

Rearranging Can Become Redecorating

BY LISA TROSIEN

When was the last time you took a long, hard look at the way your apartment home models were decorated? Maybe it is time to rethink using that Southwestern style in the two-bedroom.

Or perhaps some members of the leasing team are really, really bored with showing the same old models that have not had a decorating facelift in years.

If the thought of redecorating is attractive, and the potential cost to do so has postponed any action, well, think again.

There is a new breed of interior decorator who not only is cost effective, but also uses furniture and decorative elements that are already in a property.

Redecorators, also known as interior refiners, redesigners and stagers can take existing décor elements and rearrange them to breathe new life into an oh-so-tired model.

The first step is to schedule a consultation to review the existing décor. The interior refiner then starts big, suggesting wall coverings and paint, working their way to the smallest details such as accessories and small touches, helping to make the model look brand new.

At a reasonable price, consultants can work their way through models in a matter of days—not weeks—because they do not have to order any new elements. Their ability to simply rearrange existing items will create an entirely new look and feel.

Bristol Club Apartments in Downers Grove, Ill., is one example of a community that needed a new look for its models. The market was soft, the budget was tight and the staff knew its models were not exactly hitting the mark with their demographics. They hired an interior redecorator who gave them incredible



results in just a few days.

In one particular instance, the stark black-and-white, contemporary loft model was completely transformed. In its place, the redecorator incorporated a brightly painted model with purple and yellow accent walls and brightly colored furniture to match (see photo). Bristol Club teamed its redecorator with designers from Brook Furniture Rental Co. to maximize their redecoration.

“We saved money, created an entirely new look and re-energized the staff all at the same time,” said Garth Doering of Penobscot Management, who manages Bristol Club.

For communities that cannot afford a redecorator, don’t despair. There are other extremely reasonable options out there.

First, visit a local furniture rental company, which will have a staff that is trained in the selection of interior design packages that will match any particular demographic group, as well as your budget.

Second, visit the local library, bookstore or Internet retailer to find some great books on redecorating. One great resource is “Use What You Have Decorating,” by Lauri Ward. It covers her 10 secrets of great decorating, including proper furniture placement,

creating a balanced look and the correct use of light. ■

Internet Resources

Redecorate.com

Includes wonderful “before” and “after” photos

i-d-d.com/designers/redesigners.htm

A nationwide directory of redesigners

decorate-redecorate.com

Features ideas that are easy to do

iahsp.com

International Assn. of Home Staging Professionals

interior-redesign-directory.com

Interior redesign directory

How Much Does Redecorating Cost?

Design consultants charge an average of \$100 per hour or a flat fee, which varies by the size of the apartment. Prices will range from \$3,000-\$4,000 for a one-bedroom and \$6,000-\$8,000 for a three-bedroom.

Demographics, apartment grade and location also figure in the cost. Starting from scratch, a modest two-bedroom/two-bath for a B property in a smaller city would be \$18,000-\$25,000. Leasing furniture or working with existing furniture lowers the cost. Most reputable decorators can create a high-quality look no matter the budget size.

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