

What To Do With What You Have

Ideas from Marsha Rae of Rae Designs and
"Home by Design", for fun ways to spend little or no money and get a
great new look.

IN GENERAL

- ❖ Expose a bit of your inner self. State gently what you are all about, with the pieces you combine and display. It can be anything from the playbill of an event which really moved you to a memento from your childhood or a favorite vacation. These items will bring a smile to your heart each time you see them, and will often spark a question which will invite you to relive (if only for a few moments) a very happy time.
- ❖ Use an easel to display a special piece of artwork. Another variation to hanging art on the wall is to set it on the mantle or a table and then gently lean it against the wall.
- ❖ Try rearranging either the furniture or the area rug to create a diagonal line. This will make any room (even a bedroom) more interesting and inviting.



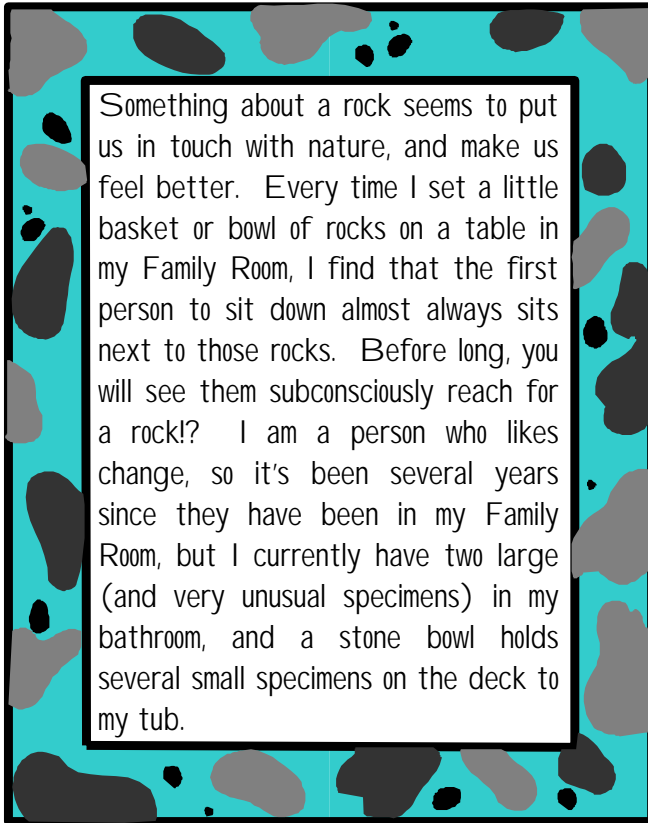
Rearrange the furniture often. This reduces wear on both carpet and furniture, and keeps everything more interesting.

- ❖ Add a rope/tassel to anything from a lamp or vase to a chair or cabinet key and it will create an elegant feel.
- ❖ Choose any one room and remove all the accessories and artwork. Rearrange the furniture if at all possible. Then re-accessorize, being careful to use totally different accessories as much as possible, and definitely not returning anything to its same old place.
- ❖ Cluster for effect. It really works! By clustering several items together and then leaving some open spaces you create a nice focal point and a much more pleasing effect. It is even better if one or two items are elevated, and perhaps if you are using pots or vases, turn one of them on its side.

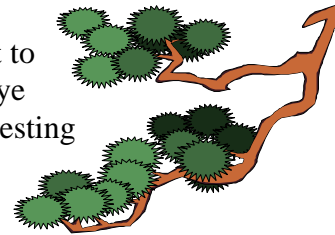


- ❖ Don't forget about books. They work in any room of the house. You can set an accessory on one (or more) to elevate it, use an unusual

accessory as a bookend to draw more attention to it, or even stand a book behind an accessory to create a background or foil and draw more attention to the accessory.



❖ Nothing is more attractive than a seasonal arrangement which includes a branch from a tree or bush which is currently in bloom or laden with greenery. These branches can be added to floral arrangements or are often spectacular used by themselves. My suggestion is that you treat yourself (and family) to a drive in the country, and take along some hand pruners. Don't trespass, of course☺, but you're bound to find some interesting materials along the road, or on a deserted farm stead. While you're at it, don't forget to keep your eye out for interesting rocks also.



