

# What Your Decorator Knows...

## That You Should Know Too.

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**T**he question that I am most often asked is: "How much will it cost me to remodel/redecorate my home?"

The answer is very simple. The cost of redecorating or remodelling is really your decision as a home-owner. The question you need to ask is: "How much am I willing to invest in making my home more attractive and livable?"

Once you have a budget that is appropriate for you, a qualified design professional can help you to best allocate those funds. With a large budget, a designer can virtually offer a limitless range of materials, custom furnishings and structural options. This could include window, door and wall changes as well as complete room expansions and additions. On a smaller budget, however, there is still a wonderful array of well-priced products and furnishings available which your designer knows. The choice is yours; for example, your designer could purchase for you an antique oil painting or a less expensive reproduction or print.

Here are some other questions that you can ask yourself regarding your project:

1. How long do you plan to live in the home?
2. Is resale value of the property important, or is this home to be "just for you?"
3. Is this a vacation or second home?
4. Do you want to improve your property with a remodel encompassing, for instance, built-in cabinetry etc., or do you want to invest in furnishings that you can own and take with you?

In ensuing articles this year, I will be going on particular questions which

you send to me. This month, our readers' question is:

*Q: When I redecorate, what "style" should I choose? ... I really do not know the difference.*

*A:* This is a very "Tricky" question and I will tell you why. The term "style" is not really specific. In a literal sense, "style" could indicate a certain period, location and/or genre; (i.e. Early 18th. Century French Country) or, in a looser sense, "style" could refer to an element of tastefulness; (i.e. How a well-placed Picasso sketch can compliment an 18th. Century antique). For you, the home-owner, I would suggest that you think in terms of "feelings" and special pieces or collections that you would like to have surrounding you in your home. These little "clues" that you can identify will help you to determine the "ambience" of your home; and then, with a skilled designer, you can develop the "style" that is right and feels comfortable for you and your family. Another important factor in "style" selection is the existing architecture. Admittedly, some homes have much more detail and thus a stronger predominant style than others, but regardless, virtually every home has elements that give it a "leaning" in a certain style direction. With ample time and unlimited funds, any style can be completely "transformed," however, if budget is a concern, it is always easier and more cost-effective to "go with the flow" and utilize the existing forms of the architecture as much as possible. In putting together your final "style" I would like to mention that, perhaps now more than ever, "eclecticism" is quite acceptable and very fashionable; (The world-traveller look, if you



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will). While this look allows you a wonderful degree of freedom and creativity, it also requires extreme attention to balance and visual composition... I can say with great assurance, that there is typically a very fine line that separates "The Eclectic Style" from "The Hand-Me-Down Look!"

In our next issue we will be discussing "Furniture Eclecticism" (which may have arisen from the joining or separating of households) and how to make the combined furniture work. *Welcome to the new year everyone and have a wonderful month!*

*Editor's note: Direct all questions to me, c/o Westlake Magazine.*