

New home, new look for the holidays

By Jane Muller

Abstract: Decorating tips for the first Christmas in a new home.

The first Christmas in a new home will bring the challenge of decking the new halls and rooms to compliment the decor that's been so carefully selected during the building process.

Another challenge could be budget, considering the recent expense of purchasing the home and moving your household. For interior decorator and home stager Colleen O'Hara, budget should always be a consideration when decorating for the holidays.

"It's been my mantra for years - you don't need to spend lots of money," says the decorator who offers advice as a television guest.

Even if a new home owner wants to start new with holiday décor, there are ways to achieve a festive, even glamorous look just right for that first Christmas. Mirrors, Champaign and wine glasses, crystal bowls and candle holders that you already own can join the celebrations as repurposed starting points, according to O'Hara. Here are some more tips from this holiday décor expert whose many projects throughout the year include decorating model homes for Marz Homes in the Hamilton area.

Celebrate spray paint: O'Hara swears by the transformative effects of a simple can of spray paint. Dress Styrofoam balls for the season with a hit of gold or silver paint. Drab, grey branches trimmed from your backyard get the glam treatment and basic plant urns can come to the party with a coat of shiny paint. Read the label to ensure you have the right paint for the surface you are working with, advises O'Hara.

One colour fits all: Keep it simple by choosing a single colour like gold or red. Arrange gold candles on mirror discs, available at dollar stores and purchase a package of bargain balls to fill a bowl. Carry red throughout the décor with candles and red berries served up in shining stemware, recommends the designer.

Focus: Find a focal point in your dining and living areas, O'Hara suggests. Take a mirror off the wall and place it on the dining room table and use it to reflect a collection of candles. A stack of metallic finish or red gift boxes with tassels can dress up a coffee or side table. Another option says O'Hara, is to bring a stack of books bound in red into the holiday mix.

Tie one on: Ribbons and bows give gifts a lift and they can do the same for holiday decorating. Create napkin rings with gold or silver ribbons tied in a bow, says O'Hara. She adds that tucking in a feather will add glamour to the table settings.

Quick change: Purchase accent pillows or pillow covers, suited to the season either by virtue of their pattern, colour or extra holiday bling like beaded accents and tassels. In the bathroom, mix some green or red towels in with your standard cream and white. A red berry wreath hung on a cabinet door provides a simple seasonal surprise.

Nature's beauty: A never-fail choice is greenery. Fresh boughs can be used in many ways, from framing a front door to donning a mantle to filling an urn. A collection of pine cones, a bowl of walnuts and some fake snow sprinkled around holiday vignettes.

"Don't over-think things. We tend to over-think things and that shouldn't happen when we're decorating," the seasoned decorator suggests.

To see her work, visit her website at <http://www.maximumstaging.com>, or www.marzhomes.com. Check out videos of Marz Homes models and more at DailyWebTV.com, where you can learn something new every day.