BATHROOMS

- ❖ Use anything but a soap dish to house your soaps. Yes, I'm serious. It can be a footed candy dish, a small brass plate or bowl, a swan vase, a wooden box, a jar with a lid, an antique bread & butter plate, a little fish, a small ramekin, or even a mineral specimen such as a chunk of amethyst or quartz. Almost anything can work to give a unique personality.

Do something fun with the towels!

- ★ Try using a large towel and swaging it almost like a drape.
- ★ Or, hang it over straight and catch it up in the middle or on one side with anything from a cord or tassel, to a ribbon, to one of the tie backs from the shower curtain.
- ★ Layering is very in right now. Instead of just folding all three layers of towels the same way, do something fun with the washcloth or fingertip towel. I often find just what I want in a napkin ring, piece of jewelry, length of raffia, drapery tie back or even a nosegay of dried or silk flowers.
- ★ Roll several towels up log fashion, and tie with a ribbon (you can further accessorize this look by adding greenery, shells, dried flowers, long cinnamon sticks, or other to



the bow). If you are not the bow type you can stack the rolled towels in basket or box.

- ★ Tuck a washcloth into a flower shape, tack together, and use it to top a stack of clean towels or add a touch of color to the necessary towels which will be used daily.
 - ★ Use a Battenberg napkin over the hand towel and then top with the washcloth to give a fresh, country look.
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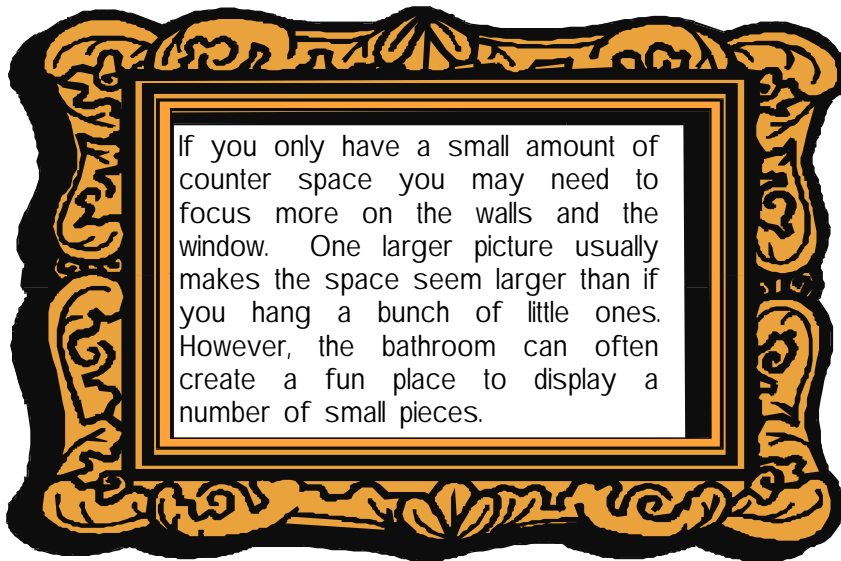
- ❖ Definitely use candles, and by the way, burn them! Dimming the lights and lighting several candles during an evening bath can chase the stress away. You can even get floating candles now! I carry candles with all types of (even Bergamot) and with all kinds of finishing touches to others are poured into a base still others have wild flowers imbedded in them. I like to do a cluster of candles on one corner of the tub and then a single candle on the opposing corner. I seldom use an ordinary candlestick. It usually ranges from a carved stone base to a champagne glass to a bowl filled with pebbles or small shells. Let your imagination run wild!



- ❖ Treat yourself to some bubble bath. Shop carefully for just the right fragrance, and then transfer the bubble bath into a more decorative container. Again, not necessarily something you would expect in a bathroom, but to make it look special. This is even more wonderful if you gather several items together into a basket, pottery bowl, wooden base or carved piece of stone.



- ❖ It does not have to be a “bathroom item” in order to work in here. Anything which inspires you or makes you smile is acceptable. I have even taken a wine stand, intended for chilling wine or champagne and then filled a small champagne bottle with the client’s favorite bubble bath. Iridescent confetti really gave it a romantic touch.



If you only have a small amount of counter space you may need to focus more on the walls and the window. One larger picture usually makes the space seem larger than if you hang a bunch of little ones. However, the bathroom can often create a fun place to display a number of small pieces.

- ❖ Install a dimmer switch on the major light source so you can change from dim and romantic to bright enough to do your make up (or brain surgery). These are relatively inexpensive and easy to install.

- ❖ If you think you are