

Teenage Living.

Teenagers these days are swamped with every conceivable electronic gadget known to man, iPad, mini-iPad, iPod, iPhone...and for a teenager it usually is all about I...I...but they tend to forget that iPad! We all know that the teenage life is not easy, these are the formative years when they start to become autonomous and their future is more in their hands than it's been thus far. So when designing for a teenager's room its best to listen carefully and then edit those thoughts to form a cohesive, creative use of the space.

Since teenagers spend innumerable hours in their rooms anyhow, it should be a space that reflects them but yet can still hold true to the architecture and style of your overall home. The idea is to make the space "cool" enough for them to be happy and like it enough so that they don't realize that you did what you would have wanted if it were your room too - just maybe a little more edgy. I like to think of it as one-room living. Almost as if it were a studio apartment and living in a space that has to have many functions; sleeping, liming with friends, gaming, TV watching, studying, dressing, etc. all call for an exacting use of the floor area. Every single piece of furniture has to be fit for purpose and be as versatile as possible. A side table needs to include storage, a bed will need to have hidden clothes drawers beneath it, closets will be floor to ceiling, and the floor space should be kept uncluttered (yeah! Right! - I hear you all saying!). But, if possible, then this helps encourage the natural light to flow through the space.

You can use a transparent screen for example as a divider between the sleeping area and the sitting/games area; in doing so you would have demarcated the area.

In this situation you can then use bold wallpaper or paint colours for the "bedroom" side of the room and even run it onto the ceiling creating a mini sleeping haven. Infusing a room with bold colour is one of the best decorating tools to create an instant mood or a certain style. Think warm blues, hot pinks, or sunshine yellows. They will all create a cozy space in a small room and detract from the rooms natural dimensions. The "living" area is where most of the gaming and liming with friends will take place (hopefully) so add a love seat in colourful upholstery and textiles and maybe a bean-bag or two.

If there is a TV, hang it on the wall and use floating shelving below to house the gaming and other electronic components. This way you save precious floor space and use the vertical in the room to keep the "stuff" off the floor. If you can mix in personal decorative pieces such as lamps and artwork then you start to give the room personality. If the space has architectural details such as crown mouldings or skirting, play them up to add visual interest.

Keeping the overall scheme cohesive may be your biggest challenge in a bright, bold coloured room, so plan it through properly and look at all your choices together with your teen so you will see how they play together. You could always take a more sophisticated route by using natural toned colours throughout.

Regardless, having your teenager participate in the process will lead to success in the end, and we all know a happy teenager is not always the easiest thing to find. Together you can help create a space in which they can find themselves and in the long run that makes the investment in your home all the more worth it.



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Warm blue is a great colour for a teenager's room



Store the TV, gaming console and other teenage-friendly gadgets on wall shelving.



Comfortable seating for when friends visit.