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MAY 2014

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*Driven by Passion*



# OPEN THE WINDOWS LET IN THE FRESH AIR!

## It's summertime!!

*Home Decorating with Martin Amado*

By Clara Galvano

*According to Martin Amado, interior decorator and lifestyle expert, you don't have to spend tons of money to give your home an updated look. Amado, who has been the host/designer on the home makeover segment ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT in Miami for over nine years, offers easy decorating tips to share with you. Let's get started!*

His DVD *De Revista - Espacios Con Estilo - Salas antes y despues* is excellent! In it he shows step-by-step how to decorate an empty living room. Summertime is when many people move from one dwelling to another so his timely tips will help if you are planning a move. Amado believes that everyone deserves a beautiful home and that you don't have to spend lots to do it. He loves working with a low cost budget. We love that too! So, how does he do it? He has a three step plan for creating a magazine-worthy space...or "de revista!"

His first step is using the living room as the canvas for your masterpiece because that is the first room you see when you enter most homes. The second step is furniture and the third and final step is accessories. The living room's wall color is probably the most important decision you will make. How do you choose the right color? His secret—find an item that you love—it could be a pillow, a rug or a painting. Use it for inspiration. Why do you love it? Choose one of the colors in that piece and get a few paint samples. Apply each to a small section of the wall. Let the paint dry well and come



back to it to determine which shade you like the most. Bingo! That's your wall color! If you are living in a small space, choose light colors and your space will seem larger. Another hint: When starting to decorate from scratch, if you see something you like in a magazine, clip it, and start a book of ideas. These clips will determine what your style is. Are you Contemporary? Classical? Shabby Chic? The clips will tell their story very clearly and when shopping you can take the information with you so can look for pieces with a similar style.

Talking with Amado you can sense that he truly enjoys helping others spruce up their homes. Although he has no formal training as a designer, and in fact wanted to be an actor, he found his "voice" helping his father in their construction business. That's where he developed his keen eye for design and, with his experience later on as a visual merchandiser, the die was cast (or should we say in this designer's case that the "dye" was cast?) regarding his career. He says that one way to change your living room look is to switch up your curtains and suggests airy linen with grommets or rings to



was cast?) regarding his career. He says that one way to change your living room look is to switch up your curtains and suggests airy linen with grommets or rings to give the window a classic look. He also likes sheers for a summery style. Tired of the sofa? Look into slipcovers—they now come in various materials and styles. With new slipovers and some artfully tossed pillows you have a brand new look. Pillows don't have to be expensive—most home goods stores carry them in an array of colors and textures. Amado also mentioned area rugs. If you have one and used it through the cold weather months, switch it up and get one made of jute or sisal. Both are natural and work well with summer décor. One surprising comment he made was that if you are a bit adventurous, you can create an accent wall by painting chevron stripes! "The striped cabana look is popular this season and a definite attention getter! And if you get tired of it? *Sin compromiso*, you just paint over it!"

What about your bedroom? There are studies that say an average person spends one third of their life in bed, so it's important to have the right ambience in that very special room. According to Amado, bedrooms are the perfect place for displaying a special piece. Furniture that is antique or made to look antique works well. Also, anything that looks distressed is popular this season. You can also arrange several pieces that look "collected" for fun. He also likes old trunks and suggests that if you like garage sales, keep your eye out for pieces that can be repurposed. He also likes beige-on-beige and white-on-white with pillows for a touch

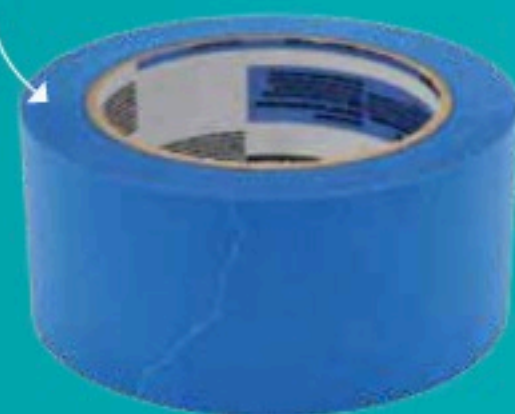
of brightness. Very sophisticated. Many home goods stores are also showing variations of grey that also look and feel very luxe.

