many decorating ideas out there, that a new idea is probably born every ten minutes or something like that.

I'd like to take you through remodeling your house, redecorating your house, and the logistics that might be involved in these. Like getting the proper permits and ordinances to change even part of the structure, or perhaps checking to make sure that your house isn't on the endangered houses list (that's Historical Houses list to everyone else).

I'd also like to take you through the various choices you have regarding both of these. The ideas are many, and you only need to reach out your imagination to find the right design for you. Then again, we can take a walk through the many design elements that will help in your redecorating endeavors.

I'll try to end up with something resembling sense if that can be achieved!

Getting Started: The Basics

Before you get started doing anything though, there are a few things you should take into consideration. I've gone into detail on each one of these points in the sections immediately following this, but in this section I just thought I'd give you a general idea of what to expect.

In other words by reading this book hopefully you won't be making the same mistakes that I did! If you do however, don't worry as you can always try to correct them. Some mistakes though might prove to be costly whilst others might actually look better than the original non-mistake idea that you had.

It's basically a matter of using your own judgment and taking the right decision for you at the crunch time. That said there are quite a lot of things that I did wrong but which I just covered up by going with the flow and coming out with something totally new and different.

Before you go into all of that however, here's a list of all the basic steps that you should at least try to cover before going into the redecorating or remodeling process. They're not all necessary and they're not all in a rigid order which you need to follow to the letter. It's just better if you can go through them.

You can go through these steps as you see fit and in your time, keeping in mind a few things first. If you are going to go through with any of these options you should decide well beforehand to make sure that a.) you have enough cash in the bank to create a reasonable budget; b.) that you really do want to go through with it; and c.) what sort of time frame you are thinking about to start going about the actual remodeling and redecorating..

These might seem unnecessary to you now, but I can assure you that if you don't at least consider these to begin with you'll land in a whole tubful of hot water. And although I might repeat myself later on this, I'll say it here anyway to begin with: A little research goes a long way.

Before you start any part of this project you will need to investigate certain aspects of it to make yourself better knowledgeable and less susceptible to being taken in. Keep in mind that a little homework on your part in the beginning will go a long way to helping you throughout the whole project.

Remodeling or Redecorating: The Difference

Before you decide whether you want to remodel or redecorate, you should perhaps know what the difference is between them. I'm not kidding here, there are people who don't know what the difference is between the two.

Although I must admit that to the person who knows this it might seem simple and ridiculous that anyone could ever get the two mixed up, I have to say that it is entirely possible.

As you might have guessed I'm speaking from experience here. I was one of those unfortunate people who didn't know the difference between remodeling and redecorating. Naturally enough I know now, but it was lucky that I took the time to find out otherwise who knows what (other greater) chaos might have ensued!

As it is I got away with many things by the seat of my pants. It's truly a shuddering thought for me to have to contemplate those short few months where I first wallowed in my ignorance. That's not to say that I became a genius overnight, only that I learned enough not to blunder as much as I had been.

Anyway the difference between remodeling and redecorating really is easy to know once you actually learn it. Remodeling mainly entails breaking down things, adding odd bits here and there, and changing structural parts of your house to suit your design.

This might become complicated and you'll most likely need permits and the like along with a hefty man wearing low slung jeans, a bald head suitably covered by a hard hat, and a sledge hammer. Oh and did I forget to mention the, "Hey lady, you want me to break down this wall too?"

As you can see I had a great time in the beginning of my remodeling endeavors. Having now banished that delightful picture to the absolute corner of my mind we can now hopefully progress to what redecoration means.

Oh, as a side note, I did manage to get builders later on – after I fired my decorator, – who were more than competent at their jobs!

Anyway whereas remodeling entails a lot of banging and crashing, with redecorating the only way you'll get that is if you do the crashing and

banging yourself out of sheer frustration. And let me tell you there were days when all I wanted to do was lie down on the floor and pull a good tantrum.

And usually it was for very good reasons, like being unable to find those lovely drapes I wanted or that gorgeous pair of matching lampshades that I had spied in the store just yesterday.

That was quite annoying actually, here I was willing to spend full price on it and they go and put it on sale thereby making it inaccessible to me, the person who avoids sales at all costs.

So in short, redecorating can be as frustrating as remodeling but it basically requires you pushing furniture here and there, adding new pieces and generally causing havoc in your rooms. What it doesn't entail is breaking any walls or adding new ones.

And before I forget to mention entirely if someone asks if you're renovating your house don't stare at them in panic and look as if they were speaking a different language. Renovating is just another side road that you can take down the remodeling highway.

All it means is that instead of thinking of bashing down walls, you're thinking of restoring or refurbishing your house to the way it was when it was first built, or at least to its previous glory of a few years ago.

