

# Reaching the FINISH LINE

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***The roof is on, the interior painted, floors carpeted and you are close to the big moving day. However, you still have some finishing touches to decide upon before the delivery truck is packed. Do not despair.***

Most of the difficult decisions are behind you at this point. You may find it easy and enjoyable to decorate your new home. On the other hand, you may feel completely overwhelmed by the impending decorating choices. Whether with the assistance of a professional designer, or your creative best friend, or by yourself, the final decorative touches should be fun and followed by a smile of satisfaction.

Some new homebuyers enjoy shopping for the decorative finishes such as furniture, window treatments and accessories during the building process. Others focus only on the home building materials during construction, leaving the finishing touches to be decided once the house is completed. The decorating process should resemble a game of dominoes. Once you begin making color choices for your new home, the rest of the pieces should fall into place. During the building process, make sure to gather samples of items displaying your color palette. Ask vendors for paint swatches, fabric and wallpaper samples, tiles, photos or

brochures and organize them in a notebook. Designate a tote bag for these items and keep it handy. You never know when you might run into the perfect one-of-a-kind on-sale-today sofa. Having your samples available will take color guessing out of the picture so you can buy confidently.

What decorative items should be selected and installed before your move? Start with privacy window treatments. The days of temporarily attaching bed sheets and old newspapers over the windows are over. Though you may not want to cover every window, begin with the comfort zone test. Walk through the new home and imagine where you and your family will spend time. Take note of the views into the rooms from exterior windows, especially bed and bath rooms. Imagine how the sun might play a glaring role while watching television or eating dinner. If you and your family are comfortable being seen at anytime through these windows and the sun does not pose a problem, then they have



*Using furniture on the plant shelf creates an interest in the great room, while choosing not to shade the windows allows light to brighten the room naturally.*

*Floating furniture, a use of hardwood floors and rugs, and shades over the windows and doors in an accompanying color, create a stunning combination to tie this great room together.*





passed the comfort zone test and do not need privacy treatments. If you do feel the need for privacy, the types of treatments you may choose from include wood blinds, plantation shutters or pleated, Roman and Honeycomb shades. Though trends are moving away from aluminum mini and micro blinds, as well as vertical treatments, contemporary-style homes or sliding glass doors may make these types a more practical choice. Just remember, no matter the treatment, to keep the front of the home's windows as uniform as possible for great curb appeal.

After taking care of your privacy issues, decorative window treatments can be added at any time. Some choose to install the decorative treatments before they move in and some wait until they can live in the home before making decisions about drapes, cornices or window toppers. Decorative window treatments can be narrowed down to four categories: ready-made, semi-custom, custom and home made. Ready-made treatments are ones you buy off the shelf or from a catalog. Semi-custom treatments are where you pick a style from a selection book and a fabric from a ring of swatches and then the treatment is constructed. Custom treatments are the most costly and are where you hire a workroom to design a treatment, choose a fabric and create an original decorative treatment for your window. Homemade treatments are the most personal. You can be creative with sports pennants for a boy's room window, mounted pastel ribbons for girls or neck ties on a drapery rod for a study. Keep in mind that you can install homemade creative treatments over privacy treatments if necessary.

Other decorative and functional treatments to decide on include shower curtains and bath hardware. You may have chosen to install glass enclosures in your baths during construction or you may need to select decorative shower curtains and hardware before you move in your home. For a gentle flow of color from room to room, try to coordinate curtains and towels with the colors used in other areas of the home and select hardware such as towel bar, toilet paper holder and cabinet pulls that match plumbing finishes. If the bath is located near a bedroom, you may select colors for the accessories that coordinate with the bedroom's linens and décor. For a bonus bath or child's suite, use bright colors or a shower curtain with cue balls or cabinet pulls with train engines. Theme decorations do not need to coordinate with your home's overall décor. Have fun with color and design since your bath accessories are

easy to change.

