

Marcia Smart's:



150+ SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

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Introduction

For years, I've been sharing quick & easy SMART Tips on the homepage of my website www.SmartRedesign.com. Each month I create a new tip based on the season of the year:

Spring, Summer, Winter & Fall

Now, I've compiled 150+ of my seasonal decorating tips (and some bonus ideas as well) in this E-book, so you can use them when you're stuck for an idea, need a centerpiece—fast, want help with your spring cleaning & organizing, holiday décor or would just like a simple way to change your look without spending a lot of \$\$.

I hope you enjoy using some of my tips to perk up your décor—no matter what the season of the year, or style of your home.

Happy Redesigning!

Marcia



FLOWER POWER

When it's officially Spring, it's time to brighten up your home with some real flower power. Here are some SMART tips to get you started.

Start with the safety factor:

Avoid precarious positioning so floral arrangements don't get tipped over by accident. Watch for items close to edges or jutting branches or stems. Avoid holders too large or heavy for the table-top or too small and fragile for wagging dog tails.

Make the colors sing:

Repeating a single shade will echo a modern note, while a mix of blooms can suit any style-setting. Select a color to match the season – pastels for spring & summer, darker shades for fall & winter. Look for color accents in your accessories and artwork you can repeat with your floral arrangements.

Add the WOW factor:

Resist the urge to reach for a vase and select a holder with a change of pace. Try a fish bowl, water jug, ice bucket or wine bottle. A decorative tin or an attractive hatbox with a hidden waterproof holder inside is sure to surprise. Anything from fabric to handmade paper flowers can add a touch of whimsy to your surroundings.

Reach for some texture in your arrangements:

A simple arrangement is sufficient, but adding fruits or vegetables lends color and texture in unexpected ways. Asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage mimic flowers with their shapes. Lemons & Limes secure stems and smell great. Spanish moss, raffia, stones and other natural elements bring nature indoors.

Try something tiny:

A lot of small arrangements can add up to flower star-power when grouped together on a tray or windowsill. Try single stems in multiple vessels, like vintage soda bottles or mason jars. Espresso or egg cups can hold smaller single blooms. Position a vintage teacup or two filled with a tiny floral bouquet on a dainty end table, tea tray or cart.

SPRINKLES OF FLORAL GALORE

They say April showers bring May flowers. Here are some SMART tips to help you sprinkle floral décor throughout your home and watch your rooms bloom!

Smell the Roses:

Infuse your home with springtime floral scents: fill vases with fresh flowers or potpourri; swap pine-scented air fresheners for lavender; tuck sachet packets into corners of bookshelves or drawers; lighten the air with fragrant floral candles.

Make the bed:

Brighten the boudoir with an infusion of floral patterns: trade the down comforter for a floral-print duvet or blanket; splash flowers on your pillow shams or sheets; for a subtle design difference, swap out the solid dust ruffle for a floral.

Artfully arrange the flowers:

BE creative, BE different and BE on the lookout for BE-dazzling flower holders: bottles, buckets, boots, barrels, boxes, birdcages, baskets, birdhouses.

Redesign a room with florals:

Highlight a wall with paper, jumbo floral stencils or a collage of framed flower pictures; scatter tabletops with gardening books; perk up lampshades, add a flower-printed area rug or accent screen.

Turn your kitchen into a garden:

Use flower boxes on counters or sills, interchange traditional door pulls with ones shaped like flowers; don't overlook the obvious accents of dishtowels, placemats, napkins or plates.

FAMILY CLEANING FUN

With the weather warming up comes the dreaded “spring cleaning” madness. Tired of tackling it alone? Here are some SMART tips to get the family involved to help make your life a little easier.

Start with one room at a time:

Scattering efforts over multiple rooms makes it seem like nothing is getting done. For visible, rewarding results, have everyone work one section of one room (that includes the garage) at a time. Complete that area before moving on to the next.

Make it fun:

Create a clutter-buster game for the family. Write specific tasks on ping-pong balls or some other clever game-related item. Have each family member chooses a ball, complete the task, then select another. After a designated time frame, whoever has the most balls gets a prize ... like a no-chores day or control of the TV remote.

Ask three important de-clutter questions:

Is everyone having a tough time letting go of their stuff? No matter their age, have each family member ask these three questions: Do I love it? Do I use it? Could someone else love or use it? Their responses will produce one of three results: save, toss or donate.

Risk creating a clean-up ritual:

Every few months (more frequently if you can manage it) reserve one weekend morning for family clean-out day. Set a time limit for purging, then box up any items for donation and get them to the car before minds change. You can use this method for different types of clean-up chores and reward yourselves with a special family event.

Tackle only the A-list tasks:

Prioritize the tasks in order of importance. Tackle the top three first. If there's time left to move on down the list, great. But don't force the issue. If you've made family clean-up day a ritual, you know the other projects on the list will get handled next time.

OVERLOOKED SPACES

Your Spring Cleaning is finished...or is it? Here are some SMART tips to remind you about those often overlooked spaces.

Start at the top:

- Sweep the ceiling with a clean broom to remove dust particles and webs. Keep it at an angle for best results.
- Slip a pillowcase over ceiling fan blades to trap dust inside as you wipe them down.

Missed these?

- Clean closet floors - clothes shed dust, you stir it up when you open closet doors, dust goes back onto the clothes–vicious cycle.
- Clean the house phone and tv remote with disinfectant wipes–they harbor more germs than a toilet seat!
- Under the sofa cushions, crumbs and surprises await.
- Toaster ovens–'nuf said.

A little vinegar & water gets the job done:

- Boil the duo in the microwave to freshen-up the inside and make stuck-on food easier to wipe away.
- Use the combo to wash windows. Wipe with newspaper instead of paper towels or cloth for streak-free windows.

Remove and clean:

- Oven racks, drip pans, vent covers, stove knobs, shower curtains, area & throw rugs, glass covers on light fixtures, washable curtains, mattress covers & pads, screens.