In the bathroom he likes to see a spa-like feel with very little money spent. "Roll up your towels like they do in spas. Decorate with scented candles, some come flameless now. Diffusers—no more potpourri...diffusers are the way to go now. Use different textures. Switch up the shower curtain. (This writer saw one in the Gaiam Living catalog for \$20! The Spring Daisy Shower Curtain is made from chlorine-free PEVA vinyl and the colorful gerbera daisies would make anyone smile.) Colors he mentions frequently are turquoise, lime green and white. You can combine these colors in many different ways with neutrals, and they are always classic and smart. Or if you prefer, choose the sorbet spectrum of colors, which are always pleasing to the eye.

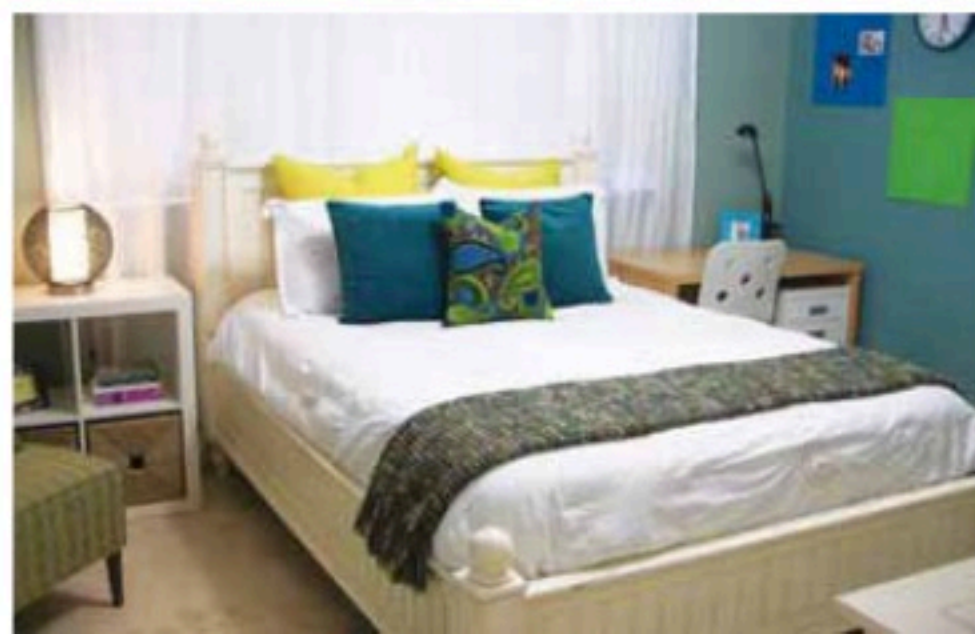
Into the kitchen! Many city apartment dwellers will find that their kitchen windows face an alleyway or another apartment building. To bring light in, choose sheer café curtains in light colors in cheery designs. These are usually inexpensive in home goods stores. If you have room on a wall, a small cork bulletin board works very well for menus, messages, important phone numbers. To smarten one up, just glue or use push pins to apply colorful ribbon around the edges in a bright color. No sewing involved!! Having a small area rug in front of the sink area is also very helpful—anything you can use on your front doorstep, you can use there.

## Sidebar tips:

If you are painting, use *blue painter's tape* for clean, sharp lines.



Buying furniture? Measure! How much room do you need for that sofa, chair, bookcase? Take those measurements to the furniture store so that what your purchase will be the right scale (and you might want to measure your doorway, too, in order to ensure you can get the item into your home in the first place!)



Plants! In every room...yes, every room! Go to a large flower store and ask about which grow best in which rooms based on the amount of light each room has. DIY Network's website has tons of easy projects that will enhance your space.

Amado works exclusively through his company *The WOW Factor!, Inc.* You can also learn more about his work by visiting [www.martinamado.com](http://www.martinamado.com).