If you're remodeling you don't necessarily have to renovate – unless you're on the historical houses endangered lists, in which case you will have to do it to make your house look at least new or clean, clear of chipping paint and other such things.

So renovation won't always be on the cards but you might have bought your house with the express intention of renovating. In which case you'll want to do a lot of research to find out what your house looked like to begin with.

And if it's a historical house your job actually becomes easier because there will in all probability be records and pictures which you can refer to, to get a better idea of what you're up against.

So this is the crunch time really in taking your first step towards doing something drastic to your house, and this is where we head off to the next section.

Decide what you want... sort of

Now this is where you need to make a few decisions as to what you're going to do. Having gained some idea what the difference is between your options, you now need to see which of the three R's – Remodeling, Renovating, or Redecorating – you're going to take.

So first take a good look at your house and decide what you want to do, or what it is about the place that you would like to do. This doesn't need to be an extensive list, just something on which you can look at and decide, Hey! I want to do that.

After going through your list once and weighing your options you can always go back and change things. I know I had a hard time deciding what I really wanted done, and the first list I made was basically a room by room fantasy wish list.

I realized that, almost as soon as I finished and saw the mile long list lying spread out before me on the table. Realizing that even to go through that list was a waste of my time, (I knew I didn't have that much cash lying around), I went back and first listed the rooms and things that needed immediate attention.

And although this was a considerably long list as well, it was nowhere near in length to my original list so I was satisfied. Then I went through it again and this time I separated what on my list could do with a face lift and what needed to be remodeled to even get into a semblance of good shape.

The Three R's

Going with your three options, if you want to do your entire house like I did, you'll want to then decide whether you want to renovate or not. Remember also that this choice can be severely limited by the endangered list. So check up on that first before you do anything else, if you're going the remodeling route.

If you're not bound by those restrictions, remember that you might still be bound by planning permits, city ordinances and the lot. So do your homework! Most times though your builder or architect will be able to help you with all of that. Finding these things out for yourself though, will save you a lot of hassle, and stop you from going through some of the madness that I did.

And if you're not renovating or doing any remodeling of any kind, then you're probably going to go the route of redecorating. I say probably because sometimes after a thorough look into what you're letting yourself into, you might not even proceed with any of these options.

So this is really the first and one of the most crucial steps for you to decide on. There will be other factors involved in making this decision and I've covered them in the sections to come. But for now, it's good if you can make a tentative decision at least on whether to,

- Remodel
- Renovate
- Redecorate

House or Room

You've chosen which of three R's to go with, but regardless of which one it is, you now have to make another choice. This one's about whether you're going to do the entire house or whether you're only going to do one or two rooms first.

And if you're thinking that you can't face another decision so soon after the first one, stop right there! By the time this thing is over you will have made enough decisions to last you a lifetime. If you're not into decision making but really, really want get your house in order, then I'm afraid you're in for a bit of a shock.

There'll be decisions coming out of your mind even when you're sleeping – or trying to – and I can say that it doesn't stop just because you finish everything either. I found to my horror that the habit was so ingrained in me that it took me a couple of months to readjust to sleeping through the night without pouncing up in the middle of the night shouting "Eureka!"

That said, you will need to make a decision, and if you want to make your dreams come true about your house, it will need to be made sometime soon. However, enough doom and gloom for now, there's absolutely no use putting you off getting your house done even before you start. Besides just wait until you need to allocate a budget, that should be fun!

Basically though, the decision is whether you're going to go the whole hog and do your entire house or settle for doing one room. In fact you might only want to do one room, and not any of the others, since you might not be having pink cabbage roses and green paisley for your décor.

If you really want to do your whole house there are many things that you will need to take into consideration, like permits, licenses and your own personal budget. And this becomes even more important if you're thinking of remodeling as well, since you will have to spend considerably more than if you're only redecorating.

Unless of course, you splash out on an antique dresser that belonged to some Earl or General or Queen or President or other, in which case your redecorating costs will be about on par with your remodeling costs.

If you want to do the entire house but you only have a small budget, then think about doing one room at a time and getting to the other rooms as time and money allows you to. If you have the money readily available then of course you can go right ahead and start on the whole thing if you feel comfortable doing so.

Also be prepared for costs to go up over a period of time. This will affect both methods of getting your dream house. If you're doing it piecemeal, as the cash comes into your hand, then you have to be prepared to have to shell out more cash as the time goes by for you to complete your house or rooms.

What you spent the first time on furnishings, paint and fittings etc, won't necessarily be the same amount you're going to pay the second or even the third time around.

So take all these into account when you're making your decision. You can always change things later, but that doesn't mean that you should put off making the decision in the first place. If you start now, at least you'll have some kind of idea on which to base your other decisions.

