

Splurge and save at the same time



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THE DESIGN FEED

With a little design know-how, balancing a budget doesn't have to mean compromising on quality. After all, some choices can be inexpensive and yet totally effective.

Other times, though, you just have to spend a little to be satisfied! Here's my guide to five major areas to splurge and save in your home, for the ultimate high-low mix.

1. Counters and cabinets. The truth is, fully custom cabinetry is rare in a kitchen. Typically, presized units are combined with fillers to create the "custom" dimensions. Embrace this and mix stock cabinets from a big box store with a beautiful splurge countertop that will draw all the attention. Use basic white units so they'll work with whatever door upgrade you might choose in the future.

Tip: Plan to upgrade the hardware (knobs, handles, etc.) as well before you buy, so your units are prepped with the right holes for your favourite selections.

2. Bathroom basics. In a bathroom, often a simple vanity is the most effective, especially for a contemporary spa-like appeal. Take those savings and splurge on a glass enclosure for your shower or tub-shower, in a clear or smoked grey finish. Even the sleekest shower curtain can't achieve the designer appeal of a custom glass panel, so it's worth the investment.

Tip: I've used IKEA's Godmorgon vanity in several client project — it's simple yet elegant, and floating vanities save leg room in a small space.

3. Tile tactics. When selecting tile, I rarely recommend using a faux finish, as they don't look authentic. Subway tile is an excellent, inexpensive classic you can apply to a backsplash or bathroom to save without sacrificing. For a room-defining statement, tile just one wall (such as the area above a range, or the back of the shower) in a splurge tile, paired with plain white porcelain everywhere else.

Tip: For a striking look from simple tile, choose a coloured grout, and let the installation pattern become the feature.

4. Tables and chairs. A good dining table can serve you and your family meals for many a year to come, especially a model with the ability to expand. Splurge on a sturdy unit with durable mechanics, and you can surround it with beautiful basic chairs — after all, six or eight chairs quickly adds up. Try a simple shaker chair, or a modern Pantone style silhouette. Down the road, these seats can become patio furniture or occasional chairs.

Tip: Use upholstered end chairs to get two plush seats for everyday use, and leave the rest simple for occasional get togethers.

5. Living room for life. In the living room, the sofa is often the anchor of the space both functionally and visually. A quality sofa in a basic neutral (especially a timeless gray or navy) will last through design trends, so splurge here. For accents, collect mix-and-match pillows, throw blankets, and other accents inexpensively over time, adding low com-



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mitment colour pops — and make sure to mix textures for a luxe appeal.

Tip: Pillows don't have to come in pairs. Grab just one wild piece, and you can mix it with basics — like the tiger print pillow in my Yanic Simard Selected accessories collection. (YSSelected.com)

— Yanic Simard is principal designer at the award-winning Toronto Interior Design Group (tidg.ca) and a regular TV design expert on CITY's Cityline. Check out his accessory line at ysselected.com.

QUICK BITES

1. Upgrade big-box-store cabinets with stylish hardware and a statement countertop.

2. Use a simple yet sleek floating vanity and splurge on a glass shower enclosure.

3. White subway tile is timeless — spice up one wall with a must-have tile or use bold grout.

4. Invest in a dining table, and use basic chairs for now. (You can repurpose them later).

5. Dress a long-term investment sofa in fun, non-committal pillows and throws.



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