

CROSSING the FINISH LINE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HEINEMAN

How adding the final touches can uplift your space

TIP
Layer items of
similar hues
together



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Buying a sofa or selecting wood flooring is a big task. Yet, in the end, we select something suitable for our lifestyle and decor scheme. The process can seem long. In the case of a sofa, you sit in several until you find the right feel and look, you choose the fabric, and make the purchase.

Significant furniture pieces like a sofa or whole-house elements like flooring anchor a space to make it feel and function like the room we envision. So why is it that when all those staple items are finally in place, the room still doesn't feel finished? It's one of the biggest decor conundrums.

As trivial as pillows or candles or a vase may seem to the big picture, it's these finishing touches that add the personality, colour and individual style that every room needs.

ACCESSORIES

A short shopping trip to the mall where you grab a few pieces, bring them home, and place them in your work-in-progress room will not result in the "instant style" you expect it to. Woefully under-accessorized spaces are the net outcome of many, not one, long and frustrating trips to a host of over-crowded malls.

How much do you really need to make one room look done? I emphasize purchasing more at the outset and returning what you don't need. Because you don't always know if something will work until you get it home.

Allot a full 20 per cent of the room's budget entirely to final touches so you commit to accessorizing as its own category, much like the flooring or electrical budgets. To finish the room completely, you need to spend money on it.

Many people get close to the end of a home project and experience financial and emotional fatigue. The room is close but not quite done after all the work that went into it. This is frustrating as it's still missing the personality that accessories add.

LAYERING

To style a room well, layering can create individuality and fullness. Layering in design means that there may be a variety of vases grouped together and behind them is a framed

photo leaning up against the wall as the backdrop.

The goal is not to have just a single item or even a grouping of similar pieces but rather to incorporate different shapes and sizes of mixed elements and a few that are not the same at all. Layering adds warmth, interest, texture and, most importantly, personality.

ARTWORK

If you're struggling to finish a room, begin with the artwork. Art adds instant focal points to any space and can pull in colours and textures missing from the larger staple items. For art, think big and strategic as you begin choosing.

What do you want to see on the large wall over the headboard in the bedroom? One large piece in a key location like this draws immediate attention and quickly fills a room. Look for other large walls that can handle over-sized pieces or groups of art together.

Next, select smaller-sized art as "infill" intended for walls that aren't necessarily large or focal but will benefit from a dash of colour. Some walls provide a place to add pieces interesting to you. Note that anything can be considered art: shadow boxes of kids' crafts or photos from your vacation. Always select items that have meaning for you.

GROUP EFFORT

Once artwork has been determined, other three-dimensional pieces like boxes, baskets, books, candles, and clocks can be grouped and placed together throughout a room. The simple rule of odd numbers—such as three, five and seven—still works when grouping objects. The key word is group.

A long row of accessories can look messy, whereas placing them into a group and leaving space