Try the vacuum on:

- Window coverings – using the upholstery attachment, vacuum from top to bottom on drape panels and cornice boxes/valences too difficult to remove.
- Use the brush attachment for cabinets and drawers – easier than trying to pick up tiny crumbs with damp paper towels or sponges.

SPRING INTO ACTION

Here are some SMART tips to put some SPRING into your step to help you SPRING into decorating action.

Surround yourself with spring:

Infuse some florals into your springtime design by introducing flowering plants, scented candles, cheery floral fabrics or pillows, flower patterned placemats, tablecloths or napkins.

Make a statement with paint:

Select a fun springtime color and paint a room, wall, picture frame, or piece of furniture to waken things up after a long winter's night.

Accent your floors:

Area rugs can change the feeling in a room instantly. Introduce a new color accent by adding a rug in your foyer, bathroom, kitchen or main living space. Pop one onto the patio for fun.

Revamp your window treatments:

Pick a fresh spring color and dress up bedroom or bathroom windows with some new curtains. For the crafty, apply colorful ribbon or fabric trim to existing curtains or valances.

Try a new set of bed linens:

Pack up the flannels and bring out the cottons. Treat yourself to a set of springtime sheets punctuated with a pretty pattern or playful color. While you're at it, swap out the heavy bedspread for a lightweight duvet to complement your new sheets.

IRISH SPRING

The *luck of the Irish* is with us in the month of March, so why not try your hand at decorating green? My SMART tips should bring you design luck.

Start by de-cluttering your rooms:

What could be greener than removing, recycling or re-purposing the things you no longer need or want?

Make an effort to plant some greens:

Start an herb garden-indoors or out, plant some flowers, grow some veggies.

Accent your home with greenery:

Bring the outdoors in – treat yourself to a weekly flower arrangement, buy an indoor plant or two, hang a picture of flowers, trees or a lush landscape.

Redesign a room:

Redesign is the original definition of green decorating! Create a new look by rearranging the existing furnishings in your home.

Think green environment:

Do some research on how you can help your *personal* environment next time you decorate. Green-conscious materials are being used in every aspect of design now, so hit the internet and discover how to green-up your home.

RESOLUTIONS REVISITED

MAYbe it's finally time to get to those decorating projects you had on your New Year's resolutions list. MAYbe these SMART tips will help!

Simplify your window coverings:

Swap the dark colored panels for simple sheers or linen-look lightweight panels. Lose the formal valance and heavy drapes and opt for simple window shades instead.

Move the furniture:

Arrange furniture away from windows and sliding doors to maximize the view and make way for easy outdoor access.

Add new artwork:

Art is subjective so pick whatever tickles your fancy. Go daring with modern or pop-art or stick to classics like landscapes or still-life. DIY by framing a series of greeting cards, calendar photos or your children's Picasso attempts.

Revitalize a powder room:

Pick a perky paint color and apply it to the walls, trim or vanity. Find a neat thrift-shop mirror to hang over the sink. Check your favorite big-box store for great deals on new towels.

Treat yourself to some trim molding:

Nothing makes a statement like great trim molding. DIY by adding a second layer of trim to existing floor molding or get dramatic with specialty ceiling trim accents.



REV-UP FOR SUMMER

Summer is around the corner. Here are some SMART tips to start your decorating engines and help you rev-up for the warm weather ahead.

Sweep, scrub and shine:

If you didn't get to your annual "Spring Cleaning" marathon already, do it now. You'll be spending more time outdoors, so take care of indoor chores and feel guiltless when the beach calls.

Make your patio summer ready:

Outdoor entertaining is at hand, so give your patio the once-over and make sure the grill is clean, furniture is washed, plants are in bloom and the patio looks fresh.

Accent your patio furniture:

Introduce some new outdoor pillows to casually throw on the back of sofas or chairs. Add a new area rug to anchor the seating grouping and ground the entertainment area. Consider replacing worn furniture cushions with new ones this season.

Redesign the patio on a budget:

No need to hire a professional. You can DIY by rearranging the seating grouping, for talking it over or outdoor dining. Add a new table umbrella or tent-like patio cover to cozy things up. Introduce potted floral gardens for more color. Potted palms add drama and miniature fruit trees are fun and practical.

Tackle the yard:

Outdoor party time is looming, so get that yard in shape. Create a welcoming atmosphere for family and friends; seed, fertilize, trim, mow, plant, and do whatever it takes to make yourself yard-proud.

EXPLOSIONS OF COLOR

July means it's time to start your summer with a BANG! Spark up the fireworks with explosions of hot hues. Here are some SMART tips to shoot-off some pops of color in your home:

Start with the foyer:

Paint walls a daring color like magenta, scarlett, teal or navy. Pump up the drama by adding a wash of gold or silver glaze.

Make the powder room powerful:

Have some fun and surprise your guests using bold plum, fuchsia, turquoise or canary yellow. Bottom line - use a courageous color that is different than any other in your home.

Accent the kitchen:

Paint the island or lower cabinet(s) a playful color like berry blue or tomato red, then repeat with towels, utensils, and even counter-top appliances in the same shade.

Romanticize the Master Bedroom:

Soften the color but make it count – sage green, sea-glass blue, dusty rose or warm honey-beige will make you feel both snuggly and sensual at the same time.

Time out means touch of color:

Family rooms, living rooms and rec rooms often get double doses of activities. Emphasize the energy with a hearty jolt of red, yellow, orange, royal blue or bold gold.

DESIGN INDEPENDENCE

Exercise your design independence. These SMART tips will help you feel free to express your summer decorator.

Start by getting patriotic:

Find a few spots in your home to infuse a little Red, White and Blue...if only for July!

Make a design statement:

Do one outrageous thing to make things “pop”...paint a chair hot pink, a wall chartreuse, or the front door purple!

Accent your home with flowers:

Bring your late spring blooms indoors to add color or use all one color flowers for each summer month.

Redesign for summer entertaining:

Prepare your patio for a Gatsby gathering – complete with fire place (try a chiminea), easy-wash area rug, and a vintage tea cart for summer beverages.

