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Reinventing traditional living spaces into useful and stylish destinations

How much of your home do you actually use? Are there beautifully furnished, yet rarely stepped-in, rooms or spaces that function solely as the 'catch all' for your stuff? Living rooms, guest rooms — even dining rooms — tend to fall under this category. These spaces have a propensity to be used on occasion only, so repurposing these rooms may suit your needs better. Could your living room work better as a home office, your formal dining room double as a craft space (if your table is usually full of crafting supplies this could be for you), or a guest room multi-purpose as a kid zone or man cave?

One local couple, Wayne and Linda, were tired of walking past their formal living room every day and never stepping into it. "It's the first room you see when you walk in the door and it had no purpose," says Linda. They felt the room had more potential as a space in their home.

The Allentown residents hired interior decorator Shoshana Gosselin of Designs by Shoshana to create a plan that offered better use of the space. "Rooms should be pretty and practical for the way you live," Shoshana says. "That can mean turning a traditionally used space into one that is unconventional yet more functional."

For Linda and Wayne, who enjoy socializing as well as quiet evenings at home, that meant creating a working library where they could read, relax and enjoy conversations with small groups of friends. The couple was looking for a stylish space with a transitional look that marries architectural components with the warmth and comfort of an intimate setting.



Shoshana Gosselin

Shoshana Gosselin

A dramatic redesign turned an Allentown couple's rarely-used formal living room into a casual, inviting library.

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— Shoshana Gosselin

Shoshana developed a plan that took into consideration existing elements that were important in the room. The focal point was definitely the fireplace. The large mantel, that could have been an obstacle, turned into a sensational feature. "It was two feet deep so we were able to incorporate a water feature above it, something Linda and Wayne always wanted," Shoshana

says. The arched box containing the fountain was built replicating the detail in the mantel so it looked and felt like it had always been there.

The plan also included two large double bookcases, made of cherry, that perfectly fill the empty spaces on either side of the fireplace. Linda had fun adding all her beloved books and accents to the shelves. Because the room was to be

used for reading and relaxing, lighting was key to making the library feel cozy, warm and also functional. Shoshana recommended adding a multitude of lighting options for task and ambiance. These accents served to set the mood.

To create enough comfortable seating for small gatherings, a soft leather sofa, two round ottomans and a pair of

updated wingback chairs — upholstered in a fun floral fabric — were added. The chairs became the inspiration for the tones of the library. A pair of graceful drapes in a powder blue chenille fabric with medallion fringe dot embellishments, pulled back with 14-inch jeweled tassel tie backs, added elegance.

A sentimental, personal touch in the library is a gallery

of framed botanicals photographed by Linda and Wayne's daughter.

"We are so happy with the way our new library turned out," says Linda. "We were able to turn wasted space into a room that we are thrilled to use."

For more information, contact designs by Shoshana at 610-573-0642, www.loveyourroom.com.

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