

TV or no TV, that is the question



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During a red carpet, TV interview at the Emmy's, nominated actress Shailene Woodley surprised viewers by dissing... TV viewing and the viewers!

She may be a public dissenter of the big black screen, but there's no denying TV's are ubiquitous, and usually a major fixture in every family room.

We all watch TV, whether we admit it or not and it's not a reason to be made to feel inferior.

I deal with TV placement and furniture layout all the time. Making everything fit in a space can be confusing so when we move in we tend to just copy the previous home owner's layout, whether it works or not.

Because all rooms are different, one plan won't suit all, so I have a couple of general rules (or five) I like to offer on how to layout your living room.

First, yes there will be a TV, and no, it doesn't have to be the first thing you see when you

enter the room. There is usually a "money" wall in every room.

That's an expanse of wall that has no, interruptions by doors or windows. Typically, you'll have an entry and a window somewhere, so most people are tempted to put their TV on the free wall, but it's difficult to decorate around a TV, so don't do it!

If you have a fireplace, you may think it is the focal point but in a contest between what is watched most, the TV will win. Your fireplace is an accessory.

You may be tempted to install the TV above the fireplace and this is fine if you have a least 9-12 feet between you and the screen, if not, get ready for sore necks!

I like to put the sofa on the money wall and the TV opposite. Your sofa wall will be the focal wall that you can build up, pyramid-style. It starts with the low sofa back, then I add side tables with taller lamps, and add art that's higher again so you create a focal point.

Seating areas work best if they are corner to corner to encourage conversation. In rooms that are long, I will often add a second seating



Yes, you can decorate with a TV and no, it doesn't have to be the first thing you see when you enter the room.

area with a couple of chairs together, and an occasional table or nesting tables. Area rugs can act as room dividers without building a wall especially in open concept spaces.

About that TV, there are options for installing. Articulating TV wall mounts installed no lower than 30

inches up from the floor keeps the TV off the furniture and adds flexibility to tilt and turn for better viewing.

There are no shortages of options for TV stands with storage for components and books, etc. Display at least one book if you care what Shailene thinks.

A third, more extravagant

option is a motorized TV lift by Lee Valley. Your TV can be concealed when not in use and rise at the click of a button for viewing. The cabinet would need to be designed for this option, making it even more impressive.

Once you've balanced the TV, furnishings and rugs you

will have a great sense of satisfaction when you enter your family room. That is, until the family shows up and lives in it.

— Jane Lockhart is an award-winning designer, TV personality and leading expert in the world of design. Visit www.janelockhart.com.

Host a Thanksgiving that's as easy as pie



NATALIE DEANE
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AND MORE

Thanksgiving entertaining can seem like a burden with all the preparation, the family, the meal — this feast can feel festive for everyone but the host. That burden can become a breeze with just a few tips.

Cheers to the holiday. Have a sparkling start to your holiday festivities. Greet all your guests with a bubbly cranberry punch that is family friendly. My favourite (for adults only) is Kim Crawford Fizz with freshly harvested cassis.

Autumn is apple season so some apple cider cold or hot will be fitting to have on hand throughout the day.

For mealtime, I recently found a truly organic wine — Emiliana Adobe Merlot. It's a bright wine with hints of berries combined with black pepper notes. It pairs perfectly with all the flavours of a tradi-

tional meal.

Let's talk turkey. There is no doubt Thanksgiving is all about the turkey but what will you be making along with the bird?

Planning your menu is critical to a magical meal. Going with the classics is usually the best bet. Creamy mashed potatoes, savoury stuffing, sweet potatoes and some delicious harvest vegetables.

Sometimes you have to move away from tradition and serve what everyone really loves. Perhaps like in my house there are a few that prefer a prime rib roast with rice pilaf or mac and cheese.

For some, a lasagna with garlic bread and Caesar salad could be the best choice. Go with what people love after all it's all about them having a goodtime.

Making this grand feast can get very costly and range anywhere from \$250 to \$350. YP Grocery (@YPGrocery) is a mobile app that compiles sales, promotions and coupons from your favourite grocery stores. It can help you save on average 25% on your

grocery bill.

Simply chic thanksgiving. When it is your turn to host you always want to impress, but rather than going over the top with extravagance, you can try for some simple sophistication. Take a fuss-free approach, incorporate rustic elements with a touch of sophistication.

Create a festive setting with a DIY centrepiece of pumpkins, leaves, flowers and candles. For some added flare, spray paint it all gold, pair it with some themed serving platters and bowls, don't have any — try amazon.ca. You can also look to amazon.ca for other Thanksgiving décor items and place settings, best thing — it all gets delivered straight to your door.

Go simply chic with a laid back approach and host in your living room. Set up a buffet table decorated with geometric candles (Homesense \$29.99) in fall colours along with decorative pumpkins with metallic stem (Homesense \$12.99). Serve food in carved wood serving bowls



This Thanksgiving, go simply chic with a laid back approach and host your family and friends in your living room with a more casual style.

(Homesense \$39.99), marble and acacia board (Indigo \$29.50), Dansk 4 QT casserole dish (Indigo \$95.96) and Dansk large baker (Indigo \$95.96).

Use these tips to help with your Thanksgiving preparation so you have more time to focus on what really counts — your family and friends.

— Natalie Deane is a lifestyle connoisseur who shares tips for everyday living through decor, entertaining and household trends.