Turn things around:

Exchange heavy/dark winter items for light/airy summer ones – drapery panels, bed linens, towels, throw rugs; even little things make a difference in lightening your summer look.

SEASIDE DECOR

Land locked for summer? Then why not bring the sea to you? Here are some SMART tips to bring the seaside home-side.

Swap out your artwork:

Bring in a seascape of rolling waves or underwater sea life. Hang a picture series of shells, starfish, seahorses or any other sea creatures that make you smile.

Make a seaside statement with paint:

Get brave and paint one accent wall a soft blue, like "Paradise View" by Benjamin Moore or " Balmy Seas" by Behr. When fall rolls around, just paint it a warmer color.

Accessorize with items from the sea:

You know what they are: giant shells set on a shelf or glass jars filled with sea glass. Coral, driftwood, urchins, sand dollars - all make interesting accents on a coffee or end table, bookshelf or mantle.

Revamp your patio look:

Set your patio table with sea blue or soft turquoise dishes, placemats and napkins. Introduce blue & white throw pillows, like classic ticking stripe or a few with whimsical patterns like sea gulls, shells or a mermaid.

Try something nautical:

Be the "captain" of your ship by navigating your patio through nautical accents: buoys, rope, anchors, ships clocks, pylons, mast head statuary – fun finds abound at swap meets, antique stores and even your local Home Goods or Hobby Lobby stores.

PATIO PERK-UPS

When you think Redesign or staging...do you only think INDOORS? Well, time to think OUTDOORS! Follow these quick & easy *SMART* Tips to help Redesign your patio for the summer months ahead.

Spray It:

Freshen up the look of your old patio set by spray painting it a new color. Some of the new spray paints have primer built right in, so they're fast, easy and stand-up to summer showers.

Market It:

Think about investing in a colorful market-umbrella—great bang for the buck to add pizzazz to any patio table. Purchase a few new toss pillows in weather-friendly fabrics (or just remember to take them in at night) in this season's latest colors & prints, and that old patio set takes on a new life.

Al Fresco It:

Take advantage of warm evenings and sunny afternoons by dining "al fresco". The stores are full of wonderful and inexpensive outdoor-friendly sets of dishes, flatware and table linens. Don't forget to add some candles and soft music and you'll think you're dining on some tropical isle.

Re-Arrange It:

Try to put a new spin on your outdoor furniture arrangement. Can you re-locate it to get a different view of the yard area? Can you bring in an outdoor area rug to anchor a seating grouping? Could you add an outdoor table lamp or two for additional atmosphere?

Transplant It:

No space to cultivate flowers, herbs or vegetables in ground-plots? Think potted gardens! Buy large terra cotta pots and plant tomato, basil, gardenia or any of your summer favorites. No time? Purchase pre-filled pots with flowers and greenery at your local nursery. Budget permitting, add a few potted palm trees or other type of small trees indigenous to your area. All that lush greenery makes any patio look sumptuous.



FALL INTO REDESIGN

Enjoy those last lazy days of summer fun, but think ahead to your fall redesign projects. These SMART tips should simplify that transition.

Sort through your seasonal items:

It's difficult to give up those last "dog days of summer" ... and to decide which pieces you will use (or replace) for your new fall look. Start slowly to transition into the cozy tones & textures of Fall and Winter.

Move the furniture:

Think ahead to snuggles in front of the fire, rainy day board- games and indoor entertaining. Plan your furniture arrangements to accommodate how you live in your home in the cooler months.

Add new artwork:

You'll be indoors a lot (most likely) so have some fun with art you may be looking at for months. Go daring with modern or pop-art or stick to classics like landscapes or still-life. DIY by framing a series of greeting cards, calendar photos or your children's Picasso attempts.

Revitalize a powder room:

Pick a perky paint color and apply it to the walls, trim or vanity. Find a neat thrift-shop mirror to hang over the sink. Check your favorite big-box store for great deals on new towels.

Think texture:

Baskets filled with pinecones, vases filled with branches, leaves scattered on tables, acorns in a glass container...think creatively and join forces with Mother Nature to add fall textures to any room in your home.

LIGHTEN UP

When the days start getting shorter...and all that summertime sunlight starts to fade, it can be a challenge to keep your home light and cheery. Try these simple SMART tips to brighten the day and lighten your rooms as you prepare for the frosty days ahead.

Sconces can enlighten:

Add candle wall sconces in strategic places to enhance existing lighting and throw a warm glow around any room.

Make the most of mirrors:

Their reflective quality also has the ability to bounce light around the room. Position them opposite a window or behind a lamp or candle arrangement to double the light output.

Add a touch of white:

Contrast darker colors with some frosty white. Splurge on a fluffy, white flokati area rug or try a faux-shag; add a vase (or two) filled with white seasonal flowers; accessorize with a huge white bowl filled with winter fruit or vegetables.

Replace bulbs:

Most incandescent light bulbs throw a yellow glow that can dull a room. Consider using halogen bulbs for pure, white light that mimics natural daylight.

Try a Triad:

Every room needs three light sources for maximum effect. That means general, task and accent lighting. Placing them in a triad, or triangular pattern, around the room assures the best distribution of the lighting.

SNUGGLE DOWN

The Big Chill is coming fast! Time to switch off the lazy days of summer style and turn on decorating-cozy for the cool weather ahead. Here are a few SMART tips to help things “Fall” into place more easily:

Start by packing it in:

Put away everything light, cool and breezy - all the fun items you added for summer decorating can just be saved for next year.

Make your sofa snuggly:

Swap the summer pillows for warm, textural ones and add a soft, new, nubby throw in the latest fall color.

Add down-home accessories:

Wooden or brass candlesticks, old books, spice-scented potpourri, seasonal fall plants or flowers can give that special, cozy feeling to any home.

Rearrange your furniture to emphasize the nesting feeling:

Tighten up your main seating area by placing the furniture around your fireplace or main focal point. Carve out a reading corner for those unpredictable rainy days.

