

In Your Space

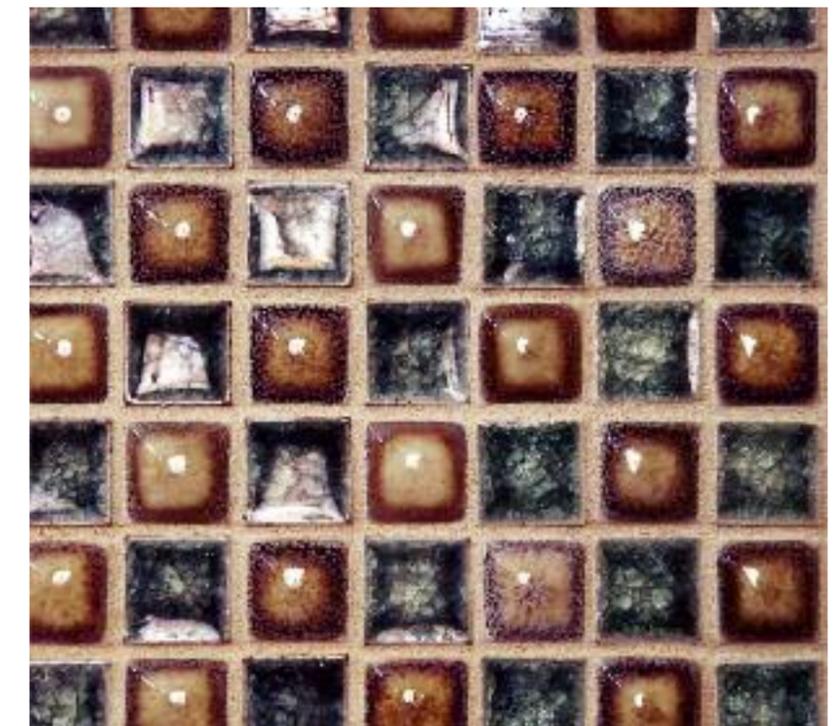
Smart Design Ideas Can Deliver Drama With Ease

By Laura Caccese and Meredith Ericksen of Tuscan Blue Design
Photography by Erick Gibson

When you're ready to update your home, the design decisions can feel overwhelming. *Where should I start? What changes will make the biggest impact? How can I refresh my look and layout while staying within budget?*

Smart updates start with smart choices. That's what we kept in mind when working with one Middletown homeowner to create a new look for her center-hall Colonial. The design alterations, while not on the scale of a major renovation, included smart updates that transformed a basic, builder-grade space into a warm and inviting home.

Think color, texture and pattern. These are the elements that we used to connect first floor spaces in the Middletown home, and they are design choices you might consider when planning your own update.





After

After



Before

You don't need a big budget to get big results. Simple uses of color, fabric and lighting made this home more warm and inviting.

• **Paint.** Create an overall color scheme to link your spaces. In the Middletown home, we used colors to unify the entire first floor—flowing from the foyer into the kitchen, family room and breakfast room. Soft, warm paint colors invite you into the space. A soft white on the trim, rather than a stark white, blends the colors together. A punch of teal blue creates a fresh accent when set against a calm canvas of mid-tone neutrals.

• **Area rugs.** The first floor of this home is filled with hardwood floors, which we softened with beautiful area rugs. Like the paint scheme, the rugs connect the open space plan with color and pattern. It is important that the rugs are companion pieces that blend together without matching exactly.

• **Architectural details.** One often-overlooked design element is architectural details. They add visual interest, making a track-built home look more like a custom home. In the Middletown home, the fireplace in the family room becomes a stunning focal point with the addition of vibrant glass mosaic tile. Built-in shelves create extra storage and display space for art and photos. Crown molding gives the family room and kitchen a finished look. In the kitchen, a basket-weave tile backsplash complements the countertops and adds texture and dimension.

• **Window treatments.** We worked with the client's existing wood blinds, which were already a smart update, and added the soft-blue linen fabric in panels and faux roman blinds.



The new basket-weave backsplash in the kitchen adds texture and dimension, complementing the countertops.

The design is simple, but adds much needed color and texture.

Think layout and lighting. In the Middletown home, we created an open flow with functional—and beautiful—living spaces.

• **New space plan and furniture layout.** The first floor space plan includes a new furniture layout for the family room that centers around a focal point—the fireplace—and incorporates lots of seating and comfy spaces. A punch of color comes from the coffee table ottoman. Accent furniture arranged throughout the first floor adds interest, color and even additional storage from such pieces as chests in the foyer and the breakfast room.

• **New lighting.** Lighting plays an integral role in any interior renovation. In the Middletown home, we began by updating builder-grade light fixtures. The existing brass chandelier in the foyer was replaced with a fixture that adds curves, elegance and a warm bronze color. Plus, the new chandelier is wide, so it fills the large foyer space. We added track lighting in the family room to create a custom look and accent the new built-in units. General and task lighting were addressed with various table lamps throughout the rooms.

In the Middletown home, relatively small changes made a big impact. If you're looking for ways to make your home more dramatic and inviting without undertaking major renovations, consider these smart updates. Your home might benefit from similar alterations. ✦

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