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Coastal Illustrated

Home is surely where the heart is and the place where we find comfort and refuge from the world. As much as we enjoy the cozy ambiance of our habitats, changing the scenery once in awhile enhances its interest and appeal.

If you're looking to transform the appearance of your home, there are several ways to go about it. The most drastic of all possibilities is to buy another home altogether and only slightly less traumatic is remodeling your existing residence. But what if you just want to change a room or two to freshen the look of your abode?

The art of redesign may be just what's needed. It is a new concept that is quickly sweeping the nation.

While everyone is familiar with interior design, redesign could best be described as a "facelift" for a room. Redesign uses mostly existing furniture, accessories and accent pieces, rearranging and reformatting them to alter the look of a room, giving it a fresher appearance. It allows for considerable change without spending the family fortune.

Homeowners may certainly perform the procedure themselves, but if they are not into "do-it-yourself" type projects or lack the time or vision themselves, professional help is available — at very reasonable rates.

Enter Karen Hendrix, owner of House Calls by Karen Hendrix, to offer a trained eye toward the transformation of a room or an entire house, often in just one day. In addition to a degree in interior design from the University of Georgia, she has completed the requirements as an Interior Redesign Industry Specialist and has 15 years of experience in the interior design industry.

Interior Redesigner

Karen's passion and eye for interior decor began at a very early age.

"When I was 11 years old, I wallpapered my bedroom," she said. "And I was always moving furniture around."

Redesign is possible in any home, but some of Karen's favorite projects have been for clients just moving into a residence, where they are challenged to make their existing belongings fit in new spaces. She calls it a "move-in redesign."

For example, when Shirley and Bill Egan returned to St. Simons Island after living in Naples, Fla., for three years, their Florida-style furniture didn't really fit well in the Sea Palms home they purchased.

"When we first moved back, I told Bill, 'I'm going to have to throw out all the furniture,'" Shirley said.

She saw Karen's ads for redesign and Bill was certainly in favor of Shirley contacting her to help with the house, rather than purchase all new furniture.

"Karen came in and immediately knew what to do," Shirley said. "I didn't have to throw anything out."

Karen redesigned two areas of the Egan's home, the living and dining rooms. In the living area, she used lighting, color and placement to give the room a beautifully "pulled together" look. Shirley has an extensive collection of Shirley Temple dolls that Karen grouped meticulously within built-ins at one end of the room. Using a complimentary color from the area rug, Karen painted a short wall and added the same shade to the coved ceiling. Not a single new item was purchased for the room.

“The Egans have a lot of cool pieces from their travels,” Karen said. “We only reframed the painting over the fireplace to update the look.”

Similarly, the Egans had great dining room furniture, but needed a way to draw the dining area and kitchen together for a warmer effect. Karen added a large black buffet to one wall and tied the piece in by adding an area rug in a neutral hue with black edging and painted the bar stools black.

“It’s very comfortable,” Bill said. “This has become our gathering room.”

Shirley said Karen combined sentimental items with functional pieces to achieve a terrific look.

“Karen is not judgmental at all and is willing to work with you,” Shirley said. “She even went with me to help choose the frame.”

Much like the Egans, Bob and Nancy Butler recently relocated to a new home and had an abundance of furniture to arrange.

“You should have seen this room when we moved in,” Nancy said. “It looked like a flea market.”

They enlisted the assistance of Karen for a move-in redesign.

“Their other house in Black Banks had three seating areas. We had to incorporate all of that furniture into this space,” Karen said, pointing out the comfortable groupings in the living room. She also used a hallway adjacent to the living area and turned it into a cozy reading nook.

In addition to the plentiful furniture, Nancy has numerous collections that are meaningful to her.

“She has all this beautiful blue pottery that I wanted to showcase,” Karen said.

Nancy was impressed by the way Karen mixed the collection with other ornamental pieces for an uncluttered and elegant display.

“Karen just has a way of putting your things in the best light,” Nancy said.

Although the Butlers have only been in the home a few weeks, Karen’s eye for detail and take-charge attitude had the lovely house looking and feeling like home very quickly.

Home Sweet Home

Island interior design expert, Ski Whitehurst, recently put the principals of redesign to work in the home of her son and daughter-in-law, Berry and Anjie Collett. The couple purchased the well-known family home of Jim and Barbara Meadows and wanted to keep the wonderful warmth of the abode while making it their own through the decor.

“This is a great house for the family,” Ski said. “It’s a house with heart.”

Working to complete the living room first, Ski had Anjie pull out all of the items that were most important to display and together they decided on paint colors. Next, Ski went to work placing the pieces and rearranging furniture to suit the needs of the family and to appeal to Anjie’s tastes.

“Decorating revolves around the emotions of the client,” Ski said. “What has worked exceptionally well for me over the years is my ability to establish an emotional intimacy with my client, without imposing my thoughts, preferences or feelings on them.”

The finished living room has a warmth that is comfortable and inviting.

“(Ski) knows what I like now. This is our third house,” Anjie said. “And the great thing about this is that whether you have a Target or a Taylor House budget, she makes it work.”

Currently the women are working on the dining area but that doesn't mean the living room will stay as is for long.

"Every few months Ski comes back in and 'fluffs' it up," Anjie said. "She makes it look new every once in a while."

Principles of redesign:

Redesign is a process of taking a room completely apart and putting it back together with a brand new look, usually within a few hours. Everything is removed from the room and carefully placed, with your tastes represented in a fresh, new look. Redesign experts will often ask to "shop" your home for items that may have been put away and forgotten or are under utilized in another room.

Once the room is redesigned, the expert will suggest ways to add to the desired effect, by purchasing artwork, a lamp or an accessory. The design expert can advise or do the shopping for you.