

Making a Home Together

There's an old tradition of planting a seedling on the morning of your wedding to grow along with your marriage. It's a lovely sentiment, but also a great way to symbolize your start as a team who makes its best decisions together.

By Lisa Arcella

Starting a new home and blending two individual styles to create an inviting space that you both feel comfortable and happy in, can be a real challenge for newlyweds. Decorating can seem daunting at first, especially if you love florals and he can't live without flannel. But just like most things in a relationship, with a little give and take and a little research and ingenuity, you will find a happy and satisfying solution.

CREATE A MASTER PLAN

Start with a list of furnishings you need right away and a longer list of pieces you will ultimately want down the road. Experts say you should begin in the room that you think you'll spend the most time in or in the room that actually needs the most furniture. But before you buy anything—or even bring home a paint chip—get a handful of decorating books and magazines. Look at them together to see which styles and colours you can agree on. Tear out pages that are definite “keepers” and gather them in a file folder that you can refer to as you go along. Look at furniture together. You want style, he wants comfort? You may actually discover you love the same pieces.

DREAM BIG, START SMALL

While you are busy making a list of what you need, don't forget to have a fantasy or two about what you would love your home to look like if price were no object. Once you've established what you both really love, you can find clever ways to create a more scaled-down version.



Decorators say that you should never underestimate accessories. With the right lighting, a textured wall, a new carpet, a single beautiful vase in a key spot or a painting can make any room appear fresh and inviting. And the secret to increasing the impact of any room, inexpensively, is with beautiful candles and picture frames.

In the bedroom, even if you can't shop for a bedroom set, choose sheet sets, comforters or duvet covers for some drama. (A mattress cover can add comfort and will protect your mattress—one of your most important purchases.) In the bathroom, choosing your everyday towel sets and guest towels, a bath mat and shower curtain with a little care can take a so-so bathroom to another level.

KNOW THE BASICS

Once you are ready to shop, make sure you know all the measurements of your rooms and windows. You will need that information to help you with everything from knowing how much paint to buy to how big a couch can be. Think neutral colours (like creams, beiges, greys and greens) for expensive pieces like couches. Add colour with accents. Then, if you want to change the look of a room in a few years, all you will have to replace are the “extras.”

TAKE YOUR TIME

If Rome wasn't built in a day, why should your entire home be decorated in the first few months of marriage? Furniture is an investment and most people hold on to big purchases for up to 12 years. Make wise choices, not quick ones.