

Austin Woman  
January 2015  
Home | Design Update  
Slide 1 of 2



**MEREDITH ELLIS**  
WRITER, "FRESHEN UP"  
PAGE 50

Meredith Ellis is an Austin-based interior designer who prides herself on creating beautiful, classic yet incredibly liveable interiors that reflect clients' personalities and spirit.

#### How do you start fresh in the new year?

"The new year is the opportune time to shed all the excess baggage we've built up over the past year, literally and mentally. So, I clean, throw away, reorganize and write many to-do lists (much to my family's chagrin). That way, I have clear sight on the year ahead."



## FRESHEN UP

Little changes can make a huge difference.

BY MEREDITH ELLIS, PHOTOS BY AMY BARTLAM

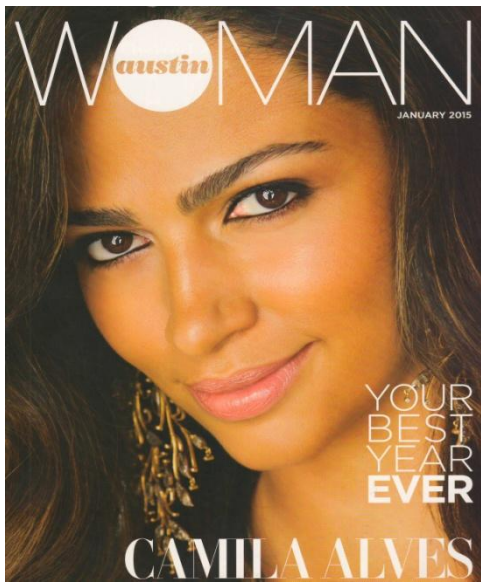
The first time I meet with homeowners interested in my design services, there is generally a lot of nervous laughter. I often hear, "It was on sale," "It was a hand-me-down from my in-laws," "It's been like this since we moved in," or "I let my kids choose the paint colors." I reassure them that it's fine, and usually those things stay unfixed too long.

Your home is an extension of yourself. You need to nurture and care for it, change it and keep up with it, just like you do your appearance and your health.

A great time to start is in the new year, when you are eager to start fresh and make changes. In 2015, start to look for little things that are dating your house because it's these things that are usually quick fixes, and changing them up can make a huge difference.

#### FIVE SIGNS YOUR HOME IS DATED:

1. Your window treatments look like your grandmother's bloomers.
2. You are still using the same lampshade on the lamp you inherited from your great aunt.
3. You have a bedroom set.
4. People tell you your house reminds them of Disneyland because it's such a fun trip!
5. Your house lacks charm, warmth and calmness, and is not at all reflective of the awesome person you already are.



Austin Woman  
 January 2015  
 Home | Design Update  
 Slide 2 of 2

**FIVE EASY FIXES:**

**1. Paint.** I know everyone says it, but I can't emphasize it enough. Experiment with types of paint (not necessarily the color). If your house is more formal, high gloss the trim. If you want more depth, paint the trim a slightly darker color than the wall. If you have old floors and don't want to refinish them, paint them. Just be sure your paint colors flow from room to room. It needs to make sense from one area to the next.

**2. Window treatments.** First, do you even need window treatments? If your architecture is beautiful and there isn't a need for privacy, sometimes it's better to do without. If you choose to do window treatments, it's a good idea to hire a professional. This will eliminate your guesswork and ensure proper fit and function. I am a big believer in doing it once and doing it right. It will save you time and money.

**3. Change it up.** Eliminate the desire to match all your furniture. You bring charm to your house when it feels collected or evolved, not like you went into a department store and bought everything on sale.

**4. Pay attention to the details.** What may seem unimportant is actually the period to your sentence. It could be something as simple as switching out your pillows.

**5. Replace dated lampshades.** Don't be afraid to explore fun fabrics. Just make sure they fit properly. Take them to a lamp shop like Tipplers if you need help.

New Year's resolutions come and go, but refreshing your home is something that will last. Wouldn't it be nice if we could say the same thing about the 10 pounds we lost with that New Year's gym membership?



**Before:** This is a view from my kitchen to the front door. It had too many jarring colors and the rooms didn't relate.

**After:** I wanted my house to flow from room to room cohesively. Simplifying the colors did that. Painting the trim white and the front rooms a warm gray green was much more harmonizing.



**Before:** This is a pair of windows in my bedroom. The shades were dated and they didn't provide a feeling of warmth I desired.

**After:** By adding curtains to the windows and choosing a softer paint palette for the walls and trim, the room feels warm, finished and inviting.

