



Festivity Furnishing



For most people, the best time of the year, writes Shahin RAJWANI, has come and is therefore a moment to celebrate and give thanks. It is time to be with family and friends, to share a meal, to give and receive presents, but also to close the books for the year.

Well, I hope 2011 was a good year for you. I feel that with all the chaos in the world, our home is becoming an even more important place. It is a place where one can "just be". Hence, should we not create the best possible environment for this to happen? Food has always been a way to celebrate life and love. Therefore creating a beautiful dining atmosphere can only enhance the eating experience.

Choice of colour

How do we bring this festive mood into our homes? What should we do to create an atmosphere where it is easy to be light-hearted and free? How do we bring celebration into our life? I always start with colour. The choice of colour can have a remarkable impact on one's wellbeing.

This year I am veering towards the use of deep reds and bright oranges cooled down with a metallic blue-green – what the Chinese call the YIN AND YANG of life. Do not be afraid of this boldness because you do not

have to change your decor. You can use these colours as accent colours, and if you truly hate orange as a fabric colour, a large bowl (really large) of oranges on the side table with wine-red candles fits the scene perfectly. Or you could have red apples in a red basket or green apples in a green basket. The balancing of green can come from your garden from any plant with a grey undertone in their leaves.

Collection of little gifts

Those of you who have larger budgets can invest in a side table, which can be placed in the entrance. Cover it with fabric in rich colours of wine red and orange. Add candles and keep the table laden with nuts and sweets, or any other offerings to welcome your guest according to your tradition. Use some red and orange coloured glasses and keep them ready to offer a drink to your thirsty guests. That way you have your festive offerings at hand. You could even have a small collection of little gifts wrapped and ready for your younger visitors. They do not have to cost a lot. We all know that it is the thought that counts!

New wallpaper in the dining area can add to the festive cheer. All you really need is a little courage and imagination. Perhaps the dining chairs would be better off with new seat covers, or just add seat cushions to add comfort for those festive meals when people sit for a long time around the table. Then add the famous red and orange – onto the table.

Accent for candles

If you have a white linen table cloth, make the colours work by using them for glassware and/

or napkins, and then repeat for candles. Orange or red cutlery handles can also be a fun statement on your merry table. Buy the inexpensive ones and use them whenever you are entertaining a larger gathering of people. If your plates are multicoloured, pick out one strong colour from the plate design and use that as an accent for candles or napkins. Balance it out by keeping the glassware clear.

Cut flowers are one of the best things for any decoration. They bring any scheme to life. We are very fortunate in Kenya to have a wide selection of cut flowers on offer. Pick them from your back garden or purchase them at any market or street corner. Use several small vases in the middle of the table and keep them low. Then add candles to create enchantment on the table.

The reason for keeping arrangements low at the dining table is so that you can converse with your guests. There is nothing more irritating than trying to gaze across the table at your dinner companions over a tall flower arrangement or candlestick. I guess by now you know which colours to use in the arrangements.

Tremendous difference

As a child, I remember there was always a major clean-up before any festivities. So have a good look around your home. Perhaps now is the time to give the corridor that fresh coat of paint, or get a fabulous look by adding wallpaper.

Papering one wall can make a tremendous difference to your space. Another good "quick trick" to refresh a somewhat tired looking interior is to add

new cushions and throws. The old sofa will look much "younger" with new cushion covers. The odd stain can be covered up with a new funky throw, or instead of full upholstery works, just make loose covers to cover the old sins. A well-stitched loose cover can give a fresh look to an old sofa and make it as good as new. So "Botox" your sofa!

Seat covers

Should you choose to entertain in the garden, have a careful look at the chair covers. Change the seat covers on your garden chairs and you are ready for

the festive season. There are all kinds of scented candles available to keep the flies at bay in the daytime and mosquitoes at night.

Should it get chilly in the evenings, it might be a nice idea to offer your guests a throw. A good host tries to think of everything in creating that special festive mood. However do not get stressed if you forgot something. The festive season is about generosity, love and fun, so enjoy yourself and I am sure this will rub off on your family and friends

Have a wonderful and decorative festive season!



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