Think ahead to longer nights and shorter days:

Do you have enough lighting for those early nights? Is it time to purchase a few extra lamps? Remember, every room needs *at least* 3 lamps, placed in a triangular pattern around the room.

PUMPKIN PATCH PORCH

Orange ya glad that fall has arrived? Here are some **Smart Tips** to turn your front porch into a welcoming pumpkin patch.

Start with a pumpkin house sign:

Greet guests with a fun house-number sign made from pumpkins. Trace stenciled number outlines using a crafts knife. Scrape the pumpkin skin from the stenciled numbers to reveal the lighter pumpkin flesh. Position them in a prominent place that can be seen from the street or sidewalk.

Make a pumpkin planter:

Hollow out a large pumpkin and simply transfer a one gallon (or larger) blooming mum or other seasonal plant into it. Make several to create a dramatic entry to your house.

Add a personalized pumpkin touch:

Buy different sized pumpkins, then use paint, permanent marker, sticker letters or carve monograms into each one. Personalize with each family member's initials or spell out your last name. Put an antique wheelbarrow or old wooden wagon near your door and fill it with your masterpieces.

Revitalize and pumpkin-ize the entry:

Line your walkway with pumpkins. Select all one color, like white, and alternate with colorful potted plants for interest. Hollowed out pumpkins, filled with short pillar candles, become luminaries for evening entertaining.

Try topiary pumpkin sentries:

Select pumpkins in different sizes and colors. Put the largest pumpkin on a planter as a strong base (remove stems on lower pumpkins). Use wooden skewers to stack and secure each smaller pumpkin to the next. Place a pair near your front door to add a touch of drama to your front entrance.

PUMPKIN POWER

It's October and you know what that means...pumpkin power! O also stands for orange, outrageous, and oh-so-clever. Here are some SMART tips to help you get your pumpkin on.

Showcase miniature pumpkins:

Pumpkins say homey, fall look—but nesting a gaggle of orange under a sleek glass dome, bell jar or cloche adds a touch of elegant formality. For a unique twist, start with a collection of pumpkins that are the same size but have varied shapes and colors.

Make a color statement:

Use outrageous orange as a striking accent in a room. Paint one wall in the dining room, buy one upholstered item starring the color, or add an unexpected punch of it in an area rug. Keep it simple by tossing an orange throw over a sofa, ottoman or club chair, or use it generously in table linens, placemats and napkins.

Artful Pumpkins:

Add some extra flair to plain pumpkins by painting designs on them in colors and patterns that complement your décor. Place them around the house, patio or porch. For added fun, paint faces on petite pumpkins to inspire a giggle or two.

Rave-getting place cards:

Use acrylic paint or brightly colored paint pens to inscribe each guest's name on a petite pumpkin, or write their names on fresh, dried or faux fall leaves. Punch a small hole in each leaf and use raffia to tie them individually around the stems of pumpkins. Set a rustic napkin beneath each pumpkin, or position it inside a small soup bowl.

Try pumpkin-light:

Cut a hole in the top of a small pumpkin, scoop out the insides, place a votive candle inside the cavity and watch the magic happen. Use them as toppers for candlesticks or use them as the candlesticks. Create a display on the fireplace mantel or an arrangement on a metal tray for the dining room or coffee table.

NATURE-AL DECORATING

Autumn is around the corner and Mother Nature will provide a bounty of items we can harvest to decorate our homes for the season. Here are some SMART tips to help you scatter the seeds of design.

Showcase Seasonal Colors:

Create a cornucopia centerpiece with a palette of green and purple artichokes, hearty kale, tiny yellow-orange pumpkins & gourds. Add some apples, berries, pinecones and nuts for texture.

Make a Crafty Statement:

Tie tiny autumn wreaths outfitted with kumquats and seedpods to the backs of chairs then hang a larger version on your front door. Bundle bunches of dried grasses together, secure with a rubber band, and tie to every other baluster on your staircase with raffia.

Add an Autumn Bouquet:

Forget the flowers and go for a bouquet of autumn leaves. Choose white vases in different shapes and sizes to make the colors pop. For a simpler look, snip some small branches off a tree in your yard, or for a longer-lasting look, purchase faux leaves or branches at a local crafts store.

Replenish the Mantle:

Make your mantle the apple of your eye. Use a statement vase or apothecary jar filled with tiny crabapples and tall pussy willow sticks. Arrange brightly colored apples paired with old books. Set them on stacks at various heights or use as bookends. Perch some as a surprise element on candlestick tops. Use artificial apples if you want the display to last the whole fall season.

Toss Around Some Nature:

Pillows are a simple way to spread color and texture around the room. Select ones that are patterned or embellished with leaves, fruits, fall vegetables, etc. For 3-dimensional impact, look for pillows that are embossed or embroidered.

INFUSE YOU IN FALL DÉCOR

If it's already November, the holidays are fast approaching, and celebrations will abound. With stretched budgets and design-time at a premium, here are some SMART tips to help infuse YOU into your holiday décor:

Start with something simple:

Haul out the good dishes and vow to use them all season. Dig out the tired table linens and dye them a deep, rich color that accents your décor. Add an inexpensive set of colorful glassware or wineglasses, and your table will be infused with new and YOU.

Make your own accessories:

Country-chic is a great holiday touch, so why not hand craft a show-stopper for the tabletop, mantel or foyer? Ask the family to join in for added fun. The item(s) will have special meaning, and perhaps YOU will start a new tradition.

Add some art:

YOU can put on your Picasso, or enlist the kids help, to draw or paint pictures of anything that reads holiday time. Hang them in the dining area as a great conversation starter around the table.

Re-invent existing pieces:

Simple additions can save dollars when sprucing up your home for guests. YOU can give upholstered pieces, lamps, dining chairs, throw pillows or drapery tie-backs instant holiday pizzazz with festive tassels or trims.

Think one-of-a-kind:

Shop at flea markets, antique fairs, and estate sales for items that are different than what you can buy at the usual stores. Soup tureens, old mirrors, teapots or anything unique, will add YOU character when they become part of the table centerpiece or home decor.



