How to add value to your home on a budget by Leslie Jones

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Everyone loves a good home makeover show but Grand Designs is one of the most enjoyable. It follows couples looking to build a new life, literally; occasionally they build with their own bare hands but more often than not they make use of contractors, but the basic premise stays the same: to create a home that meets their needs, wants and dreams.

Running on the success of the programme came Grand Designs Live, which has now blossomed into Britain's foremost modern home show. This year it is returning to Excel London for the eighth consecutive year. With everything from new green developments to kitsch kitchen gadgets, this event has it all. In 2012 at least 500 exhibitors, spread over seven contrasting sections, will be taking part. It is a great event to go to for home inspiration and, let's face it, most of us would rather turn to DIY and home improvements so we can stay put in our homes rather than trying to rise up the property ladder in the current market.

Home improvement can be placed into different categories: from the minor and basic, like a new layer of paint; to the major and big, such as extensions and loft conversions. If these large scale renovations are a little out of your price range at the moment, don't fret. There are numerous ways to quite dramatically improve your property without demanding the big bucks.

Doors

First impressions are important. Make your external doors stand out. Ditch any tired, old and out dated front doors in favour of modern, contemporary and stylish doors that fit the new look you are trying to build with your property.

Don't forget about the internal doors either. It's quite easy to brush over internal doors, however you'll do so at your peril. Scuffed paint may be easily fixed, but doors that don't fit the look of the room need to be replaced. For instance, if you live in a Victorian property, modern pine doors just won't cut it.

Soft Furnishings

Adding colour, pattern and texture to a room is best and most straightforwardly achieved using soft furnishings. Cushions, throws, new three-piece suite covers, curtains, drapes and blinds can make a surprising difference especially when incorporated holistically.

Flooring

Don't just think that if you lay some Swedish pine floorboards your room will be at once enhanced. Some rooms benefit from carpets, whilst others cry for solid wood. Tiles and slate are another option and don't discount dark colours; deep and dark shades can have a dramatic effect, especially when offset by light-coloured walls.

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