

## Give your home a Christmas treat

Christmas is a time for pampering yourself and your friends. So why not give your home a lift as well? There are many little things you can do which make a big difference to the impact of a room, but shouldn't cost a fortune.

Annie Stevens (right), a member of the Interior Decorators and Designers Association (IDDA) says: "New cushions can make all the difference to a room that is looking a bit tired". She often does up flats or houses which are to be let out, and therefore understands the need to keep to a tight budget.

"Especially good for winter, and with Christmas in mind, is velvet," she adds. "I buy it in 50 metre bundles at £3 a metre, and use it all over the place". The joy of velvet is that it is practical, gives a feel of opulence while being relatively cheap. It also looks good with cheap fabrics, such as ticking. Other nifty tricks include using dish cloths or glass cloths to make cushion covers for a kitchen or child's play room. If your children have bean bags, cover these in ticking and have them initialled for a new look.

For the dining table, Annie suggests buying little old terracotta pots, of different sizes, filling them to the top with moss and then buying masses of Price's white candles. Pretty and festive but not too over the top. Or you could buy a huge white or pottery bowl, collect nice-looking twigs and cones and perhaps whole roses, then add some orange spices and a few drops of aromatherapy oil. This looks good and smells fantastic.

A change of curtains can completely change the feel of a room. Cheap calico, bordered with upholstery webbing tape and tied back with inexpensive hessian, gives a smart but practical effect. Other curtain ideas might be to use towelling in the bathroom. You could use plain towelling with initials for a 'Ralph Lauren' look at a quarter of the price, and if you have a chair in the bathroom, make a loose cover out of towelling for that.

Sue Symons, another IDDA member, also has a few tips. "To change the atmosphere in your living room at a reasonable cost, you must change the lighting," she says. "Fit a dimmer switch, add candlestick lamps at one end of the room and at the other put a large table lamp, which will give a much warmer feel. On top of that buy a large plant, and put it in an empty corner near one of the lights". If you have a plain sofa, you should find some checked fabric which has all the colours in your room on it, trim with rope and fringe in one of the colours of the checks and just throw it over the sofa. These alterations should not cost more than £400.

Or to brighten up a dull room, choose some complementary fabric and make a pretty decorative pelmet to go over plain curtains. Use the same fabric to cover a small chair or for scatter cushions. All of this can help give your home a new vibrant look for 1995.



## BEDS IN GOOD STEAD

A small company situated in the heart of Cornwall is producing reproduction Victorian bedsteads, using 100-year-old designs and original moulds and tools salvaged from the scrapheap. Says Terry Woodcock, founder of Enchanted House Traditional Bedsteads: "We aim to create a bed which will last for generations, just like the originals." Each bedstead is hand made, and can be produced to any size, with all kinds of customer specifications incorporated. It can have a brass, china or mother of pearl finish, with the simplest double iron bedstead starting at £495. Half testers and four-posters are also available from the company in Tresallian, Cornwall. Call 0872-520403 for details.

PHOTOGRAPHY TREVOR RAY HART



### A DREAM MACHINE

A real treat might be this amazing Dutch bed, called the Royal Bed. Each one is custom made to fit your exact requirements. When you buy it you are weighed, measured and generally sized-up. If you are after a double bed, then each half will be tailor made for each partner. If one wants to read sitting up, while the other sleeps prone, so be it. At the touch of the remote control the bed moves. It also airs itself in the morning, which is bad news for house mites. Prices go from £1,000 for a single, two-motor bed up to £4,500 for the deluxe version with four motors. The Royal Bed is available from the Auping showrooms in Baker Street, London W1.