

## Dis'n Dat Decorating

It's easiest to decorate (or redecorate) when you start with a clean slate. Clear every surface - mantel, hearth, shelves, walls and tabletops. Now start again and avoid repeating the same arrangements you had previously. Keep an open mind and let your feelings rather than your eye be your guide.

Think of a vase as a house within itself. Do you prefer your home to be understated, or highly decorated? Ornate or plain? Vases are what "houses" the flower, arrangement, or object. If you think of a vase in this way, it frees up your mind to come up with new, creative ways of "furnishing" it. It is not necessary to fill urns and vases with fresh flowers and greenery.

Consider filling a clear vase with rocks, stones or marbles for a fall look. Try white sand with a fresh flower for a warm, summer feeling.

Vases of colored art glass or lacquered foil are beautiful on their own and need nothing in them. Enjoy and appreciate them for their own stunning beauty.

Avoid too much symmetry. Strive for balance when it comes to display. Think of each room, bookcase or shelf as a canvas on which you are trying to create the perfect still life.

Large vases/decor pieces definitely make a statement and define a room, but you also need to incorporate vases/containers that are more modest. If you find a smaller size accessory such as an infinity vase (hole in the middle), dish/bowl, test-tube vase or tall cylinder that you really like, then buy them in quantity. One rose bud in a test-tube will go unnoticed, but a repetitive row offers a striking design presence.

Don't fill shelves from side to side, end to end. Decide on your center of focus and then radiate out from this point. The idea is to incorporate different heights, sizes, textures, colors and widths, that subtly draws all accessories together.

Don't overdo it! If you've finished and personally like your display, don't worry if you have pieces left over. Store them until you're ready to make your next design change.

There tends to be a misconception that every "prized" piece must be prominently displayed. Don't be afraid to overlap some of the objects, so that some are slightly hidden and others take prime position. This technique of display adds a sense of interest and depth to the finished composition.

If you try to create too many unique focal points, the eye will become confused and you will end up cluttering your home with too much stuff. Nothing will stand out and there will be no "wow" factor.

Rather than allowing table surfaces to become covered in accumulated clutter, use them to create an interesting still life. Table size dictates the amount of items in a grouping. Sometimes a single vase or accessory item is enough to make a statement, while leaving adequate space for a book or coffee cup.

Use "odd" thinking to avoid too much symmetry. Accessory groupings work well in groups of threes, fives, etc. If using an even number, have one or two items at vastly differing sizes to break up the number.