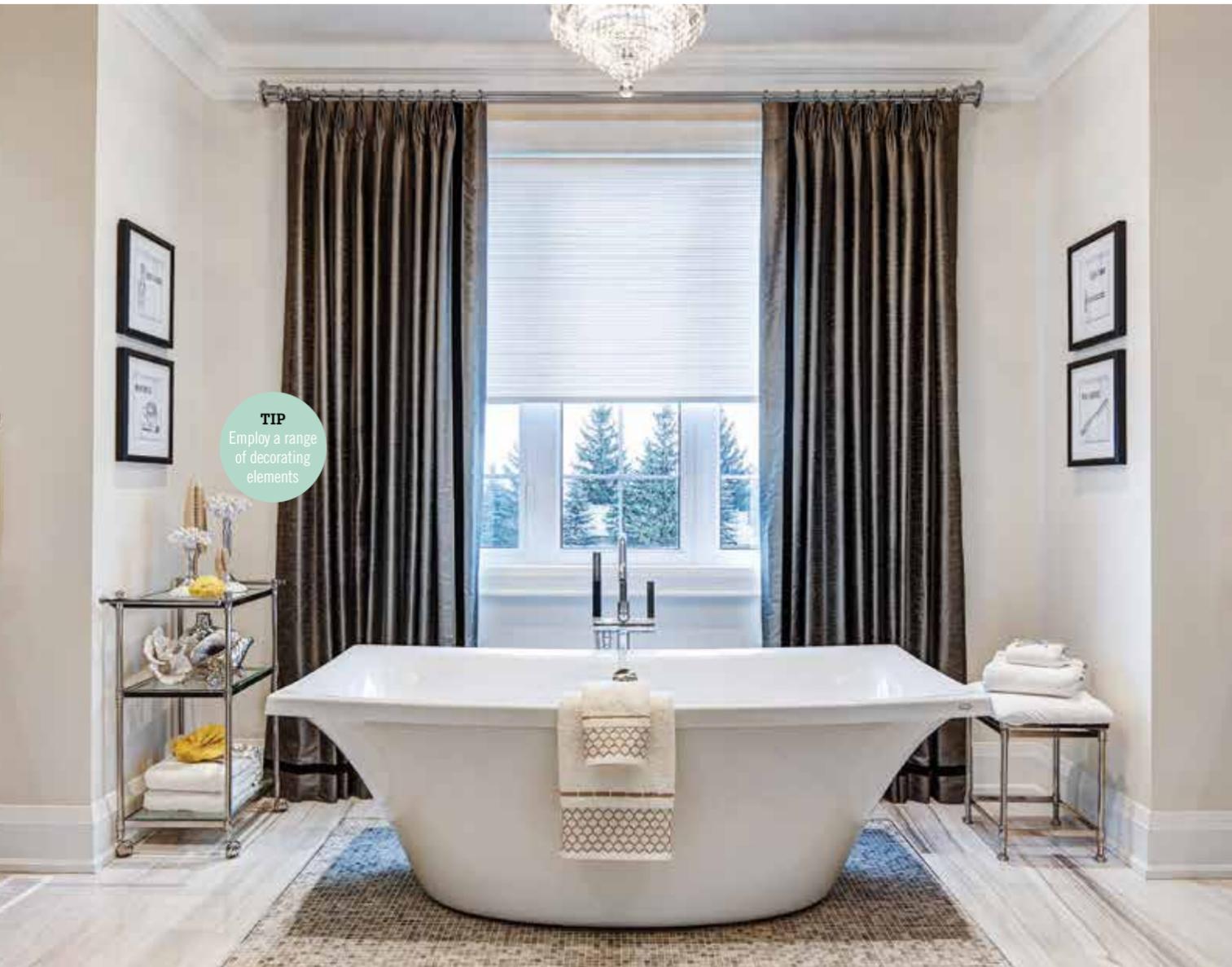
before the next grouping creates visual harmony. If this is difficult for you, try the designer's favourite trick: add a tray to any surface and put items on it— instant grouping! To make this work, ensure you have enough surfaces to display on—add small tables, ottomans, bookcases, and shelves to accommodate your accessories.

SOFTWARE

Perhaps the easiest way to add a

final flurry of colour and texture is with soft textiles like pillows and throws. A grouping of three pillows in different sizes at one end of a sofa provides layers of colour, texture and shape that connect to other elements within the room.

Remember, accessorizing is the last 20 per cent of a room's design but ultimately it makes the other 80 per cent sing and convey your personal style in an authentic and individual way. ♦



TIP
Employ a range of decorating elements



TIP
Use varying shapes and sizes

SOURCES:

MASTER BEDROOM: DRESSER, restorationhardware.com **CHAIRS**, janelockhart.com **OTTOMAN**, janelockhart.com **CARPET**, speersroadbroadloom.com **BUILT-IN COFFEE STATION**, pariskitchens.com **SINK**, kohler.ca **TRAY**, homesense.ca **PILLOWS AND BEDDING**, Drapery: Avant Garde masterfabrics.com Tailored by drapesandmore.ca **HEADBOARD**, sunpan.com **NIGHT TABLES**, unionlightingandfurnishings.com **DRAPES**, installed by drapesandmore.ca **END OF BED BENCH**, Jenna Queen Bench; janelockhart.com **CHANDELIER**, unionlightingandfurnishings.com **MASTER BATH: TUB, CABINETS**, pariskitchens.com **DRAPERIES**, Avant Garde masterfabrics.com Installed by drapesandmore.ca **FLOORING**, Elegance Escapement polished 18 x 36 and Temple Grey cercantile.com **CHANDELIER**, unionlightingandfurnishings.com

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