NEW YEAR DECO PLAN

The New Year is here...and so are the same old decorating dilemmas. Make a resolution that THIS year you'll create a plan to tackle your decorating projects... and resolve to stick to it! Here are some SMART tips to help you get started.

Start with a list:

Put pencil to paper. Decide what design challenges you face in each room. Now prioritize the list starting with "functional" importance. Do your best to stick to it!

Make your budget:

Be realistic. Decide how much you can spend for your overall plan. Then assign a certain dollar amount for each room. Do your best to stick to it!

Arrange a schedule:

Decide how much time you can devote to completing each project. Create a timetable to accomplish each one. Do your best to stick to it!

Research your resources:

Decide where you will find needed items and ideas. Look online, in retail stores, thrift or consignment shops, Craig's List, or ? and promise yourself you won't purchase until you've done your homework. Do your best to stick to it!

Try a professional:

Decide if you need help with your challenges. Working with a decorator can save dollars in the long run. Listen to the ideas and take the ones that work for your design plan. Do your best to stick to it!

LOVE YOUR HOME

In February, signs of love are all around us. It's the perfect time to infuse a little of that affection into your rooms. Here are a few SMART tips to help you play cupid to your home. The results may be just the thing you need to liven up your space and sweeten up your life.

Saturate the air with soothing smells:

Introduce some herb scented candles or boil fresh herbs in a pot to both moisturize and atomize the room. Pop for an oil infuser and essential oils to calm even the most savage beast of a day.

Make a cozy cuddling corner:

Position a comfy chair near a sunny window or roaring fireplace. Pile it with pillows and a sumptuous throw. Whether it's with your sweetie or man's best friend, get ready for some serious snuggling.

Add some chocolate:

Fill a vintage jar or glass apothecary with your favorite decadent delights. Drag out grandma's crystal serving dish and heap it with foil wrapped goodies to treat yourself when you need a pick-me-up. Don't trifle with the truffles – indulge.

Re-direct the lighting:

Nothing says romance more than ambient lighting. Overhead ceiling lights or recessed cans will never replace the need for table-top lamps. The soft glow they add to the room is a necessity to create a calm, come-hither mood.

Tiptoe thru the tulips:

When you think "love" - think "flowers". Show your affection by filling a foyer, kitchen, bedroom or bath with fresh cut florals. It's almost an unwritten guarantee they will bring a smile to your face and a song to your heart.

RED ENERGY

Valentine's Day reminds us it's time to L-O-V-E your house again. Here are some SMART tips to inspire your *heart* by infusing R-E-D energy into your home.

Spread the love:

Put *heart* into your decorating by adding some to your space: heart-shaped pillows, themed artwork or coffee-table books, polished stones or a love-ly heart printed throw for snuggling in front of the fire.

Make a statement:

Have the *heart* to paint it red? Energize a foyer accent wall or the front door. Reinvent an old Ottoman, chair, bookcase or red-washed a vintage trunk.

Accessorize with passion:

Select vintage objets d'art that speak to your *heart* and scatter them throughout your home. A lacquered tray, old books, and tiny treasures will pop even more if they're red.

Red-Up the Powder Room:

Heart-colored red walls will make the room seem dramatic and important. Not that brave? Than pep it up with red rugs, towels, curtains (shower & window) or paint the mirror frame, medicine chest or even the tired sink cabinet.

Trim it:

Adding a little red ribbon or fabric can give *heart* to the over-looked. Trim a lampshade, curtains, pillow, coverlet, bed skirt, towels, window shade – get creative!

COMPANY'S COMING

The Holidays are approaching and you know what that means—company's coming! Add to the welcome of the season by creating a "haven" for guests and not just a place to flop for the night☺ Here are some SMART tips to turn your Guest room into a REST room.

Start with the sleeping area:

- Bring an extra chair into the room to allow guests to unwind or read without having to sit on the bed.
- Empty a drawer or two for smaller clothing items. If they are using their suitcase, provide a luggage holder or space for easy access.
- Make closet space available for all their hanging clothes, and don't forget extra hangers.
- Provide your guests with all the electronic niceties: an alarm clock, radio, reading lamp and small nightlight. If there is a television in the room, be sure they have their own remote control with instructions.

Make the bed:

- Use crisp, fresh linens. Consider purchasing bedding just for guest usage.
- Tuck in some lavender sachet under the pillow for restful sleep.
- Provide extra blankets and pillows in the room or nearby for easy access.

Add special touches:

- A basket, box or tray will provide a place for your guests to put their keys, jewelry, glasses or other easily misplaced items.
- Put out some reading and writing materials: books, magazines, paper and pens.
- Have a fresh flower arrangement or flowering in plant in the room to add to the welcoming atmosphere.

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Remember the bathroom:

- Create a “hotel” vibe by providing toiletries your guest may have forgotten: toothbrush & paste, shampoo & rinse, lotion & deodorant, extra facial tissue & tp and a new bar of soap.
- Hang a plush, clean robe on a hook in the bathroom or folded spa-like on the bed. Include inexpensive bath slippers as a perk.
- Be sure there are plenty of clean towels available. Consider providing a set of different colored towels for each guest.
- Candles or air freshener are a must in guest bathrooms.

Treat them like family:

- Leave bottled water or a carafe with a glass near the bed for late night thirsties.
- Consider giving extended-stay guests a house key (and provide the alarm & gate codes, if applicable).
- Show your guests where you keep your coffee, tea, breakfast and snack items in case they are early risers or have a midnight craving.
- Place a welcome note and some wrapped candies on their pillow to let them know you're glad they came.

DECK THE HALLS

Ho!Ho!Ho! Here are some SMART tips to deck the halls for the Ho!Ho!Ho!-lidays.

Satisfy a sweet tooth:

Decorate with *Ye Ole Candy Store* inspiration. Fill a variety of jars with classic holiday colored candies, like peppermint sticks and ribbon candy, wrapped or loose and group together in your foyer, on an occasional table or use them to trim the mantel.

