



Do It Yourself

BY DENISE O'CONNOR OF OPTIMISE DESIGN

With summer breaks approaching, you might be thinking of embarking on a DIY project or planning some home improvements. Whether you decide to do it yourself or outsource, there are dozens of simple things that will transform your home without spending a fortune.

When we undertake a renovation project we always try to work with clients existing furniture wherever possible – reupholstering or painting existing pieces can lead to great savings. We had one client who had a set of dining chairs that didn't work with her new colour scheme – we suggested reupholstering in a variety of bold colours to tie in with a painting in the room. The end result was far better than anything we could have sourced and far less expensive than replacing the chairs.

Something as simple as repainting a room can have a dramatic effect on the look and ambience of the space. This is something anyone could have a go at doing themselves.

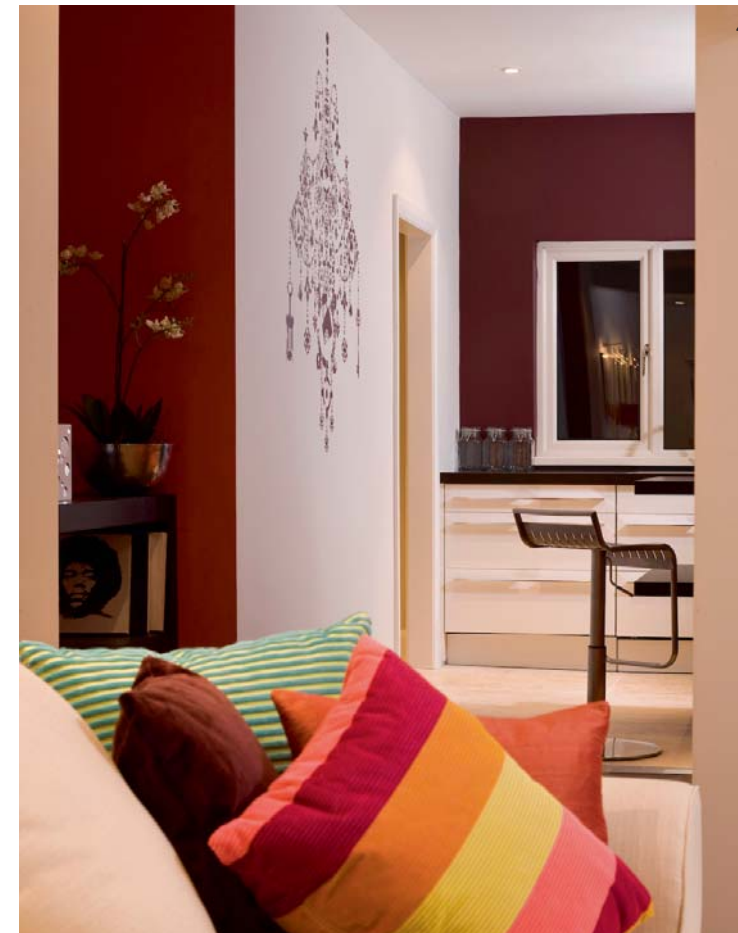
When it comes to painting, getting the perfect shade can often be tricky. To help you get just the right colour, pick up a range of sample pots in varying tones of the same colour ranging from light to dark. Resist the temptation to paint directly onto the walls as painting onto an already coloured surface can greatly affect the final colour of the paint. Instead, paint each colour on a piece of white card. This way, you can hold up the card in a number of areas of the room to see how the colour looks in different lights.

If you plan to do the painting yourself, make sure your surface is clean and dust free, and lightly sand it to get a 'key'. This is by far the most labour intensive part of the job, particularly with wood work, but it's essential if you want to get a good finish. And make sure you choose the right product and tools for the job. Matt paints require different brushes and rollers to gloss and eggshells, so ask the shop assistants for advice before you buy. And bear in mind that quality brushes and rollers will give a better finish and last longer so it's worth paying that little bit extra.

Don't just stop at your walls. We have had a number of clients who have opted to paint their kitchen units rather than replace them. The result is a brand new kitchen at a fraction of the cost. Do bear in mind that to be able to successfully paint existing kitchen units they will need to be solid timber. We would also recommend that you



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get a kitchen company to do the painting or spraying as they will be able to carry out any minor adjustments such as changing cupboards to drawers or upgrading handles at the same time. And for those of you who are more skilled with a paint brush why not have a go at stencilling. Crown have teamed up with the Stencil Library to offer a fantastic range of stencils that are a very easy way to create real impact. We used a stunning stencil of a chandelier in a kitchen to create a very effective feature wall.

There is a lot to be said for DIY but be wary of apparent cost savings. If you have to take a week off work to do it how much has that cost you? Work out what your own time is worth and weight it up against the cost of tradesmen.

1 We reupholstered these dining chairs in a variety of bold colours to tie in with a painting in the room. The end result was far better than anything we could have sourced and far less expensive than replacing the chairs. **2** When it comes to painting don't just stop at your walls. We have had a number of clients who have opted to paint their kitchen units rather than replace them. The result is a brand new kitchen at a fraction of the cost. **3** Painting existing pieces can lead to great savings. This dining table and chairs were given a new lease of life with a coat of paint. **4** And for those of you who are more skilled with a paint brush why not have a go at stencilling – Crown have teamed up with the Stencil Library to offer a fantastic range of stencils which are a very easy way to create real impact.

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