



burgeoning BUDGETS

A healthy decorating budget doesn't mean there isn't room to save

BY PAUL SEMKULEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILLIAN JACKSON

Every month several decor magazines arrive at your door, tempting you to take the plunge and redecorate your home. With so many beautiful rooms, filled with great ideas, and accessories, where does one begin? One of the biggest concerns of all is, "Can I afford to make this happen?" Whether it's a condo or house, anything is possible... within reason. And by that I mean budget.

When friends of mine approached me to redecorate a couple of rooms in their home, the first question I asked was, "Do you have a furniture and accessory budget?" Their response was yes, and with a \$20,000 budget we were set to redecorate their living and dining rooms.

As much as decorating your home is one of the most satisfying things you can do to make your living space

more enjoyable, establishing a budget is essential, even if you have deep pockets.

The living room was outdated; it had a navy blue leather sofa, two floral bucket chairs, a yellow slipper chair, and a small silver coffee table. The proportions of the furniture didn't work with the size of the room.

The dining room, with its gold and crystal chandelier, had a '40s-style dining room table with four dining chairs, but it didn't maximize the potential for their entertaining needs. My clients wanted a new contemporary space to reflect their present lifestyle, a space that would accommodate a growing family.

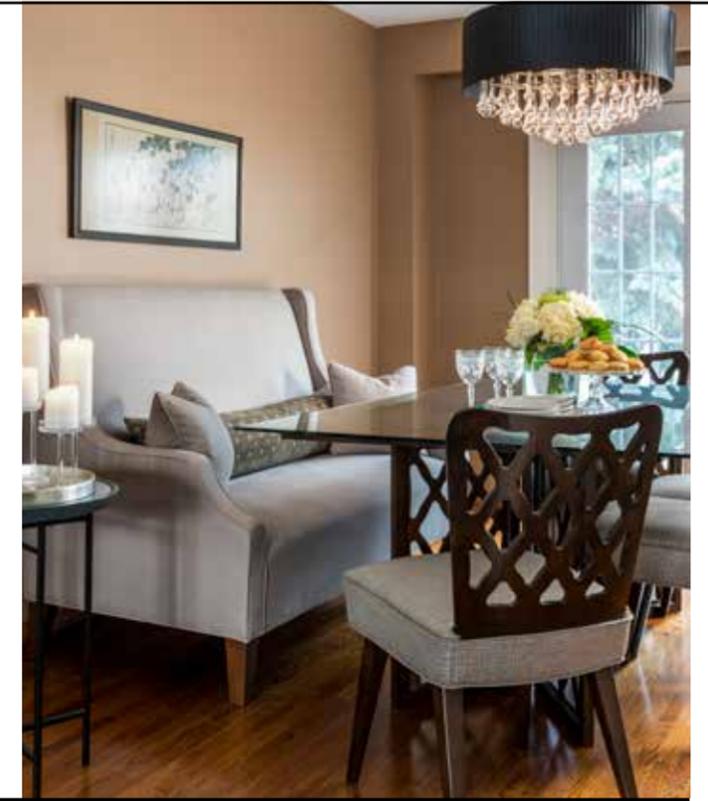
As well as selecting furniture from various retailers, a few custom pieces were ordered, including two tight-back sofas and a dining room banquette. This allowed us to design with the correct dimensions for

both spaces. The slipper chair and dining room chairs were reused and reupholstered with amazing fabrics for added focal points.

