

Five, easy ways to add a 'wow factor'



MELISSA DAVIS
**THE INCOME
RENOVATOR**

I'm a big advocate for sensible renovations that both answer the wants and needs of my clients but also achieve the maximum return on investment.

I know, I know — that sounds like no fun. I'm going to let you in on a little secret that will appease that need to splurge.

A completely generic and "builder basic" renovation although efficient, on-budget and seemingly mass-appealing, is not enough.

Like most things in life, be it people, clothing and even homes, we're drawn to those that are familiar and safe, but we fall in love with the ones that have some defining attribute that makes them unforgettable.

In every renovation allow

yourself 5-10% of your overall budget for splurges, upgrades and noteworthy additions. Here are my top five favorite splurges that won't break the bank.

1. Applied moulding. The weekend warrior version of its expensive cousin, applied moulding offers instant luxury. Elevate a builder basic living room or add a chair rail in a stairwell with a simple 1½" moulding, painted out the wall tone or accented in a crisp trim white. Materials are a few hundred dollars and this is a task even the novice DIYer can do.

2. Dining chandelier. There are few more prominent features in a home than the dining room chandelier. This is

literally a lit up adornment hung at eye level demanding guests take note. Selecting something that nods to quality sets the tone and an expectation that the balance of the home is of matched quality.

3. Marble — A little will do. When potential buyers visit an open house, they're trying to absorb a lot in a short time. If your budget is too tight to use marble in a washroom renovation, I'll use something clean and simple like a grey porcelain on the floor, a classic white subway tile or the like on the walls BUT add one row of natural stone as a feature. Just that small touch is enough. I promise when visitors have the post-visit chat about the house, they'll remember there was stone.

4. Opt for wardrobes over closets. I'm not a fan of traditional closets. The stud wall construction and access-limiting doors are inefficient. Just because it's how it's usually done does not mean it's the best solution. I like to buy big box wardrobes and build them in. The footprint

is smaller, the look is slick and custom and the internal fittings offer a dreamy custom closet layout for a very modest investment.

5. Create custom solutions with store-bought products. High-end homes are customized homes. Everyday problems are solved with custom solutions. Look for ways to answer these needs using prefabricated products. I love using kitchen cabinets in creative ways to create storage flanking fireplaces, hutches in dining rooms, even window seats and desk units in bedrooms. Using these cabinets as the overall structure, trimming them out and capping the tops achieves the same look at a fraction of the cost of actual custom built-ins.

— **Celebrity designer Melissa Davis** has close to 20 years of renovation and design experience and is well-known for appearances and her creative design work on several HGTV shows. For more information, visit www.melissadavis.com.

Use inexpensive, store bought kitchen cabinets to create a custom look - for storage around a fireplace, hutches in a dining room or even as window seats.



There are few more prominent features in a home than the dining room chandelier - it sets the tone for the home and demanding guests will take note.



Elevate a builder basic living room with a simple one-and-a-half inch moulding, paint out the wall tone or accent it with a crisp, white trim.