Mix contemporary and classic:

If your tree is bedazzled with antique ornaments, mix in garlands of metallic silver & gold discs, Mardi Gras-style colored beads or geometric shapes of colored paper.

Add tradition-inspired items:

Dig out the centerpieces the kids made in school, find Grandmas old candleholders, stack a pile of old books and top with a framed pic of the kiddies & Santa. Fill an old trunk or chest or some stacked vintage suitcases with fresh Poinsettia plants.

Return to simple pleasures:

Create postcard or holiday card art – find fun vintage postcards or last year's saved holiday cards and hang garland-style w/ ribbon from your mantle, tree, banister or doorway, frame singularly or fashion them into a collage.

Try a unique color scheme:

Punch up your décor with pops of fuchsia or chartreuse. Introduce the color in small doses: a throw or pillows on the couch, festive trim around a lampshade, or even gift wrap on the packages. Or go for the gusto and use these fun colors everywhere, instead of the more traditional red and green.

ORNAMENTAL DECOR

Have some extra ornaments that just won't make it on the tree? Here are some SMART tips for decorating with those left-over ornaments.

Surround a tray:

Fill a favorite tray with candles, than surround it with ornaments....stick to a color or theme for unification; red and green, snowflake print, all one color, silver, vintage etc.

Make a wreath:

Decorate your front door, hang above the mantel or in the foyer. Glue old ornaments on a styrofoam form and accent with silk holly or ribbon.

Add as accents:

Use outdoors – line flower boxes, hang from trees or large potted plants. Create tie backs for dining room chairs and hang an ornament on back. Add to your banister garland for sparkle.

Re-purpose in unexpected ways:

Hang from light fixtures (chandeliers) for sparkle and color. Gather a grouping of misc. candlesticks (all glass, brass, silver) and instead of a candle, top with a colorful ornament – for dining table, mantle, foyer or sofa table.

Table arrangement fun:

Put vintage ornaments in a large apothecary jar or glass bowl, Mix with live greenery or use large and small red ornaments to look like “berries”. Crate Individual centerpieces – glue and ornament to a small, mirrored disc (avail at craft stores) remove the hangers and fill with a bit of water and add live flowers or greenery. Use for a place card – write name in silver or gold ink pen or hand a nametag from the ornament loop attached to ribbon wrapped around a table napkin

NOEL NOSTALGIA

Doesn't it seem like we need to put some nostalgia back into the Holiday Decorating? In these fast-paced times, I invite you to slow things down a bit. Try to capture some of that childhood spirit with these good old-fashioned SMART tips.

Start with smells & sounds:

Decorate with fresh pine boughs and colorful poinsettias. Live in a warm climate? Seasonal scented candles work well also.

Simmer cinnamon sticks and cloves in a pot on the stove. The smell is divine and the steam adds humidity during a dry season.

Nothing beats the aroma of fresh baked cookies. No time? Buy pre-made cookie rolls, slice and pop into the oven on a moments notice.

Dig out your favorite Holiday music and play it on the radio, iPod, piano or just hum along.

Make a family craft:

String popcorn and cranberries for simple and decorative garlands.

Create a wreath easily by adding your favorite items to a Styrofoam form; greenery, holly, wrapped candies, ornaments, pinecones & berries. Add accents of jingle bells, snowbirds or silk poinsettias. Trim with glitter, or spray on a little gold, silver or "snow" flocking.

Decorate a gingerbread house. Do-it-yourself kits make this craft simple enough so even the little ones can join in the fun.

Revisit your childhood by cutting snowflakes from white paper and hanging them in all of your windows.

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Add a little sentiment:

Bring out some photos of holidays past, frame for the season and place around the house.

Create a display of vintage toys. Dolls, teddy bears, trains, rocking horses, antique toys, wooden blocks, drums, horns, etc. make wonderful seasonal decorations. Display on shelves, mantels, around the tree, on or near the television. Place groupings in corners, hallways, or anywhere you want a little nostalgia.

Make a centerpiece from an assortment of old family ornaments arranged in clear glass vases of varying shapes and sizes. Place the vases together on a large mirror interspersed with votive candles for dramatic impact and plenty of sparkle.

Everyone has some sentimental old holiday books. Gather all the family's favorites and display them on coffee tables, shelves, in bathrooms, etc.

Remember the less fortunate:

Gather unused blankets or old winter coats and take to a homeless shelter.

Assemble a food basket or two for families in need.

Do you know someone who is alone for the Holiday? Invite them to dinner.

Donate toys for tots or time to the elderly in convalescent homes.

Take time for tasty treats:

Include steamy soups as part of your quick-fix, yet healthful, holiday fare.

Make a hearty stew in the crock pot and enjoy with crunchy, rustic bread.

Have a cookie exchange with friends —less work and more cookies for your family to enjoy.

Brew up a beverage of the season; cocoa, grog, spiced tea, cider, mulled wine, or your favorite hot toddy.

BONUS SMART TIPS!!

BRING ON THE
BONUS TIPS!



DECORATING BY INSTINCT

New Year's Resolution #1: Get decorating! Follow the SMART steps in my book, "Decorating by Instinct" (<http://www.smartredesign.com>) and see how easy it is, when your instincts become your resolutions.

Start by identifying your style:

Knowing your distinct style will provide the foundation for all your design decisions and help avoid impulse buying.

Make a list of your challenges:

When you take the time to identify specific line items you intend to tackle, it helps you stay focused.

Activate your plan:

Prioritize your list of challenge areas, then devise a timetable to get decorating effectively and efficiently.

Rearrange, Reupholster, Replace:

Be ruthless and determine which items on your list fall into one of these three categories.

Tie your look together:

It's the finishing touches that finalize that designer look. Take it personally, take it from room to room and take it easy.

SMALL SPACES – BIG TRICKS

Do you live in a small home, or does it just feel that way? Here are some SMART tips to make small spaces feel bigger.

