

Adding a Little Luxury to Your Home

Seventy-two percent of homeowners plan to decorate or redecorate in the next two years, according to the 2012 Houzz and Home Survey; and 86 percent said that improving the look and feel of the space was their most important goal.

You can find plenty of décor inspiration on sites such as Houzz or Pinterest. And with the right materials and a little creativity, you can add a little luxury to your home, too. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Paint – You can add a fresh look to a room with a fresh coat of paint. You can also add richness and depth with a specialty paint treatment. Textured paint allows you to give your walls the look of soft suede, leather, linen or even

vintage plaster. Metallic paints can be used with stencils to create elegant patterns, or on textured wallpaper to create the look of antique tin ceiling tiles.

Textiles – Fabrics are a great way to add color and texture to a room. Browsing the remnant tables at a fabric store can lead you to some beautiful bargains. You can use remnants to recover pillows, add banding to drapes, or make runners for the table or buffet. Try adding a luxurious throw to the sofa or a small wool rug on top of existing carpet for a cozy, layered look.



You can also consider investing in having a quality piece of furniture reupholstered. Look for a fabric that is not only beautiful, but durable

as well, so you get more bang for your buck. For example, Sensuede is easy to clean, child- and pet-friendly, yet is soft, comfortable and luxurious

to the touch. Learn more, and explore the more than 200 colors available, at www.sensuede.com.

Accents – Sometimes little things can add up to a big difference. Change out some of your accent pieces to add a special touch to any room. Metallic colors and materials such as gold, silver, bronze and copper add warmth and elegance. Vases, picture and mirror frames, decorative bowls and trays are simple ways to bring beautiful metals into any room. Richly colored candles add color and scent to a room, and their soft light will make your metallic accents

glow.

Flooring – Sometimes the floor can get overlooked as a design element in a room. But a beautiful floor can pull the whole look of a room together. Refinishing hardwood floors, installing laminate or stone flooring, replacing carpets, or investing in quality area rugs are all ways you can add the perfect finishing touch to a room.

There are a lot of ways you can add luxury to your living spaces, so start exploring creative ways to make your home the picture-perfect place you've always wanted.

(Family Features)

A well-maintained driveway can add to a home's curb appeal

When renovating a home, many homeowners look to increase the home's curb appeal. "Curb appeal" is a term used to describe how the home's exterior appears to buyers the moment they pull up to the curb. A home that impresses prospective buyers before they even go inside is said to have a strong curb appeal, and that curb appeal can add significant value to a home.

Homeowners looking to improve the curb appeal of their home can do so in a variety of ways. One often overlooked yet effective way to make a home's exterior more appealing is to revamp the driveway. Driveways may not be high on a homeowner's renovation totem pole, but a cracked or unsightly driveway can give prospective buyers the im-

pression that a home has not been properly taken care of. When addressing a driveway, homeowners have a host of paving materials at their disposal.

Asphalt

Asphalt is an affordable paving material, which likely plays a role in its popularity among homeowners. Asphalt is also easy to install and requires little maintenance, two additional benefits to homeowners who don't have much time to install or look after their driveway. Asphalt is made from a combination of concrete, gravel and tar, and though it's easy and affordable to install, asphalt, as any kid can tell you, can get awfully hot under the summer sun. Asphalt can also crack rather easily, so homeowners must weigh its im-

mediate affordability against the likelihood that perhaps it will need to be replaced sooner than other materials.

Brick

Brick is among the more expensive paving materials, as brick is a labor-intensive material to install. But brick allows homeowners to create distinctive patterns that can add quite a bit to a home's curb appeal. Once installed, brick driveways don't require much maintenance, though cracked bricks will need to be replaced.

Cobblestone

Cobblestone can be very pleasing to the eye, but that aesthetic appeal won't come

cheap. Among the more expensive paving materials, cobblestone can also be a handful to maintain, as weeds can penetrate the cobblestones rather easily. Loose or missing stones can be unsightly and will need to be replaced.

Many homeowners who love the look of cobblestone choose to use it along walkways or on their patios, as these areas won't require as much materials, saving both money and the time it takes to maintain the cobblestones.

Concrete

Concrete is perhaps the ideal paving material for the homeowner who wants to

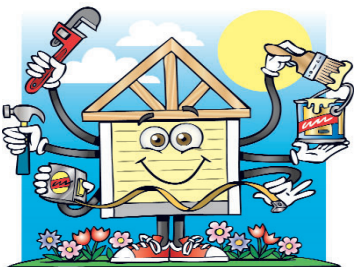
express his or her individuality. That's because concrete driveways can be laid in a variety of colors and designs, adding a touch of personality in a place many homeowners likely thought such expression was impossible.

Though affordable, concrete can fall victim to the elements, as extremely cold temperatures can cause the concrete to shift and ultimately crack. Concrete pavers can remedy this problem, though that will add to the overall cost of the project.

Gravel

A gravel driveway can give a home a historical look that few of today's homes

can boast. Gravel is an affordable material that requires little maintenance, though weeds can grow through gravel and must be removed to maintain the driveway's appeal. Washout is a concern for some who want a gravel driveway, but edging the driveway with a material like timber or bluestone can prevent the gravel from washing away should heavy rains fall. SH132901



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