

Couple stretch small living room into multifunctional space

Layout of furniture makes big difference in creating your look

By Katie Wilmeth
Special to The Washington Examiner

Bill and Diane Lebherz wanted a room that could do it all.

Semiretired, the couple wanted a place where they could read, relax, watch television and entertain their big family.

But the small, narrow living room in their cottage-style Frederick County home made that a tall order. Lots of windows, multiple doors and a fireplace also made furniture placement a problem.

"We had been fretting it about it for over a year, trying to figure out what to do ourselves," Diane Lebherz said. "I think that we were really clear on the function but that was about it."

The Lebherzes enlisted the assistance of Meredith Ericksen, principal for Tuscan Blue Design in Frederick to make over their room.

She took the space from a tad cluttered with muted colors to multifunctional with a wow factor.

"Furniture placement is a very difficult thing to do," Ericksen said. "That's probably one of the biggest things we get called in to do."

The Lebherzes' space was a long and narrow, 13 by 28 feet. Even so, Ericksen created several dedicated spaces in the room for different activities.

She placed two red-and-white chairs with a contemporary damask pattern and a red ottoman by the

fireplace for hours spent reading. Two couches and a table ottoman carved out a space for curling up and watching television, which was placed in a repurposed antique pie safe the pair already had.

Ericksen said furniture in a small room doesn't have to match, but some colors can help tie in the separate spaces. For example, she covered both ottomans in a red fabric to give the room some continuity.

She also advised people not to shy away from placing furniture away from the edges of a room.

"You don't want it to look like a bowling alley," she explained. "That's another reason not to line things against the wall."

Ericksen suggested keeping the walls light in a small room like the Lebherzes' and to be sure to measure any furniture before purchasing it. The red-and-white chairs, for example, were custom because only a certain size could fit in the reading area.

All the furniture should be carefully considered in a smaller room because you only have so many pieces.

"You might be able to only get a few pieces in there, so make those pieces 'wow,'" Ericksen said. "If you look at the floor plan it might look boring, but what are we going to do to make it pop."

The Lebherzes were pleased with the outcome and have even used the room for overflow when they have their 25-plus family members over for dinner parties.

But it's not all about entertaining, Diane Lebherz said. "Every afternoon you can find us napping in there too."



BEFORE:

Meredith Ericksen of Tuscan Blue Design in Frederick was hired to make over Bill and Diane Lebherz's long, narrow living room. The space was a little cluttered and had muted colors.



AFTER:

PHOTOS COURTESY TUSCAN BLUE DESIGN

To create a bright and comfortable living space, Ericksen placed an ottoman and two red-and-white chairs in front of the fireplace and added couches and a table ottoman by the television — which was put into an antique pie safe — to give it a major wow factor.

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