Start with creating a foyer “landing strip” for items usually dropped at the door:

- Outerwear: Provide a coat rack or vintage hall tree if no closet available.
- A flat surface: Place a large dish or tray on a small table, chest or bookshelf to hold keys, mail & misc. small stuff.
- Shoe Shack: Leave some shelf space in the cabinet or add a decorative covered basket to act as a collection bin at the family shoe-dumping spot.

Make windows look larger:

- Don't spare the rod: Use curtain rods that are wider than your windows. When drapes are open, the entire window will be exposed, bringing more light into the room and giving a much larger appearance to the window space.
- Fool the eye: Add a similar-sized mirror next to a small window to unify off-balance window walls. Use the same window covering to give the illusion of another window.
- Naked windows: If you have a fabulous view out and nobody can see in, just leave the windows bare. Less really can be more when curtain-clutter makes a window seem visually smaller.

Add more light:

- Table lamps: Plenty of table lamps will illuminate even the smallest room to its full advantage.
- Uplights: Use them generously to flush out dark corners and open up the space.
- Clean the windows twice a year: Nothing says big & bright like and abundance of natural light.

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Reconsider your furniture:

- **Go big:** It's a common misconception that small spaces can't handle large furniture. A strategically placed over-sized piece (like a sectional) can make a small room feel more cozy.
- **Multifunction:** Look for pieces that serve two or three purposes to free up cluttered spaces and provide storage where needed in smaller rooms.
- **Think legs:** Keeping pieces like sofas, chests, bookshelves and beds lifted off the floor with legs you can see. "Breathing space" below heavier pieces, creates the illusion of spaciousness and makes the room feel visually lighter.

Try camouflage:

- **Paint:** Hide less attractive architectural features (like wimpy trim molding) and functional items (like radiators) by painting them the same color as the walls.
- **Cover it:** Hide unattractive flooring underneath a beautiful area rug. Cracked tiles, scratched hardwood, peeling linoleum, worn carpeting all disappear in an instant for much less than the cost of replacement.
- **Mirror it:** Mirrors enlarge a space more than any other item. Place across from a window to bring the outside in and widen a room visually. Use a 6ft. floor mirror to double the size of a small wall and make it look taller.

ORGANIZE THAT OFFICE

It's difficult to work in a cluttered, chaotic office space. Here are some SMART tips to help you get the jobs done more efficiently and effectively.

Start by de-cluttering your desk:

Do you know where everything is in your office space? Does your desktop say disorganization? Does the clutter interfere with your efficiency? Can you put your hand on a pen and paper instantly?

- Vow to clear the desktop with stackers of plastic, wire, rattan or metal.
- Add attractive file holders in leather or wicker baskets
- Indulge in a matching desk set; you'll be more inclined to keep your desk tidy.

Make your space function better:

Analyze how you function in your office. What isn't working right now? Too many loose papers not filed? Books stacked in corners? Files lying on the floor? Not enough workspace?

- Make a list of what you need to organize your space more efficiently-more file cabinets? Book shelves? Extra table or credenza?
- Make a pledge to purchase those items with your income tax refund.

Arrange the furniture for better function:

Do you have too much furniture in your small space?

- Consolidate or remove excess items to give you extra room.
- Consider a modular desk unit or all-in-one office armoire free up floor space.

Does your room need to perform double-duty?

- Customize a little used closet as an efficient desk area or to add storage.
- Adding an extra chair or two will allow the kids to use the space as well.
- Make space for a daybed, futon or Murphy bed for any sleep-over guests.

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Re-Locate the annoying wires:

Tripping over wires everywhere you walk in the room? Is the stack of twisted wires behind the electronics larger than your pile of laundry? Are the wires ready to take over the room?

- Move the desk or re-arrange the desktop computer so wires are against the wall & floor molding.
- Consider painting PVC tubing the color of your flooring and/or walls and thread the wires through to hold them all neatly in place.
- Hide wires behind a desk top plant or large, potted floor plant.

Try some light on the subject:

Fumbling to find things in the dark? Is your desktop draped in shadows? Do you have three sources of lighting in your office?

- General lighting illuminates the entire room Be sure you have good overhead lighting, and avoid florescent whenever possible.
- Always include task lighting to directly illuminate your work surface. Add a table lamp or two and see what a difference it makes.
- Ambient lighting helps too. Picture lights, uplights, and small lamps tucked in bookcases or on top of file cabinets add to the mood as well as highlighting a specific surface or dark corner.

HOT TRENDS

No matter the weather, design trends are always changing. Here are some SMART tips to let you in on what's *hot* and what's not.

Start with a statement rug:

Attention-commanding statement rugs, in fun colors and unique patterns, can liven up a neutral palette and add some punch to an otherwise hum-drum room. In the practical department, they protect wood floors from scratches and spills and serve as a great anchor item for any seating grouping.

Mind your marbles:

When it comes to mixing patterns, marbleize motifs are joining the ranks of tribal prints, ikat, and wide stripes. The flowing pattern is a softer alternative to hardline geometrics and often incorporates several colors, making it ideal for eye-catching artwork and fabrics.

Arrange an art gallery wall:

An update on the similarly-framed photo trend, a wall of treasured art, photos, frames and fun curiosities will make a room shine with your personality and style.

Rustic charm reads new:

Today's new country look of Farmhouse Chic offers something different than chickens and geese. It's still rustic and charming, but with a little more flair: think displays of white enamelware or chunky green glass, colorful mix-n-match chairs, dry brushed to give that worn look, and barn-wood harvest tables and sliding doors.

Try going tribal:

Speaking of trends, Tribal is one print that's always *hot*. Usually geometric in styling, tribal patterns embrace angular motifs in a more traditional way. You can find them in muted, earthy tones or brilliantly colored jeweled tones. Try out the look on a rug, pillow, or tapestry as a juxtaposition in a traditional space.

ENTER HERE

Are visitors turned-off when they approach your front door? Here are some SMART tips to change your entry from blah – to beautiful.

