

Custom Touches

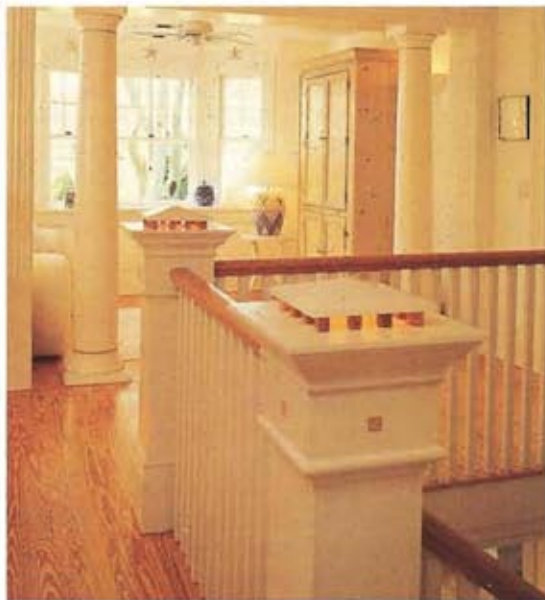
Splurging on distinctive features here and there adds a dynamite accent to your home.

Little details make a big difference. For proof, study the custom touches pictured here and note how they add personality to a room. Many of these effects are the results of simple ideas and inexpensive materials—things you can do yourself to add your own personal flair.

Put It on a Pedestal

▼ An architectural column—either a stock column or an antique from a salvage shop—creates an interesting accent for a wall. This column stands on its own as a work of art even when not displaying flowers or collectibles.

Photographer: Tim Murphy. Architect: The Architector Design Group. Regional editor: Mindy Pantiel



Keep a Light Burning

◀ Lighted newel posts give this upstairs hallway a warm glow as well as a measure of nighttime safety. The simple hollow post is topped with an ornamental hipped cap under which a light glows like a lantern. A panel at the back of the post opens for easy access when the bulb needs to be changed.

Photographer: D. Randolph Foulds
Architect: Lyman Goff, AIA
Interior design: Cohen Design
Contractor: Sal Parise



Roundup of Ideas

Many good builders add small practical touches to make life easier for homeowners. Mike Wood, builder of Providence Homes, in Arlington, Texas, offers these tips:

- Engrave switch plates with the names of the areas each switch controls. Friends and family can tell at a glance which switch to use. A company that sells and engraves trophies can do this for approximately \$65 for a 5,000-square-foot home.
- Include several outlets under the eaves for holiday decorations.
- Place soundproofing between floors for extra noise control.
- Install adjustable shelves and rods in clothes closets to accommodate the needs of growing kids and changing fashions.
- Tint the garage floor with concrete stain for the look of a sealed and colored floor. The stain doesn't have a tendency to peel like paint.



Double-Deck Island

▲ Borrowing an idea from commercial kitchens, Page and Diane van Loben Sels included a raised counter atop the island in their kitchen. Dubbed the "landing platform," it serves to separate the work area from the eating area. The platform is a perfect spot for displays, or to place serving dishes during buffet dinners. Electrical outlets on the ends are handy for appliances. The tiles were painted by Page and Diane's children. □

Photographer: Ernest Braun. Designer: Sandra Bird
Regional editor: Helen Heikamp