

## Creating Open Vibrant Space in Your Home

By: Darren China, R.A.

Many of my residential clients have indicated that one of the main objectives for our work together is to open up their living environment so as to create a more loft like and voluminous space. This is particularly true of clients I have in New York City where apartments tend to possess layouts that are very compartmentalized and claustrophobic. Clients wishing to build newly constructed homes state this objective with the intent to create a more spacious home while establishing visual and physical connections between rooms.

What are some ideas to create a more vibrant and spacious living environment?

- 1) Combine rooms to create a more open floor plan. This will likely require the removal of a wall to create one space from two or three adjoining rooms. Flooring materials, the ceiling plane, lighting layout and even paint colors can then be designed to flow through the newly created space and create a cohesive environment. This design approach will immediately create a more open living area.
- 2) Maximize natural sun light from windows. Try to expose windows to the living space as much as possible by using window treatments that either roll up or can be pulled back during the day or treatments that are not heavy or bulky. Use sheers or solar shades that when drawn will allow light to filter through. Again, if walls or parts of walls can be eliminated or openings created this will allow available light to further penetrate into rooms.
- 3) Use of translucent or reflective materials will allow natural or artificial lighting to filter from space to space and create connectivity between these areas. I often try to introduce translucent panels into my work to provide privacy between rooms. While providing privacy the panels simultaneously allow light to pass through which creates an attractive luminescent glow.
- 4) Pay close attention to the paint colors you choose for your home. Use a vibrant light toned paint scheme. I often find that clients have used darker colors in rooms with little natural light or rooms that are small. By using lighter tones you allow the light to bounce around the room rather than be absorbed by the dark colors. Use of white on the ceiling is highly beneficial when the room is mostly lit by artificial light because this will allow the light from the fixture to bounce off the ceiling and reach the floor or table surface more effectively.

These are four design strategies that can create the feeling of an open vibrant living space. Each approach utilizes the same square feet of space one currently possesses while increasing the quality of light and life in the home.

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