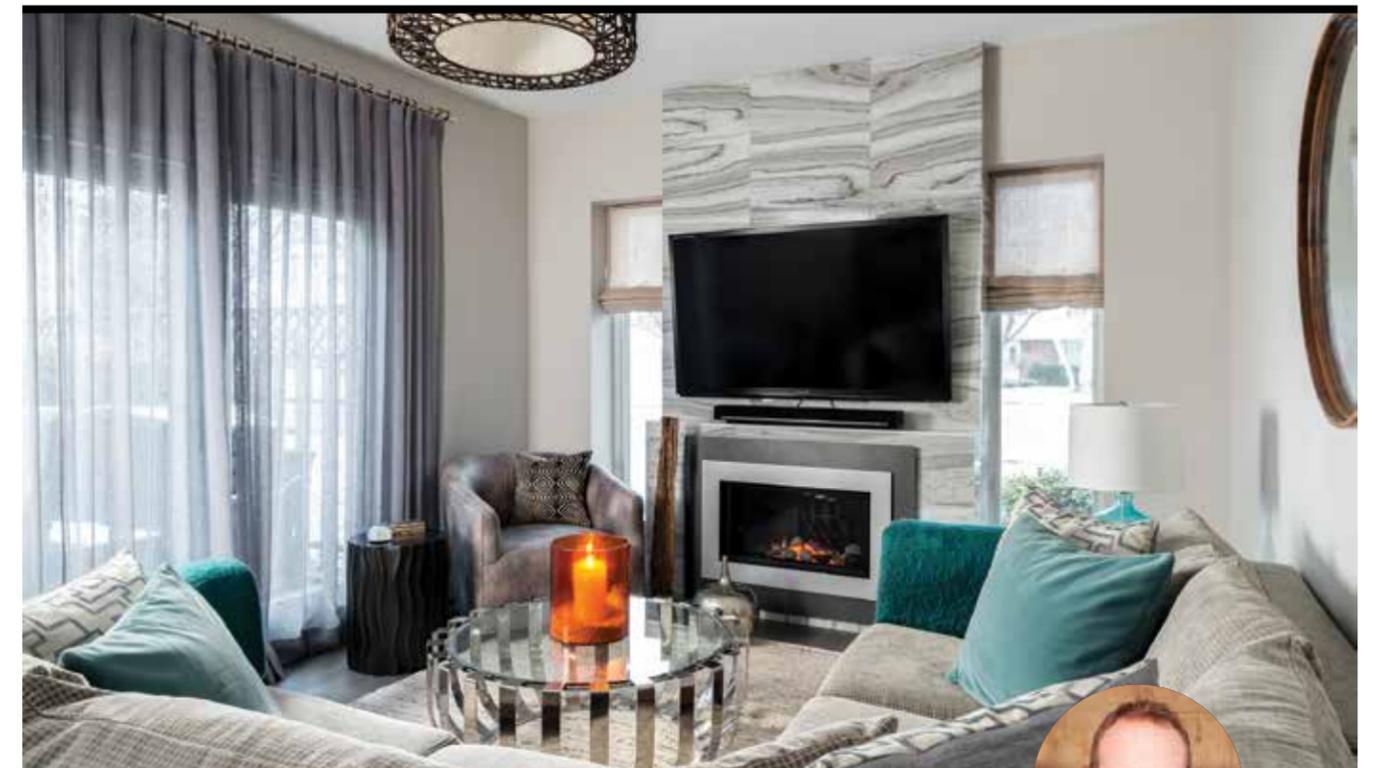
At this stage, we'd already spent just over half of the budget. We set out to find the remaining necessary items, which included two side tables and lamps, a coffee table, a 10x14-foot area carpet, a bar cabinet, an occasional table, a small stool, two floor lamps, a glass top for the dining room table, a dining room chandelier, and accessories.

By repositioning their existing artwork and dining room hutch, we were able to provide them with a better flow and an improved use of their space. They now have a beautiful new living and dining room, fully accessorized with a combination of current and family heirlooms. Budget check: \$17,488.70.

Hiring a professional decorating firm like ours can initially seem like it is going to cost you a lot of money, but let's face it, our client was prepared to spend \$20k and we came in under budget. The \$2,500 savings helped offset our hourly rate. Impressed with our work and fees, our clients hired us to redo the powder and family rooms. ♦



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Paul Semkuley, a Toronto-based interior stylist and principal of re-source lifestyles, successfully incorporates the client's existing collection of furniture and family treasures in unique and unpredictable ways. Resourcelifestyles.com