



## SAVVY HOST

Why kids' birthday parties have become a competitive sport

See Page G4

## LIFE AT HOME

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## AROUND THE HOUSE

## Easy 'makeover' ideas for kitchen

**ON THE CHEAP** • If you can't stand your kitchen but the budget does not allow for an extreme makeover, maybe a new backsplash can help.

There are lots of inexpensive, do-it-yourself options, according to the fall issue of Do It Yourself, a special-interest publication of Better Homes and Gardens:

■ Paint the wall with magnetic primer, then with black chalkboard paint. Colourful magnetic frames can showcase photographs or stand alone in a sort of rotating gallery space.

■ Cut rectangular pieces from wine crates and alternate them on the wall, checkerboard-style, with similar-sized pieces of plywood that have been stained a rich brown.

■ Head to the home store and check out the supply of lightweight wood or synthetic architectural appliques and mouldings. Create a design, glue it to the wall, then caulk carefully and apply a white-washed paint job.

■ Bring nature to the kitchen with botanical prints. Protect them from splatters by sandwiching them under pieces of Plexiglas that are screwed to the wall.

■ Apply wipe-clean oilcloth to the walls.

Although none of these suggestions will be as durable as new ceramic tile, they might work well as stopgap measures. And the price is certainly right compared with new tile.

— Gail Borelli, McClatchy Newspapers

## Extreme Makeover goes back to school

**CONTEST** • The home makeover fever is going back to school. Expo, maker of dry-erase markers, boards and accessories, has developed a classroom makeover program to bring colour to the classroom and improve learning environments.

Paige Hemmis of Extreme Makeover: Home Edition and the Scholastic Instructor Magazine are holding a contest in both Canada and the U.S. for schools. The Expo Classroom Makeover Contest invites students to submit an essay explaining why their class deserves a chance to win a \$15,000 classroom makeover. The contest closes Oct. 31.

Kids need not fear. The essays must be 100 words or fewer and accompanied with a classroom photo.

Judges will choose based on essay content and creativity, and the need for a makeover as demonstrated by the photograph.

On Nov. 10, six semi-finalists submissions will be placed online and open to voting. This is the second go-round for the contest in Canada. The first winner, in 2006, was a school in Mississauga, Ont.

Learn more about the contest at [www.expo-classroom-makeover.com](http://www.expo-classroom-makeover.com). Be sure to click on the navigator marked "Canadian residents."

— CanWest News Service

## Match but don't clash

Expert advice helps take worry out of choosing exterior paint colour



If you choose the right exterior paint, your house will be in harmony with its surroundings.

CINDY HOEDEL  
McCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

A great exterior paint job should make you think, "What a lovely home," not "What great colours."

If you get it right, your house will be in harmony with its surroundings — nature and the neighbourhood. Get it wrong and passersby will wonder, "What were they thinking?"

"You want to try to do something you feel will have longevity," said Barbara Richardson, director of Color Marketing for ICI Paints/Glidden. "If you want funky, limit yourself to the front door."

You can get a long way down the road toward a harmonious colour scheme if you keep a few guiding principles in mind.

## Start with the colours you can't change

Colour consultant Paul Helmer helps clients pick paint colours and he says it's crucial to take the following "givens" into account:

## The roof

Think of your roof as a big chunk of colour. The steeper the pitch, the more noticeable it is. If the roof is dark charcoal composite, Helmer says it's best to choose a colour with heavy grey undertones. Conversely, if the roof is a light coloured composite, the house colour shouldn't be too dark or it will look like the roof is trying to fly away.

Richardson advises using a colour wheel to find colours that

contrast with the roof in a pleasing way.

"If the roof is a warm shade of brown, find that brown and look at the opposite of that — a blue-grey or a greyed green," she said.

## Exterior stone, brick or metal

If your house has orange-tinted bricks or stucco, it will look good with warm tones, whereas rose-tinted exteriors will look better with cool tones. Ornamental wrought iron can be tied into the scheme by repeating its black or rusted tones on shutters or trim.

## Vinyl windows or siding

Remember whitewall tires from the '70s? Your house might wind up with that look if you paint it a deep colour and the windows are white vinyl, Helmer said.

If you have vinyl siding, don't think you can't change the colour scheme. Richardson colour-styled her sister's home, which had light yellow siding.

"I made the trim — the corner trim and the window trim — a darker, more subtle shade of yellow and painted the door gloss black and the shutters a purplish eggplant," she said.

## The landscape

Just like the wrong coloured shoes or scarf can wreck the look of a co-ordinated suit, the wrong flowers or landscape plantings can detract from your home's paint scheme.

SEE MATCH, PAGE G2

Photos, John Mutrux, McClatchy Newspapers

Muted colours emphasize architectural details while accent colours harmonize with other homes in the neighbourhood.



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