

Show off small treasures

Common items can become unique showcases for your special treasures and your everyday necessities. Keep your eyes open at garage sales, flea markets, antique stores or auctions for some incredible bargains that will set your home apart from the norm.

A wonderful way to display small treasures is an old, multi-pane window frame. Carefully remove the glass and dispose of it carefully. You may choose to stain or paint the frame. If you choose to go in this direction, make sure you scrape the frame to get rid of the loose paint or varnish. However, with rustic, weathered furniture all the rage, you can leave the window frame just as it is, with the scratched and faded paint. If you would like your special items to be hung at the top of each pane, buy some drawer knobs or gold hooks, and attach them just above each pane. Hang the window frame on the wall, place it on the counter or table, or just lean it against a wall. Hang coffee cups, sun catchers or ornaments from the knobs. If you decide not to add knobs or hooks to the window, simply set your small knickknacks onto the bottom of each pane.

Another simple and speedy project shows off your most precious photographs and your talent. Find an inexpensive picture frame made of plain glass with clips attached to the sides. Remove the clips so that all you have is the glass. Then choose some small pertinent personal articles that will go with the picture you have in mind. For instance, an earring worn by the bride,

a cufflink worn by the groom or other knickknacks from the couple's years together could surround an anniversary picture. Hot-glue these items to the glass keeping the center open for the picture. While these cool and adhere to the glass, find a wedding invitation or some old letters to place behind the picture as a background. Turn the glass facedown and place the picture in the center, and then add the background. Put the back on and replace the clips.

Your staircase, just as it is, can be your very own gallery for pictures, antiques or other collectibles. Even if you only use your staircase to display seasonal things, do not forget to take advantage of that extra space. If hanging photos, you might go with a chronological theme, with the youngest pictures at the top and the oldest at the bottom.

A really cool way to show off your pots and pans is a wooden porch column. Yes, I mean the kind you see outside. Placed in the corner of the kitchen, or countertop if you have no extra floor space, a wooden porch column is a delightful way to display and store your pots and pans. What a space saver this is for your cupboards, too. You should be able to find a column at your local lumberyard or home improvement center. You will also need a base and cap to hold your column in place. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to install your column. After you have finished installation, attach some sturdy silver hooks and hang your pans on this unique display area.

—By Kathy Scott, special

Give your home more room by creating the illusion of space

Are you newly married or single? Do you live in a small house or apartment? Does it seem cramped? What can you do to enlarge a room without actually removing any walls? Here are some tips that may give you a little more breathing space and an illusion of spaciousness.

You can achieve a sense of flow by keeping your decor the same from room to room. For instance, using blue carpet in your dining room and continuing the same carpet into your living room gives those two rooms a sense of spaciousness because the color flows from one room to the next. You can achieve the same effect by using the same type of furniture in several rooms. If you have chrome dining room furniture, continue that trend in the family room or bedroom. Choose similar plants for several rooms. Paint more than one room the same color.

Use soft, even neutral colors for woodwork, furniture, floors and accessories. Similar colors provide an illusion of uninterrupted space. A myriad of color, on the other hand, breaks up space. Your eye tends to focus on a new color and that is what interrupts the flow.

Keep the lines on a continuous pattern. Chairs, tables and other pieces of furniture should be about the same height

for that uninterrupted look.

Try to use simple window dressings. Heavy drapes and curtains can darken a room, making it appear smaller. Leave windows and doors bare, if possible, or use shades or panels of fabric. Put some plants near a window. This simulates the outdoors in your home and emphasizes a transition from the inside to outside.

Floors that invite space are open and the same from wall to wall. For example, hardwood floors, wall-to-wall carpet and matching baseboards provide the illusion of more space.

A rug that covers only the center of the room gives the room a snug, cozy look as opposed to a large, open look.

As mentioned before, neutral furniture lends itself to a feel of spaciousness. However, if you have a large piece of furniture, go ahead and make that the focal point of the room with smaller pieces of furniture surrounding it.

