

Adding impact to your new home



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CREATING SPACES

Have you recently moved into a new home and are perplexed on how to mark it with your personal style?

Many new homes, rental or purchased, come with fairly bland, neutral interiors designed to erase the former resident's decorating style and give new residents a blank canvas where they can create their dream home.

But a blank canvas can be intimidating, not to mention hard on the bottom line. You might be tempted to go on a shopping spree for all new trendy accessories but that can just lead to a space that looks out-dated too soon.

Moving is expensive enough without wasting money on band-aid décor solutions. This list of four easy changes that don't break the bank eliminates the challenge of the blank canvas.

Wallpaper

Wallpaper instantly changes the mood and look of a room depending on the pattern and colours chosen. Most wallpaper can now be easily removed if you move, making it a long-term decor option for both homeowners and renters.

A single wall of paper (similar to a focal wall of paint colour) can anchor a bed or enhance a main wall. I like the wallpaper patterns that mimic wood panelling, old bookcases or vintage city scenes, as they instantly add character to bland, characterless rooms and can be a great jumping-off point for brining in similar colours and furniture styles.

Light fixtures

Lighting is considered jewelry for the home. It's an easy way to punctuate a particular style. New light fixtures are also a way to add an on-trend metallic colour to modernize your space. The most obvious places to add impact with lighting are over the dining table, pendants over a kitchen island and in a foyer, as they are often the first thing people see when they walk into those rooms. If renting, always get your landlord's permission to install new fixtures (and make sure to store the old light fixture to reinstall when you move). Also, always have the electric work done by a qualified professional or your landlord.

Paint

Adding a focal wall of colour to your new space is a relatively fast and inexpensive way to add big col-



Wallpaper is a quick way to add character to a bland space. Felt Tip Indigo Wallpaper, from \$100/roll.

our impact to your home that also highlights an important wall.

I like to suggest two routes for choosing colour: either pull a jazzy accent colour from an existing carpet, artwork or fabric in the room; or choose a dramatic neutral tone that's already in the space.

Want to paint the entire room a neutral, soothing colour but can't decide what to choose? Take inspiration from the colouring in the floor and choose paint that's a few shades lighter. This will create a monochromatic colour scheme that can be easier to decorate around.

Drapery

For a long time drapes were pushed to the side when decorating. These days, whether you have blinds or shades on your windows, designers are adding a sense of softness with fabric curtain panels.

It's the easiest way to add vertical lines to a room, which make the ceilings appear taller (the pleated folds subtly lead the eye upward, creating this illusion).

I suggest a lightweight synthetic linen-type fabric as it is easy care and will not be affected by sunlight. Be sure to use the appropriate wall anchors when installing drapery rods.

If renting, get permission to drill holes to install the rods, otherwise you might be patching and repairing before you move.

— *Karl has worked as a home decor expert and product designer for 25 years. Do you have a decor dilemma or want to give feedback? You can contact Karl on Facebook or Instagram at Karl Lohnes Designer.*



A personal favourite of the Kalu Interior Team is Turf, also known as artificial grass, especially for urban areas such as condos and townhouses.

Small outdoor spaces with maximum impact

ALEEM KASSAM AND PHYLLIS LUI

Whether it's a balcony, patio or single-family home outdoor space, the best way to look at them is as extensions of the interior space.

No matter the size, there's options, ideas and design tips that can not only help you maximize your outdoor living, but ensure that it looks fabulous.

Whether for lounging, dining, entertaining, or perhaps you need some privacy from your neighbours, there's a solution for every need.

The first thing is to determine the main function you'd like to have your patio or balcony serve, and size-wise, if it can accommodate.

Is it for cooking? So perhaps a BBQ. Is it for dining? A table and chairs, or for lounging with couple of loungers?

Once you start with your largest pieces, you can begin to lay out the space. Always start largest to smallest, and from bottom-up!

We like to start with the canvas — the floor. A personal favourite of ours is Turf, also known as artificial grass, especially for urban areas such as condos and townhouses.

It brings some greenery into an

otherwise concrete jungle. Providing a soft landing for your feet, while adding greenery, and absolutely no maintenance.

Always consult your local supplier, and ensure the type of artificial grass couples a rubber drainage membrane. Alternatively, interlocking wood tiles for exterior patios are also a great stylish solution.

For smaller patios it's also always important to try and source double-duty items. For instance, a fire pit that might double as a coffee table, or an outdoor chair with an ottoman that can be placed against one another to create a lounger.

Flexibility is key! Once you've determined what you need, begin laying out items in the space. In most cases an outdoor tall bistro table (bar height) tend to be the best fit, as they're usually a smaller footprint, and help to maximize your view, if you have one.

Stools versus chairs can also be tucked nicely under a round or square bar bistro table. Maximizing every square inch, especially when space is limited, is the key. A built-in BBQ and outdoor kitchen are a huge trend right now, allowing not only cooking, but a surface to prep on.

With floors done, and your fur-

niture and functions organized, it's time to work in some greenery. A combination of pots and/or planters, especially in any urban area, lush greenery and plants, or the illusion of, will be a great escape from your concrete surroundings.

At Kalu, we tend to be a fan of a combination of solutions, such as artificial hedges which can create privacy screening from your neighbours, while also adding a lush addition to your outdoor space, and no maintenance required. Then perhaps fill in dead corners or areas on the perimeter with tall narrow planters.

Lastly, don't be afraid to treat your outdoor areas as you would your living room. There's a wide array of "in-out" accessories and furnishings available at most retailers today.

Outdoor-rated plush cushions, candles, lanterns, and even art, sculptures, and decorative pots add an element of the interiors to your exterior. It's important to utilize colours and accents on the exterior, that you might find on the interior of your home.

Whether it's a particular colour, or certain style such as modern or traditional, imagine your outdoor space as a direct extension of your interior living.

This will provide overall cohesiveness and the appearance of a larger living area, and the perfect oasis for you to escape to with summer at our feet.

— *Awarding-winning interior designers Phyllis Lui and Aleem Kasaam are the principal designer duo for Kalu Interiors, a Vancouver-based design firm known for creating thoughtfully curated interiors. Visit www.kaluinteriors.com.*