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## Advice from North Carolina's PBS home guru: Express yourself

By Michael J. Solender

Correspondent March 28, 2014

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Our homes "should be an expression of our personal style and reflect who we are from a personality standpoint and say something about how we like to entertain," TV show host Vicki Payne says. This is the living area at her south Charlotte home. TODD SUMLIN — [tsumlin@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:tsumlin@charlotteobserver.com) | [Buy Photo](#)





- Make your home inviting

Vicki Payne offers these tips:

- “Pull your furniture away from the walls towards the center of the room. Create conversation clusters. No seating should be more than 8 feet from any other.”
- “View your house from the eyes of others. Approach your house on foot. Do your hedges need trimming? Is your outdoor lighting dirty? Is mold growing on your siding or brick? You can make a large impact by starting with small projects. It can be as basic as fixing a broken mailbox.”
- “Mix and match and repurposing furniture is a great way to give a new look to your home. Don’t be afraid to move things around.”

- More information

Want to watch?

- Time Warner Cable subscribers can watch “For Your Home by Vicki Payne” at 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Thursdays on UNC-MX.
- Or watch full episodes from past and current seasons at <http://nando.com/f9>.

If there is one consistent message Vicki Payne has shared with her legion of viewers and fans over the years, it is that each of us should feel empowered to express our personalities and sense of style in our own homes.

Payne is host of the long-running nationally syndicated home improvement show airing on PBS and cable, “For Your Home by Vicki Payne.” Her mantra is: Please yourself first and foremost. Whether it’s accent pieces acquired on vacation, one-of-a-kind furnishings purchased at an estate sale or a color scheme reminiscent of a childhood home, expressing a custom personal look allows us to fully enjoy our living space.

Payne, 64, is plain-spoken in offering advice that makes our homes and gardens true personal refuges and oases of comfort and livability.

“They should be an expression of our personal style and reflect who we are from a personality standpoint and say something about how we like to entertain,” said Payne, a Charlotte resident for 10 years. “My show is geared at professionals who care about their home, not in a way to show off but as a form of personal payback for hard work.”

Airing since 1996, “For Your Home” is the longest-running home and garden show on television. Last year it averaged 2.5 million viewers per episode in 530 TV markets. All of Payne’s shows are shot “in the field,” and Charlotte and environs are her primary location. Area viewers may recognize regional locales such as Atherton Mill and Market and High Point Furniture Mart in her episodes.

Payne prefers to work with design anchors that reflect “classic, good bones” and timelessness. Payne cautions viewers not to skimp on moldings, paint, tile, floors and foundations and to stick with classic and basic design.

Payne recently downsized from a 7,000-square-foot home to her current 3,000-square-foot home. Its renovation took nearly a year and was the backdrop for eight episodes of her program in the most recent 13-week season. Viewers accompanied Payne as she tore down walls, refinished floors, and established a casual and breezy outdoor living and entertaining space, along with a lovely garden.

“A cornerstone of PBS is education,” Payne said. “That element has to come through in all aspects of my show. Part of that is an obligation I feel towards professionals in the building trade. If I can have an experienced do-it-yourselfer learn some tricks from a pro flooring installer, that’s great. If in seeing what’s involved, a viewer decides they need to hire a specialized professional, there is value in that too.”

Payne’s advice regarding furnishings and accessories also emphasizes a classic, elegant design that offers utility.

"I look for unique pieces of furniture that will fit in different rooms of the house," Payne said. "I like to mix things up and move furnishings around. You never want to buy a singular suite of furniture that looks like it came off a showroom floor. I also have multiple sets of dishes that I'll alternate depending upon the season. By offering a different look, I can change the mood or the décor to better match the time of year or style of entertaining."

Dump what doesn't work

One of the greatest surprises Payne sees in her work is people's tendency to hold onto things that don't work for their home. She recalls hunting for hours with a friend for thousands of dollars worth of upholstery fabric to match pillows that cost a few hundred dollars.

"It was crazy," Payne said. "I finally told her to get rid of the darn pillows and start with the upholstery. Sometimes people just don't want to admit they've made a mistake or have lived with something for so long they feel they can't part with it."

Payne clearly finds great joy in sharing the hospitality of her home. Her hope for those who take pride in their homes is to share their home with others.

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