Think of it like your laying the foundation stone for your remodeling /redecorating plans.

Themed or Eclectic

Now that you're going strong with the decision making bit, you might want to keep on this roll and decide, or at least base loosely, what type of renovating or redecorating you're going to do. And what can I possibly mean by that.

To put it simply you might want to think about whether you're going to go with renovating and restoring your house to its former glory – without the paisley and the cabbage roses – or whether you want to put your own personal stamp on things.

By now you probably have the whole endangered house thing in firmly in your head, and I won't mention it again. So when I'm talking about putting your own stamp on things I'm taking it for granted that you've already gone and checked this out.

If you haven't don't feel bad, I only did so when my boss mentioned that fact to me in passing one day over my coffee break. Naturally I stared at him, stunned for a second into immobility. After which point of course I burnt myself and ruined a perfectly good suit by pouring a cup of coffee over myself in an attempt to look at my watch! Classic goof on my part, what can I say?

Not much since I obviously hadn't taken that into consideration and the builders were already firmly ensconced within the house making a mess of the connecting wall between my living room and my dining room.

I barely avoided breaking the speed limit in town and luckily for me I didn't run anyone over either. Besides it's a good thing Joe lives opposite me. He's a cop and let me off with only a raised eyebrow.

Apparently he guessed correctly what was happening. He and Ella had known me only for the few months I had moved here, but I'm afraid to say my scatterbrained, and admittedly harebrained and haphazard method of getting this done was widely known and accepted.

And that's why I love, and moved to, a small town! Not so Joe would let me off parking in a no parking zone but because people take the time to get to know you, and to take in their stride your odd little quirks.

Anyway, I was lucky in that my house wasn't on the list, but I was only just there by a thread. However, I choose to believe that either Joe or Alan or any one of my other friends would have told me before I got into serious trouble.

After all, they didn't have any hard and fast reasons to dislike me. No, that would come on better acquaintance, as I have been told countless times before!

To get back to what we were talking about though, this a good point at which to decide what kind of thing you want to do with your house. It's true you know that you want to something, but you should at least have a vague or hazy idea of what you want to do.

If you don't, then you could always go about deciding what you don't want. That might however, take longer than you might think, so I'd stick with writing down what you want.

If you're a tidy person, with a tidy mind and a penchant for cleaning the house until you can run a white-gloved finger along the surfaces to check for dirt, then you might possibly go in for something uncluttered.

Then again, if you don't mind a little bit of clutter you might go in for something that's an interesting mixture of tastes and which can be quite eclectic.

So, themed and tidy, or eclectic and not so tidy?

Time Frame (when to start / finish)

The other thing you'll want to decide before you start is a reasonable time frame to finish all renovations and redecorating work. Naturally enough you will have to take into account factors such as weather problems, and contractor delays.

There'll also be the time frame that your contractor will give you initially as to when they can reasonably finish their work. You'll have to take all of these into account, so in the beginning it'll be best if you just stick to a tentative time frame.

Then based on everything that comes later you can adjust it to suit everything. More than deciding when to finish though, you'll need to decide what will be a good time for you to start work.

This also depends on whether you're only redecorating or whether you're remodeling. If it's the latter your start and finish time will naturally enough depend on outside influences. This is especially true for the start date since you will first need to contact the builders to get an estimate and a starting date.

If it's remodeling season – and you can believe that that's not going fall in the middle of winter – then you might have to wait until your builders have free schedules to slot you into place. So if you want to remodel your house it's best to decide this early on and to get your builders before anyone else does.

If however, it's merely a question of redecorating the start and the finish times to a large part will depend on you. Unlike remodeling jobs which can be affected by adverse weather conditions, redecorating within your house will only be affected if you're caught out in the middle of a blizzard.

And since it really doesn't matter on the season when you start to work, redecorating projects can commence all year around. And this is especially

true if you're doing the redecorating yourself. You can decide when and where to start, how much you need to finish in an allotted time, and if you lag behind it really won't matter since you're the one doing it.

If you give over the redecorating to a professional decorator, or interior designer rather, then you will have to a certain extent be dependant on their schedules. But this might be the best course if you're stuck for time to do it yourself, or if you just don't trust in your own abilities to get your house looking just the way you want it.

Here again, you'll need to look into the demand for interior designers and schedule your time accordingly. If you want something done in time for the festive season you might have to claw your way into their appointment books, but other than that you should still be able to get the interior designer of choice.

I bombed out with both my first choices for builders and an interior designer, so make a careful consideration and always be prepared for the worst that could happen. Not only will your starting schedule be to a large part in these professionals' hands, so will the finishing times.

Download the rest of this book for \$14.99.

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