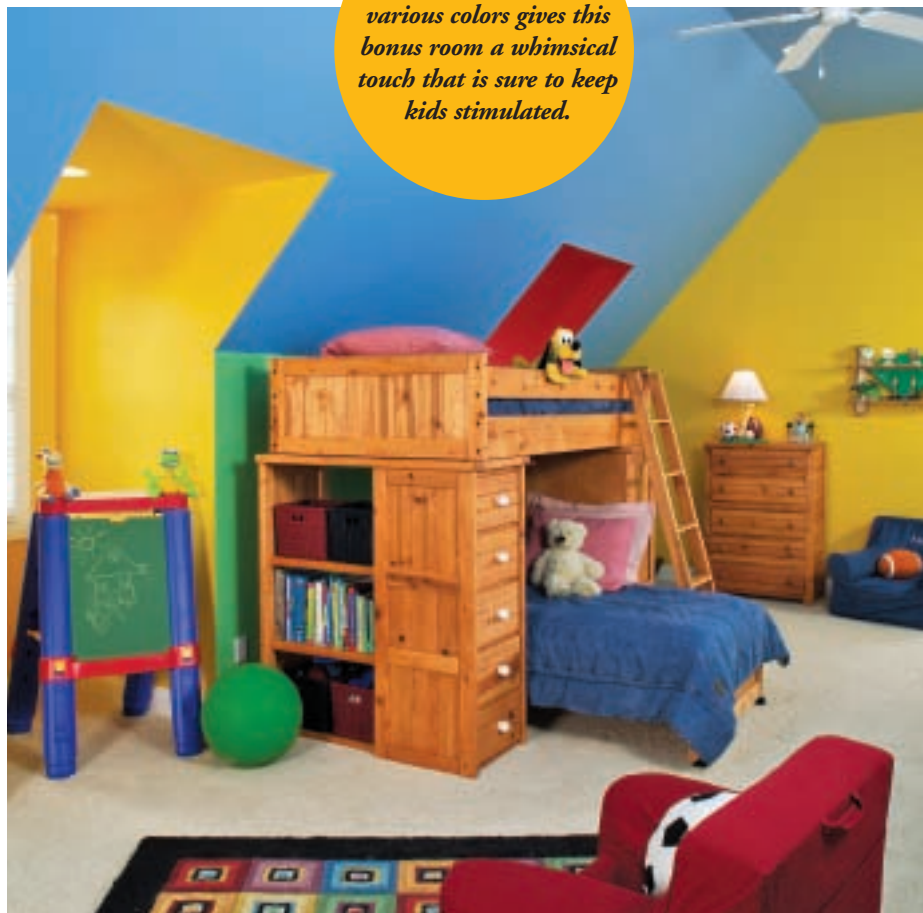
With privacy and toiletries under control, concentrate next on decorative floor coverings before you move in your furniture. Since you will not want to move a heavy dining table set or a pair of living room sofas twice, decide where you plan to decorate with rugs. If you plan to use rugs from your existing home, make sure the room will accommodate the rug's size and that the rug will match the room's décor. If you plan to purchase rugs, measure the rooms before visiting a store. Make notes of floor vents or other obstacles that will affect the rug size. Take your tote bag of samples with you for guidance with color. While oriental rugs tend to work well in formal areas, you may choose a bound rug for a more casual feel in other areas. Ask your builder to hire his carpet vendor to bind a rug from the carpet you selected for your new home. Rugs for areas such as foyers or baths can be placed at a later date since those rooms normally do not require moving furniture.

Before you jump into major furniture purchases, take inventory and measurements of your current furnishings. Make a list of items you plan to move into your new home and decide where they will be placed. Include floor and table lamps,

ottomans, floor plants and trees, mirrors and prints, as well as typical furniture. During the construction of your home, you may find the house plan useful in deciding the location of your furniture pieces. You can even purchase peel and stick scaled furniture symbol kits if you need help to visualize your project. If you wait to decide furniture placement until the house is completed, place painter's tape on the floor of your new room to mimic the depth, length and width of your furniture. Remember that scaling furniture on a plan or floor is not three-dimensional and furniture will typically seem larger once placed in the room. Think outside of the box and place furniture on angles since furniture can "float" and does not have to rest straight against the walls. Once you note where your current furnishings will be placed, it will be obvious what new furniture needs to be added, and you can begin your search. Decorator magazines and furniture web sites are helpful tools in deciding your style, while color and comfort can only be judged by visiting a furniture showroom.

After you select your large furniture pieces, you can fill in the smaller empty areas with accessories. Invest in realistic silk plants and trees if you do not possess a green thumb because

*Painting the interior dormer walls various colors gives this bonus room a whimsical touch that is sure to keep kids stimulated.*



greenery adds life and color to any room. Though high architectural shelves have been dubbed as plant ledges, it does not mean that you have to use greenery in those areas. Be creative with varying sizes of pottery, large figurines or baskets. Use empty shoe boxes to create different levels for displaying accessories. You can drape coordinating fabric strategically to hide whatever you use as a base. Make sure the tops of bookcases and plant ledges are finished if they are visible from an upstairs overlook. Bookcases do not have to only display vertically aligned books. Use decorative acces-

sories to create interest. Lay some books down with the spine angled for view of the title and place a decorative finial on top. The old decorating rule of odd numbers is still a great guideline whether accessorizing a bookshelf or fireplace mantel. Graduate sizes of three, five or seven to create appeal. Re-frame photos in frames that have a similar finish but different style and display in odd groupings. Add wallpaper to the inner back wall of a bookcase or wall niche to add color, dimension or texture.

Though you will continue to collect new decorative items throughout your lifetime, by

carefully planning some of the decorative finishes prior to moving into your new home, you can pack only the items you will need to decorate, keeping your new attic and garage free of unwanted décor and clutter. If you feel challenged by the thought of solely tackling the finishing touches, ask a friend or professional designer for advice. Mixing your old furnishings with new decorations should result in a style that translates into eclectic, not hectic. Enjoy crossing the finish line and take time to appreciate your beautiful design when the last domino falls.

*When creating a theme bathroom, little touches such as a tissue holder or wastebasket bring this child-like aquarium to life!*