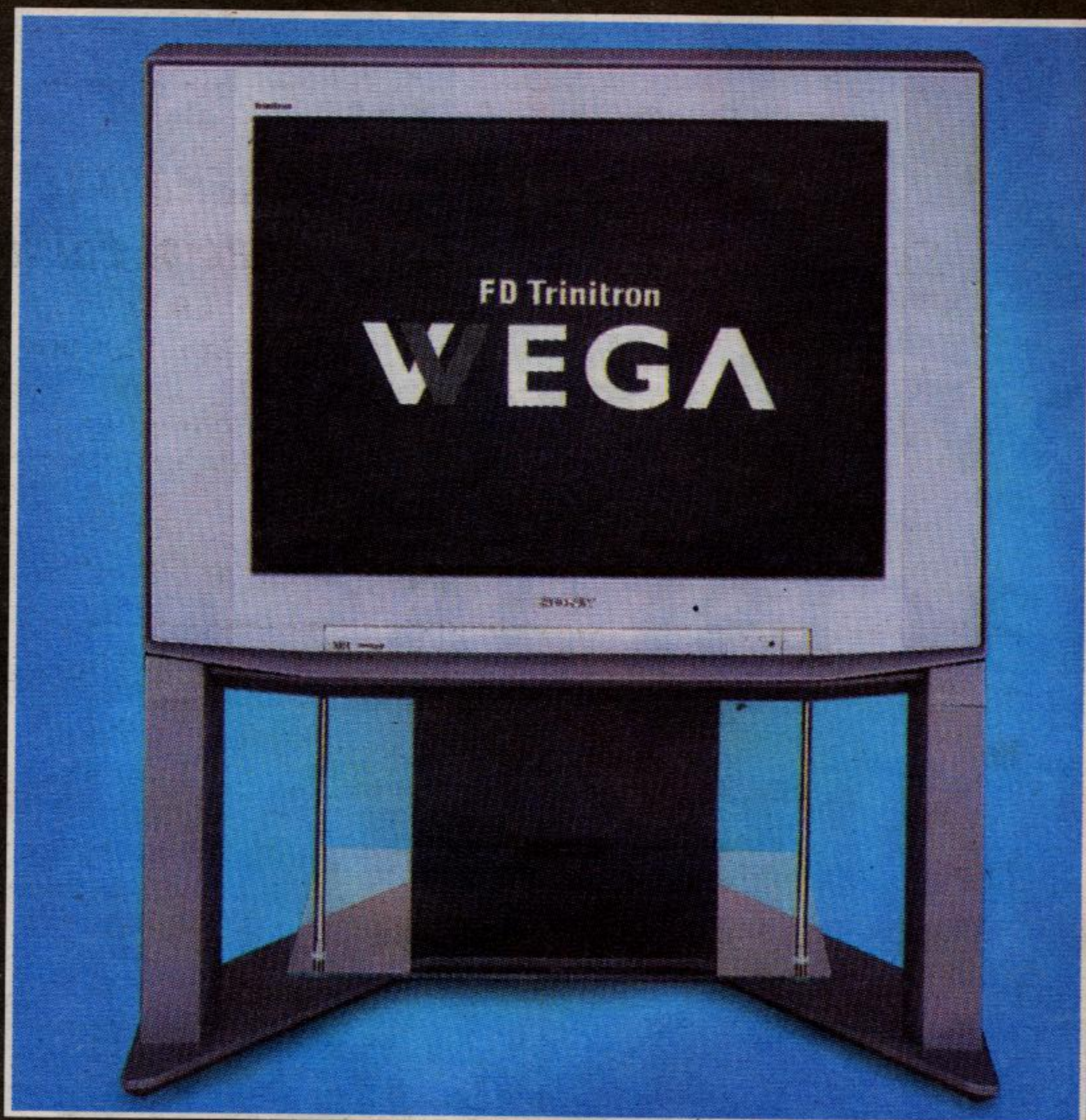
Wallpaper that suggests the outdoors, such as trellises, vines or a larger-than-life mural, will open up a room. The old standby of hanging a mirror that reflects a beautiful section of your room also works.

The most important decorating tip is this: Make your home a comfortable, loving atmosphere in which you can live and your guests will feel welcome.

—By Kathy Scott, special



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