

## Amazing Rec Room Redo

Every spring Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, The Milwaukee Brewers and Fox 6 hold the Amazing Rec Room Redo contest. To enter, contestants must submit a photo of the rec room they want decorated and a written explanation, of any length, of why they want to win. The grand prize winner then receives professional redecorating services (from me) for their rec room and up to \$1,000 in merchandise from selected Goodwill stores in addition to a fabulous assortment of Milwaukee Brewers merchandise such as framed jerseys, lamps, chairs, rugs, bobble heads and autographed baseballs.

From a design standpoint there were several challenges involved with this contest, and believe me, I love a good challenge! The main one was the turn around time. We only had **two weeks** to assess the room, determine a design strategy, shop for materials, paint and complete the actual "redo" for a LIVE Fox 6 TV broadcast on June 11. The winner was chosen on Thursday, May 22 but I didn't meet the family or see the room until that following Tuesday, May 27. While meeting the family we discussed what they wanted to keep (the TV and cabinet), purge (everything else) and assessed their needs for their "new" rec room.

I learned that the kids played video games, the parents used the area for storage, and they really wanted a media room for the whole family to enjoy. But this space really didn't have its own style or personality, or even a comfortable place to sit! I needed to make this room functional for the whole family but at the same time, I needed to give it some pizzazz. Let me tell you, the winner was every designer's dream client! "I trust you," she said. AND, she let me make all the decisions!

Usually when I begin a redesign, I look for some inspiration in the room such as artwork, a lamp or a pillow, however there wasn't much in the room that they wanted to



keep, so I needed to find my inspiration elsewhere.

Now, the second challenge came into play, "would I find my inspiration for the room and would I be able to find the right items with less than a week to shop?" This one never worried me though. I love the thrill of the hunt and I know that I'll find amazing things for sale at Goodwill on any given day.

As I shopped, I knew our winners really needed a sofa, a chair or two, a rug to warm up the floor, lighting and shelving. Voila, my inspiration appeared in the store. I found a beautiful, **brand new** sofa that included throw pillows in pale shades of turquoise, rust, yellow, brown and blue. Now I had my inspiration!



The pillows lead to a drapery fabric in turquoise, brown and beige. I chose paint colors called 'Believable Buff' (beige) to disguise the grey paneling, 'Hazel' (a medium tone turquoise) to camouflage the block wall and 'Chocolate' (dark brown) for everything else in the room.

The family wanted a media room for everyone to enjoy, however one of the walls was in rather rough shape. So, I solved one problem and set the stage for the other. I covered that entire wall in chocolate brown crinkle fabric panels to simulate theatre curtains. Not only was the wall hidden, but we also created a cozy, more dramatic space.



Just to do something totally unique, instead of the usual drapery hardware, I used various lengths of galvanized pipe and rings to hang the curtain panels. After all, it was a basement rec room and it called for something unconventional.

Once those main items were in place, looking for coordinating pieces was easier. We found a comfortable recliner (also brand new), a carpet remnant, an area rug, a coffee table, game table and counter height chairs all at Goodwill stores.

The coffee table was unique because it opened up to make a larger work surface. It was a little too country looking, so I painted the base and the insert to match the walls in 'Chocolate'. I also updated the hardware.



Finally, all the Milwaukee Brewers merchandise was added. Chairs from old County Stadium were an added bonus and a treasured keepsake. I wanted to highlight baseball items in a special way, and I found all sorts of small shelves, half circle, rectangle, candle boxes and even bat and ball holders shaped like a glove. I sanded and painted them in 'Chocolate' and they created a nice collage against the turquoise wall.



The game table and counter height chairs were a fantastic find because they made the rec room more versatile. The table is a combination bumper pool, poker top or smooth surface for board games or buffet style snacks.



Finally, to add a feminine touch, I came across a collection of wood jewelry boxes in various sizes and finishes—after all there are girls in the family too—they make an interesting contrast with the older Brewer teammates.



Although the project was a bit challenging, our rec room redo was completed by the TV reveal date of Wednesday, June 11 on Fox 6 with Gus Gnorski. Just think—with a little ingenuity and the ability to see a diamond in the rough you can create a room that says “welcome home” with treasures found at Goodwill.

