



# DESIGN GUIDE

## *Quick Ways to Refresh Your Home for Fall Entertaining*

BY KATHERINE BARRO

Anne Alderson is an interior designer and the proprietor of Brick & Mantel, a local luxury furniture and interior design studio. She is a native Californian who has spent the last 16 years creating beautiful residential and commercial spaces here in the Napa Valley. Fall is the busiest time of year in her industry. As the weather starts to cool, people begin to focus on updating their house for the holiday season.

"In the fall, people usually come in with very specific goals, be it space, furniture, window coverings, guest space, etc., but often need help getting there," says Anne. She shares some of the tips that she has learned on how and where people should best focus their attention.

Now is the time to gather ideas, and clients should think about how they use their space and what would make it more functional. Don't start a remodel now, the chances of completion before the holidays is slim. Wait until after the New Year when

the stress of the holiday season is over and more attention can be focused on the project. Immediate focus should be on quick updates: think about a new paint color, change out a light fixture or add a chandelier above a dining room table. Add mirrors to bring light into dark spaces to make a small room seem larger, or update the entryway to maximize a guests' first impression.

Area rugs can be stacked for a layered look. In the dining room, find a rug 24" larger than the table on all sides so any chair can pull out and still be entirely on the rug. Ideally there should be 12" of exposed floor all the way around.

September is when to order new furniture if it is expected for the holidays. Many manufacturers have deadlines in mid-September for guaranteed delivery before Thanksgiving. The most popular items are dining tables with removable leaves, dining chairs or bench seating and sleeper sofas.

Declutter before bringing in seasonal decorations. Remove at least as many items as are being put out. Adding seasonal décor on top of already crowded shelves will make the house feel cluttered instead of festive.

To create an outside living or dining area, start with an outdoor rug or use plants to define the space. Buy furniture or a table that fits comfortably, then add small decorations which could be candles, lanterns, umbrellas or pillows.

If help is needed, hire a designer, and it's best to come prepared. Bring in photos of the house and create a Pinterest or Houzz account to save favorite designs; these are essential tools for a designer to understand the look the client wants to achieve. A good designer will be able to recreate the feel their clients wish to convey in the space they have.



Anne Alderson

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