Start at the beginning:

Trim back overgrown foliage and remove dead plants from the front of your house. Give the porch a good hose down and add pots of fall flowers. Seed the lawn for colder weather.

Make a statement:

Consider painting your front door a rich color. Persimmon, Rustic Red or Forest Green creates a bold fall statement that will be a year-round treat to the eyes.

Add welcoming accents:

Bring the indoors out to the front porch. Big or small, create a spot to sit with a chair, bench or painted stool. Accent with a side table and lamp. Add a potted plant or harvest basket filled with foliage or pinecones and your vignette is complete.

Revitalize the entry:

Is the door knob tarnished and dull? Does your porch light fixture need replacing? Are the dust webs overwhelming the welcome? Is the door mat welcoming or worn and dirty? You know what to do!

Texturize it:

Small trees in matching pots, such as scented pines, colorful Japanese maples or starter birch trees add texture and softness to a stark porch. Entwine with Twinkle lights for holiday drama.

STAGE TO SELL

90% of potential buyers preview house photos online before they'll even consider a look-see. If you're not sure what it really needs to attract positive attention, here are some SMART tips to help you get your house Staged and ready to sell *fast!*

See, Sniff, Sort:

- See your property as a prospective buyer would.
- Sniff your space. If a buyer can smell it...you can't sell it!
- Sort through your "stuff" and de-clutter before putting your home on the market.

Make a plan:

- Move from outdoors to indoors, room to room and make a list of items that need repairing, refreshing or replacing.
- Make a list of supplies you need to execute your preparation plan.
- Make a list of things you need to remove for your staging- then sell, pack, donate or throw away the items.

Activate your plan:

- Set a realistic timetable to prepare and complete your staging projects.
- Begin by de-cluttering *everything* inside & outside the home.
- Enlist help from friends and relatives and/or hire professionals to do the rest: such as Home Stager, plumber, electrician, gardener, painter, etc.

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Rearrange & Redesign to sell:

- Redesign to create an open & airy look in the home. Replace or purchase lamps and lighting so each room is fully illuminated...even during the day!
- Rearrange your furniture for optimum traffic flow- remove excess pieces that block easy access to doors, closets, windows, etc.
- Remove valuables, collections, religious and personal photos and items.

Timing Is everything:

- Complete the majority of your home preparations BEFORE you list it.
- Complete the remainder of the preparations BEFORE you hold *any* open houses; broker or public.
- Complete a final "tweaking" just BEFORE your open house. Call in a pro to "set-the-stage" before you open the doors to potential buyers.

SIMPLE CENTERPIECES

Looking for some *fast* and simple Fall centerpiece ideas - using items you can find in and around your home? With these SMART tips, you can whip up one of these centerpieces just minutes before the guests arrive.

Start with an interesting container:

- Vintage vase or teapot
- Water pitcher- clear glass, ceramic, silver or pewter
- Lidded apothecary jar or pottery crock
- Soup Tureen or oversized bowl

Make a statement:

- Use a very large, single item for impact
- Group together smaller items to create one large focal piece
- Position “centerpieces” at various locations throughout your house

Add natural items as filler:

- Acorns
- Artificial or real fruits and/or vegetables
- Berries - cran or other seasonal berries from outdoors
- Beans or seeds
- Branches from trees or seasonal bushes
- Cinnamon sticks
- Coffee beans
- Nuts - in the shells
- Pinecones

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Refine it even more by adding:

- Candles
- Branches - bare or w/leaves
- Pussy Willow
- Tall Grasses, dried sticks or wheat
- Seasonal flowers

Turn up the impact by anchoring with a:

- Stunning-looking tray
- Vintage plate or serving platter
- Gold or Silver charger or sparkly placemat
- To-die-for embroidered table runner

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

Thanks for letting me share some of my SMART seasonal tips with you today ... and a few more just to top things off.

I hope they have inspired you enough to put some of them into *action* right now. And remember, decorating should be fun!

Happy Redesigning!

Marcia Smart

P.S. If you enjoyed these tips, you may want to consider my other E-Book, *ACCESSORIZING WITH STYLE* or my paperback book, *DECORATING BY INSTINCT*. And if you want to try your hand at use-what-you-have redesign, to give any room in your home a SMART new look, my DVD & Workbook set, *REDESIGN-LIKE-A-PRO*, will get you decorating like a true professional!

Marcia Smart's –SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips

MEET THE AUTHOR



Considered a leading interior redesign and home staging expert, Marcia Smart, owner of Smart Interior Styling, has been a featured guest on Radio programs around the country, including Martha Stewart Living SIRIUS 112, KRLA talk Radio and Blog Talk Radio, to name a few. Her work has also been highlighted in Sunset, Entrepreneur Startups and Decorating Spaces magazines.

Marcia has appeared on HGTV, Channel 7 News "Consumer's Reports", created set design for KTLA and acted as spokesperson for Linens 'N Things' East Coast "Get Inspired" grand opening campaign.



A pioneer in the Interior Redesign and Home Staging industry, she was one of the founding members and served as Executive Director of the former International Redesign organization, *Interior Redesign Industry Specialists (I.R.I.S.)*. Her training and experience as an Accredited Home Staging® Professional™ and I.R.I.S. Certified Instructor, gives students and homeowners the best Home Staging and Interior Redesign education and services possible to help prepare any home to "Love It" or "List It".



Having achieved the designation of Certified Seminar Leader, Marcia has the privilege of conducting professional training seminars and decorating workshops throughout the country.

Smart Interior Styling has won the **Star Award for 2015**, based on the independent research of *The Pulse of the City News*, for excellent customer focus, and also been recognized in the **Honors Edition** of the Manchester Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women 2007 registry.



Marcia's Design Philosophy:

I embrace the fact that each one of us is unique, and I believe that your home should be a reflection of who YOU are, what YOU like and where YOU have been in life. No matter what your style, budget, or where you live, YOU deserve to have that well-decorated look for your home. Ultimately, my design goal is:

"To give your home a SMART new look through education, validation and imagination."

Feel free to contact Marcia anytime!

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