

HOME | décor

All in the Details

by Sharon Lake Gargano January 2006

Accessorizing a room to fit your personality

Accessories can set the tone of a room and tell the world who you are. Where you place them can make a design statement.

Whether you prefer a formal, casual, eclectic or minimalist look, there's a place in your home for all the little things you love and a great decorating plan to go with them.

The Interior Design Society, Triangle East Chapter, offers tips on ways you can incorporate accessories and personal treasures into a room, no matter what your style:

Formal

The formality of a room is achieved through the use of order, balance and classic accessories and furniture.

But this style is not limited to traditional, ornate settings.

Contemporary lovers can also have a grand formal room. For example, a pair of clean-lined 1920s Barcelona chairs by Mies van der Rohe could be combined with a pair of large vases flanking a mirror or an abstract painting.

Casual

In order to embrace this style, you must be comfortable with a room that is both welcoming and relaxed.

Of course, proportion and scale are still important, but the arrangements of articles usually are not symmetrical or forced.

Also, color plays a major role in a casual setting.

You can perk up a collection of family photos just by grouping them in bright frames.

Large floor pillows or fun throw pillows on a solid-color upholstered sofa or chair can make a room more inviting.

Eclectic

Believe it or not, an eclectic room involves planning and forethought, even though it is marked by unlike objects and cohesive chaos.

You still have to pay attention to scale and proportion of the items you wish to display, but you also must be mindful of what you are grouping together in the space.

Choose decorative things that you love, and then place them in unexpected ways, using their differences to enhance one another.

Mixing textures, shapes and design origins helps you achieve an eclectic feel.

For example, you might place a contemporary vase collection beside a large Asian painting, offset by a basket of flowers.

Minimalist

This style often is bold and crisp, defined by a simplistic approach to design.

Sophisticated and carefully chosen would best describe the accessories if this look is your goal.

Less is more in this dramatic, clutter-free setting.

Collections

Just because you've chosen a style doesn't mean there isn't a spot for your beloved cat figurines or your husband's model cars.

You can still present your treasures with pride, but just remember that similar things should be grouped together.

To help prove this point, try to imagine three or five candlesticks arranged on a mantel or an end table. Then, imagine that same area with only one candle.

The group of candlesticks seems much more important and pronounced.

Remember most items look best grouped in odd numbers.

Photographs

You don't have to hide your family photos in a scrapbook just because you don't think they go with a room.

You can cluster them in hallways, bedrooms and family rooms. You can vary the frames as long as they have some common thread to help link them together.

Different shapes and sizes will intensify the arrangement and make it more interesting.

Bookcases are good venues for displaying old and new snapshots. Framed photos mixed on the shelves in small groups, along with books, plants and other meaningful pieces, can create a warm welcoming feeling, and give guests a glimpse into your family history.