

FROM | THE | FIELD

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Wise Designing

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MAKING THE MOST OF
THINGS IN A
TOUGH ECONOMY

MANY DESIGNERS WORK WITH A CLEAN SLATE, but in these economic times it makes sense to consider a scenario where customers can utilize what they already have, yet create a newly transformed space. They want a “wow” space, and design25 answers the call. The brainchild of two friends who bonded while playing together on the Pound Ridge tennis team, Betsy Moreno Berger and Shelley LeBoff stage homes for resale, or provide quick-fix decorating and de-cluttering services to clients who want to keep the price tag down. One of the hallmarks of the design25 team is their desire to reuse and rework much of what an existing home already has. The success of their concept and talent is demonstrated by a growing number of assignments. There have been 12 big jobs to date, a great boon in any economy.

“We are so busy that we haven’t had time to stop and evaluate how things are going,” said Betsy with a grin. Like longtime friends, they

sit comfortably on a spacious couch in the LeBoff home, eagerly finishing each other's sentences. They use linens, pillows, flowers, and table top decor to provide a punch factor in transforming a room.

"One interesting aspect to our spaces is the declutter factor," said Shelley. "It doesn't just affect the house, it affects how people are living," she reveals, "they feel better in their space and then good things begin to happen. Houses that have been on the market suddenly sell, or people begin to invite friends over more when they feel proud of their home. It is all positive."

The realtors are catching on to the duo. Ginnel's Muffin Dowdle engaged the services of design25 to stage a multi-million dollar home that was going on the market. This included enhancing the furnishings, and turning a workout space into a bedroom. The realtor felt it was important to have one more sleeping area close to the master suite to attract families with smaller children. The guest bedroom was reorganized to serve as a den as well. "They are terrific and have a real eye," said Dowdle.

In another challenge, the team was tasked with re-decorating a geodesic dome. There were no right angles and no rectangles in the room. The ladies changed the

furniture placement and added one new wall color to enhance the existing paint. They placed textured accent pillows on the sofa, which they had feared initially would need recovering. "It is a lot of lifting and moving. We try many things. We fought with this place, but it all worked in the end," said Betsy.

When asked what simple fixes might apply to most homes, Shelley replied, "Digital photos mean lots and lots of framed family pictures that people like to decorate with. Photos should be rotated so they aren't oozing all over the room." "People have so many objects in their rooms that they just aren't enjoying," added Betsy. "We help them edit things and rotate what they have on display so that they don't have to part with things they love."

Next, design25 will be consulting on a "totally green home" in Westchester, which will be under construction for the next year. The task will be to visit the homeowners' current house, and decorate the new one from the available sofas, artwork and other possessions.

Meantime, this tennis team remains grateful for the friendship they share, the creative process that inspires them, and the excitement that comes along with a venture that is rapidly taking off.



fairy dust

A now eight-year-old shares her correspondence with the tooth fairy.

Dear Tooth Fairy,

What is your name? Does everyone have their own tooth fairy? How tall are you? Are you a boy or a girl?

Hi. What a great tooth! ... My friends call me Sneak—but that's not my real name. Everyone has their own tooth fairy but sometimes we share. I'm not very tall. Keep brushing those teeth.
Love, the Tooth Fairy

Dear Sneak,

What is your real name? Are you a boy or a girl? What's Pearl [another fairy] up to? Are you sharing with anyone tonight? Do tooth fairies lose their teeth? You are so nice.
PS. Do you like fairy books? Make sure you answer all the questions.

Wow! Another tooth already. My name is Zelda, but don't tell anyone because I don't like it. I haven't seen Pearl recently—I think she's in France. Tonight is a slow night—so no sharing. Fairies are fairies, not boys or girls. Yes, I love fairy books—I hope to be in one someday. Your friend, Sneak.

Hi! It's been awhile. May I please have 10 or 50 dollars? If that's too much you can choose. Please tell me how tall you are. Write back.

Good work on the tooth—it was worth waiting for. Sorry I was late. I had a sore wing yesterday. I couldn't give 10 or 50 dollars, but I gave you special dollars! I don't know how humans measure so I can't explain how tall I am. Using this pencil is kind of tiring. Love, Zelda.