

Insight

REINVENTING AN ENTRANCE HALL

Keen on the colourful look of Angela Bunt's hall? Subtle yet impactful tweaks can ring the changes

Despite setting a decorative tone for your home, entrance halls are often overlooked. With design know-how, you can turn this traditionally transitional area into a welcoming place in which to linger.

Get practical

It's worth making the most of the bones of your hall by highlighting its strengths. If you live in a period property, for instance, consider keeping things simple and exposing original details such as cornicing, ceiling roses, encaustic flooring and ornate handrails. In contemporary spaces, aim for a striking central feature, such as a frameless picture window, statement lighting or a stylish staircase – many companies, such as James Grace, specialise in upgrading existing stairs.

Several halls suffer from being too narrow as well as a lack of light. Replacing a wall with Crittall windows will allow more light in and also create the feeling of space, while glass panels on a front door will illuminate the area further. Adjusting

your lighting scheme can be as effective. Try combining dimmable ceiling lights with the warm yellow glow of table lamps.

In terms of storage, make the most of the under-stairs area or have drawers set into stair risers. Also opt for a slim console table and install plenty of hooks for coats.

Style the space

Once you've made the most of your hall's features, personalise it from a decorative point of view. Don't underestimate the transformative power of paint and choose a hue that harmonises with the rest of your interior. Add texture with rugs and stair runners, as Angela Bunt has done with her unusual runner made of Persian rugs, or opt for a smart hard-wearing floor covering such as sisal or herringbone jute.

If space is at a premium, use the walls to make a splash with large-scale artworks or a collection of smaller pieces framed identically. In a large hall, anchor the area with statement furniture such as a console with a pair of tall lamps, or a round table topped with books and flowers.



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

'Halls are where first impressions are made and set the scene for what lies beyond. It's important to appreciate the significance these spaces give to the overall feel of a home when planning a decorative scheme.

Many people make a statement with flooring in the living areas of their home and neglect the entrance hall. Why not wow your guests with an impressive surface choice in this area, too. Obviously, it's a high-traffic zone so the floor covering needs to be hard-wearing, but there are many options that are both practical and striking, including wood, textured fibres such as jute, a vibrant herringbone carpet, vinyl, tiles and even glass.

Introduce glamour with lighting. You'll be amazed at how much of a difference this makes to any entrance hall. The rule of thumb is to keep this space looking as welcoming as possible. Try a choice of lighter-coloured lampshades or flush ceiling chandeliers for smaller rooms. For larger spaces, a striking chandelier will create real magic.

Try to avoid dark colours in the hall and instead go light on the walls, and introduce wallhangings to make the space visually interesting. Use the room as your own personal art gallery and have fun with it. Add darker hues sparingly, as an edge to a frame, carpet, rug or lampshade, for a classic-contemporary look that won't date.'

TOYIN-ANN YERIFOR, TAY OF LONDON

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Decorate a large entrance with statement furniture

Create interest and drama with a layered lighting scheme

Treat a hall as a room in itself and not just interim space



EXPERT EYE 'A runner or small rug will give an entrance hall a real sense of homeliness. For a final flourish, arrange some books on a shelf and include fresh flowers – a succulent or two, or some good artificial foliage or plants – will enhance your scheme'

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