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Bringing reality-show design into your real-life home

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Resources

Amely Wurmbrand Designs: 206-542-0447 or www.amelydesigns.com

Faith Sheridan Interior Design: 206-774-6771 or www.fsidesigner.com

On TV: Catch Amely Wurmbrand on HGTV's "What You Get for the Money" at 11:30 p.m. Sunday and 3:30 a.m. Monday. For more air times and details about the show, go to www.hgtv.com.

You don't need us to tell you that television isn't *real*, even shows with regular people, like on HGTV.

But those shows can get even the most rational people over-excited and convinced they can pull off a design just like the one they saw last night.

However, local designers say, most people don't have the same invisible army and other resources to do the labor-intensive and creative work necessary to pull off the beautiful rooms shown on television.

"Good design doesn't just happen overnight," said Shoreline-based designer Amely Wurmbrand, who recently filmed a spot for "What You Get for the Money." "Even in a one-week period, they have a whole staff of people working with the designer, doing the rendering, color board, running around picking fabrics."

Unless you convince 10 friends to help you for a weekend for free, it will take you a lot longer to replicate what you saw on television — and probably cost a lot more.

The shows aren't realistic for the average homeowner, but you still can take away useful ideas and tips from watching.

Faith Sheridan, a Seattle designer who did a bathroom renovation last year for "Designers' Challenge," said the benefits are the resources listed online and the ideas you see.

"You can go look at all the bathrooms or go by style," Sheridan said. "Based on the information that you put together of the bathrooms that you like and what they incorporate, you have your own wish list of resources, materials that you like, colors that you like, even layouts."

But it's not always easy to tell what translates from the little screen to your home, so we asked Wurmbrand and Sheridan for suggestions on what they do behind the scenes that can help you in a redesign or renovation.

• **Shop like you mean it.** Shopping vintage is one trick designers use to reduce costs for a redesign, but it requires perseverance and a creative eye. Wurmbrand once turned a farm table into a bed frame, and has had vintage light fixtures refinished. She recommends auctions, vintage stores and surfing eBay regularly. Spend concentrated amounts of time shopping so you treat it like a project and remember what you saw.

• **Give yourself time to design.** Make sure your redesign or renovation includes time for making a floor plan and doing preliminary furniture and fabric shopping.

• **Be realistic about cost.** For kitchens and bathrooms, Sheridan's rule of thumb is to double the cost of a fixture or toilet for the labor required to install it. Bathrooms and kitchens involve multiple contractors and subcontractors. "It doesn't matter if the bathroom is 5 by 7 feet, every single trade will set foot in there," she said.

• **Budget money for accessories**. Designers do not just stumble upon the perfect accessory. Wurmbrand sometimes buys almost double the accessories she needs and returns the ones that don't work. Go to as many stores as possible in a short period of time (and make sure you understand their return policy), then edit. "You have to try different things out to see how it reads in a space," Wurmbrand said.

• **Mix high- and low-end pieces.** Invest in a couple of pricier pieces, but mix them in with affordable options.

• **Keep a folder of ideas.** Tear out pages of looks and pieces you like.

• **Where to start.** Pick a painting, a piece of art or photograph you really love and use it as the basis for color decisions and inspiration.

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