



HOUSE CALL
BY SARAH GALLOP
INTERIOR DESIGNER

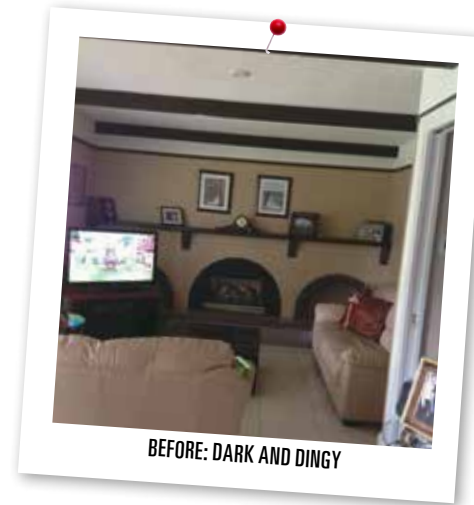
Converting cold to cosy

A bland family room is given colour, a warm wood floor, additional lighting and touches that turn it into a comfortable, inviting space.

Three equal size sections on the fireplace wall make the room feel taller.

A new neutral sofa with chaise end provides comfy seating for watching TV.

Placing tall artwork on the large blank wall helps add height to the room.



As the weather turns colder there is nothing better than cosying up next to a warm fireplace. For this homeowner, however, the family room was feeling anything but cosy. With the cold tile floors and a bland monochromatic colour scheme, this room was screaming for colour and interest.

Removing the dark horizontal lines of the current mantel and ceiling beams helps to change the proportion of the room. With the ceiling colour spilling over on to the top portion of the wall, the room appears short and squat. Small elements like this can make a room feel uncomfortable, so removing them is important to create a cosy space.

Taking the wall colour to the ceiling line makes the room feel taller. Adding crown moulding maintains some interest on the ceiling but removes the contrast that the wood beams had, which pulled the eye up.

Creating three equal size sections on the fireplace wall introduces vertical repetition and makes the room feel taller.

To give the fireplace wall more focus and presence a floor-to-ceiling built-in could be added on each side, providing storage and display space. The fireplace is defined with a white mantel and marble surround with a large scale piece of artwork above.

The TV is moved to the opposite side of the fireplace and placed within the built-in – on an adjustable pullout arm. This allows the furniture to be rearranged, opening up the sightline into this space. The sofa is moved to the exterior wall, and a comfy chair and ottoman is added in the corner created by the adjacent room.

DVD and games storage is provided at the bottom of the built-in behind closed doors, while the middle portion is open to keep books, family photos and treasures.

Additional lighting in the form of pot lights and a central ceiling fixture help to brighten up the room and improve the functionality by providing both task and ambient lighting. The ceiling fixture also adds some sparkle and reflection in the family room. Medium tone hardwood flooring replaces the cold floor tile and an earthy area rug anchors the seating group.

A new neutral sofa with chaise end provides comfy seating for watching TV or visiting with friends, and colour is added through accent pillows and throws. This allows the accents to be changed seasonally if desired. The coffee table with a developed patina has an old world quality, and adds a weathered reflective aspect to the room.

Placing tall artwork on the large blank wall to the right helps add height to the room and balances the proportion of the built-ins. This is also a great opportunity to add more colour to the room.

With these changes, this room transforms into a space that is warm and inviting; a perfect space for the family to enjoy as the weather turns colder. All that's needed now is a plate of shortbread, a mug of hot chocolate and a good holiday movie.

Sarah Gallop is a registered interior designer and principal at SGDI, a full service design firm specializing in custom homes and renovations, sarahgallop.com.

EMAIL YOUR DESIGN QUESTIONS TO HOUSECALL@SARAHGALLOP.COM