

Resale can mean real savings when decorating on a budget

By **CARRIE BOURDAGES**
Special to the Record-Eagle

When decorating or redecorating a home, imagination is actually more important than money. One way to spark your imagination without burning through a lot of money is to shop at second-hand furnishing stores.

"What can be really fun is finding unique occasional pieces, tables and chairs and getting creative with them using paint or stencils," said interior decorator Ann Freckelton, ASID. "They can make great conversation pieces."

Freckelton, who has been a professional decorator for 25 years and operates her own business, ACF Designs, suggested looking at popular home magazines for specific projects and ideas.

The other advantage of shopping secondhand: finding quality furniture and accessories for significantly less money than new ones.

"The cost savings can be incredible, especially if you look for name brands," Freckelton said. "People get tired of things, even though they're in perfect condition."

She recommended looking for one outstanding piece as a focal point in a room, especially when decorating on a budget.

"The best buys secondhand are large pieces like armoires, secretaries or entertainment units," she said.

Buying upholstered items can offer particularly significant savings. Freckelton said she has suggested clients purchase couches, for example, and use slipcovers as creative decorating tools.

When looking for couches or chairs secondhand, the most important tip is to look at the structure of the piece, said Carol Rose, manager of Women's Resource Center.

"A couch can look great, but be poorly built," Rose said.

For various reasons, some sofas are priced as low as \$65.

"We get some wonderful buys in this town," she said. "Like Ethan Allen furniture that comes in after someone has redecorated."

Rose, who oversees more than 3,000 square feet of donated house furnishings at the Women's Resource Center, said another important tip to secondhand buyers is to take time shopping and check back by phone to see if a sought-after item has arrived.

"We have an enormous turnover rate here. Things come and go in the same day," she said. "So if there's something specific you're looking for, give it some time."

While Rose can't hold items, she can let customers know what has come in and out of the store, and does so for regular customers.

Secondhand shopping doesn't have a season, but the biggest quantity of items are available from spring to fall, said Jeff Stolarski, owner of Riverside Resale Furnishings.

"January or February are our slowest turnover times," Stolarski said. "But we get and deliver items consistently all year long."

Stolarski, who accepts furniture from a 150-mile radius — although he said there is enough furniture coming in from the immediate area to keep his store well-stocked — does not have special cautions for resale buyers.

"Second-hand furniture is what it is — no warranties, no hidden pricing — that's the nice thing about it," he said.

Eddie Brown, owner of

Ebb Tide Resale Shop, said consignment shopping provides a big variety of home furnishing accessories at a standard half the cost of new ones.

"A lot of my stuff looks new," Brown said. "People who change colors in their home or redecorate regularly bring their old items to me to sell."

Brown said she has regular customers that she calls her "budget decorators," who have figured out that resale shopping not only saves them money, but is also an adventure.

"You never know what you're going to find...one-of-a-kind knick knacks, lamps...if you like unique things, secondhand shopping is the best way to find them," she said.

"I have regular customers who have gorgeous homes and come here to find the funky items that add the right touch to a room a painting, a lamp or a chair," Brown said. "They can't find them anywhere else."

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Ann Freckelton,
Interior decorator,
ASID



Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

Consignment shops like Traverse City's Riverside Resale Furnishings are one way to save money when redecorating the home, whether you are bringing in items or looking for some new furnishings. Aside from economizing, shoppers sometimes spot an eclectic find.

A new look for the new year

By **MELISSA CLARAMUNT**
Special to the Record-Eagle

The new year seems like the perfect time to give your home a new look. But realistically, after the holiday shopping frenzy, spending money on home decor probably isn't high on your priority list.

What are some ways to add style to your surroundings without depleting your budget?

For some, home decor may involve your own skills and handiwork. According to Nancy Drew, a Michigan artist, designer and author, the fun begins "when you give yourself permission to play."

If you are gearing up to the task of putting your own creative energy and artistic talent to work in your home, Drew recommends some preparation. Does your home need a new look or a new feel? Consider the feelings that your home exudes and be sure that they make you feel welcome and comfortable in the living space.

Next, exercise the act of cleaning and purging. Decide what should stay and what needs to go. Separate items that could be used by others and make a trip to your local Goodwill or thrift shop.

Then, with a clean home and an uncluttered mind, find a place to enjoy some quiet, such as your local bookstore. Enjoy a cup of coffee and browse through magazines that offer design ideas and styles.

In her book, "The Artful Spirit," Drew offers several tips for ways to take that creative leap. Drew believes that achieving a fresh look can be as easy as dolling up a picture frame, lamp and lampshade or giving a trunk, table or chair a

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Martha Stewart's Everyday Collection offers affordable new home wares for the kitchen, bedroom and bath.

built to hold anything from electronic equipment to those precious collections.

Cindi Franco, interior designer and owner of Cindi Franco's Cool Stuff in Boyne City, believes that one-of-a-kind items can give your rooms new zest. Franco said that her clients sometimes choose to have her completely redecorate with new furniture, wall and window treatments and accessories.

On the other hand, others may simply want a new look without purchasing anything new. These clients will give her complete access to their home's contents, from furniture to home decor pieces, allowing her to create a new look using existing components.

And it's easy to shop for

affordable accessories that will help achieve a new look. With Web sites, on-line shopping, upscale lines in discount stores, catalogs and in-store planning and design centers, new styles are more attainable than ever.

For example, the Martha Stewart Everyday Collection at Kmart offers everything for bath to bedroom and kitchen to garden. Here, bed linens can be purchased to coordinate with towels and shower curtain in the adjoining bath or the dining room's table and glassware with the kitchen's cookware.

You can then tie the room together with a coordinating wall or ceiling color from the Martha Stewart Everyday Colors paint line, recently enhanced with Tintable Ceiling Paint.



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