

# H·O·M·E

*for the Holidays*

■ ■ By Donna Cohen



**THE TIME IS NOW—**  
don't wait until  
the last minute  
*(easier said than done)*,  
so let's do a timeline  
and then you can plan  
appropriately...

### *Front Door and Entryway*

Paint a new color (other than white), change the carriage lights and get rid of that bright brass door handle that is no longer shiny—do brushed pewter or oil-rubbed bronze for a rich entry look. Get matching pots in a complimentary finish, and fill with holly or poinsettias. At least one month in advance!





### Light Fixtures

With so many reasonably priced and beautiful chandeliers, pendant lights and bathroom vanity lights, you can go through your home and change the ones you deem dull and outdated for a fresh new look! Do this a month in advance and put dimmers on everything. The easiest change is from bright task lighting to mood lighting; get rid of every fluorescent, except in the garage or laundry room!

### Furniture

This is typically a six or eight-week advance order, unless you buy it off the floor, so this is really an October deadline. Some ideas to consider: why not buy two fun chairs that you can use for a host and hostess chair to add more seating, color and diversity—instant new look! Add an interesting accent piece to the living room—maybe a garden seat, some interesting ottomans or a sofa table that will get your furniture off the wall and floating in your room. A surprise element: a desk top used for a cocktail table, large ceramic pots used as a base for dining table or breakfast table, iron exterior lanterns used as sconces in a foyer or breakfast nook—the possibilities are endless!



### Change Your Rooms

Why not switch your too small dining room for the living room, and now change the dining room for a sitting room with a chandelier? It's fun and easy to do, and now there is enough room for all the relatives at the dining room table.

**Tip:** *If your dining table is too small, have a carpenter cut two equal pieces from an 8-foot sheet of plywood, round the corners on one end and set on your table, protecting it underneath with an old sheet, cover with a tablecloth, and, voila! You have a table that will seat up to 14 people and will be wide enough to set all of your serving pieces on!*

### Family Photographs

We all love our family pictures, but this may be the time to go through and update. Add some more recent photographs, and put outdated ones away for safekeeping—after all, the children are grown now! And, to make them more effective, try putting them in all the same color frame on a surface you choose, such as all silver or all black.



Donna Cohen is president of Donna Cohen Classic Design, LLC. She can be reached at (352) 332-9905.

### Flooring

Flooring in the dining room or living room. Yes, the time to take up that 15-year-old carpet is NOW—hardwoods add space, light and instantly update the room. Please do this in October or the first week of November!



### Paint

Yes, this is an old tip, albeit one of the best ones! Painting a room can be the most dramatic change in any home, especially going from one extreme to the other—light (such as cream walls with a darker cream trim) to rich eggplant walls with a bright white trim.

Tip: dark paint does not make a room always look smaller.

Or, change from dark (such as deep red walls with taupe trim) to pearl-colored walls with a deep sealskin trim. Try doing an accent wall in the living room that picks up the color in the dining room. Add in pillow throws and accent trays all in the same color for a rich monochromatic look. This is probably a six-week advance job because all of the other pieces have to fall in place. Other painting projects can be removing the wallpaper from the foyer, guest bath or guest room, and painting with some fun colors like watermelon, lime or wisteria.



### Accessories

All the items that give your home a fresh, new look for not much money—lampshades, cabinet knobs, live plants. Get rid of all those silk ficus trees, dried arrangements and the hanging plastic plants over your kitchen cabinets! Buy new front door mats and bathroom rugs, fresh towels and bath accessories, a smashing new piece of artwork for over the sofa or buffet and wonderfully interesting mirrors for a long hallway or a dark room that you want to lighten.



### Candles, Candles, Candles!

The more the better! Try to keep them all white or off-white. Have the same theme running through the house—of course, red, green or gold are perfectly acceptable at holiday time.



### Have Fun!

De-stress, and if you are really struggling, hire a professional for as much time as your budget will allow. I have clients who will buy an hour at a time! You will be surprised at how much time it will save you to get the look you want to achieve!