



# FROM CAVERNOUS TO COZY

AFTER

## FURNITURE REARRANGEMENTS MAKE A SUNROOM MORE LIVABLE

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What a pleasure it's been this summer to spend time in Jo Ann's cool, blue and yellow sunroom with its verdant views of the back yard. But when we first met, Jo Ann was truly surprised when, right off the bat, I suggested we rearrange this "finished" room.

After her parents passed away, Jo Ann moved into their home and had spent a year and a half remodeling and redecorating it to make it reflect her own more casual, country style. She thought her sunroom needed only a rug to make it complete.

The 18-by-29-foot sunroom was added to the house in 1995, mainly to house a pool table from the family's lake house. Shutters were added and two sofas and chairs from Ethan Allen were purchased. Furniture was strategically placed to cover an electrical floor receptacle just as you enter the room. >



BEFORE

*BEFORE: Like orange barrels along a highway, the placement of the large table and hutch behind the sofa said, "Do not enter."*

*AFTER (TOP): Rearranging the furniture and layering an existing rug over a new flat rug created a welcoming room for relaxing and watching television.*



AFTER



BEFORE

**AFTER:** *Thinning some of the throw pillows and placing them on the window seat and moving furniture and accessories into other rooms created a calmer, more comfortable room.*

**BEFORE:** *Too many throw pillows, accessories and coffee tables vied for attention, resulting in visual overload.*

## TRADE SECRETS

- Think outside the box. You can mix a formal needlepoint rug and a glass and brass coffee table with an inexpensive rug and antique pine to get the casual, high-style look you are after — at a price you can afford.
- If you have to move pillows in order to find a place to sit down, perhaps you have too many pillows.
- Arrange your seating so that it greets you like a clamshell, instead of creating a doorway “roadblock” to walk around.
- Sometimes the most effective strategy is not to buy more furniture and accessories for your home, but to first rethink the pieces that already are paid for.

Additionally, the room had two mismatched coffee tables that vied for attention. When I asked if she liked to sit in there and watch TV, her answer was hardly a surprise. Among other problems, like furniture placement, the sharp arrow on the weather vane was pointing at the seating area like a scolding teacher.

“Well, you know, I don’t sit in the sunroom much,” she admitted. “I have never felt comfortable in that room.”

### DO NOT ENTER

You know how orange barrels placed across a road signal, “Do not enter”? Well, when you place a sofa right in an entranceway so that you are forced to walk around it, especially when there is the added barricade of a sofa table and hutch behind it, the room symbolically says, “Do not enter.” Also, so many throw pillows on the sofas left no place to sit down, saying, “Do not sit here.” And third, Jo Ann had no comfortable place to sit, put up her feet at the end of a long day and watch TV.

**TIP:** A room should function as well as look pretty. Pillows are terrific, but when you have to move them in order to sit down, you have too many.

“I had purchased the largest flat screen TV that the antique armoire could accommodate and planned to spend a great deal of time in this room filled with sunshine and surrounded by some of my favorite pieces. Even though it was filled with the colors and furniture I love, the room still felt cavernous,” Jo Ann says.

**TIP:** Don’t be afraid to leave a TV angled in an armoire so you can easily enjoy watching it.

### UNDER CONSTRUCTION

That first meeting day, Dorenda Longoria and I moved the extra pillows onto the window seat under the windows. We moved the table and hutch behind the sofa into the empty sitting room off the kitchen — why Jo Ann had called in the first place. We rearranged the sunroom’s sofas, tables, accessories (including the weather vane), lamps, chairs and ottoman.

Then we sat her in the armchair facing the angled TV, pulled an ottoman under her feet and moved a small red table beside the chair for her remote control and iced tea. She truly was comfortable for the first time.

The cobbler’s bench coffee table found a new home in Jo Ann’s study and one small table was moved into her guest bedroom, which she also was seeking help with.

“You completely furnished my empty sitting room off the kitchen using my own already-paid-for pieces from the sunroom, the garage and utility room and even selected a paint color and provided a rug size. After you left, I loved everything throughout the house, but my head was literally spinning with how quickly you got to work,” Jo Ann says with a laugh.

“Although I had every confidence in what you were doing, I would never have dreamed of combining the wood pieces you were bringing in from the other rooms. It saved me money because I thought I was going to have to reupholster at least two chairs and buy new furniture to furnish my sitting room,” she adds.

Jo Ann admits she had moved the blue and white needlepoint rug into every room in the house before giving up and storing it in the garage.





*AFTER: An already-paid-for needlepoint rug was brought out of the garage and layered over a new wool and jute rug bordered in blue. The rugs coordinate with Jo Ann's favorite colors and fabrics.*

She thought she needed a large, multipatterned rug in red and beige to go in the sunroom. When I made the suggestion to layer the smaller, existing rug over a new flat seagrass rug from [www.homedecorators.com](http://www.homedecorators.com) with a blue border (large enough to cover

the floor receptacle by the entry), she was stunned.

TIP: Because seagrass is a flat rug, you can layer another rug on top of it and it will not buckle.

#### PROJECT COMPLETE

Jo Ann wanted to "touch" the rug, so I suggested she bring home a variety of rug and border samples from the Great Rug Company that she liked, and at the next visit we selected a blue and cream jute and wool rug with a blue border, which

the store custom made for her for less than the mail order site. We recommended she go a little larger, 13 by 16 feet, since it was being custom ordered. She was thrilled to find a rug that incorporated her favorite color, blue, and the rug purchased was half the cost of the wool rug she had previously considered.

Jo Ann admits that although she wanted the entire house to reflect her own style, she experienced a terrible separation anxiety regarding some of her parents' furniture that was part of her early childhood. She had literally spent months trying to figure out where she was going to place her parents' furniture and when she could come up with no other solutions, she called me. Her friends and family are in total agreement with the changes and love the rearrangement of the sunroom.

"I didn't even know the sunroom had a problem until you said it did," she says with a laugh, adding that her daughter said, "I could have told you the sunroom would look more open with the new arrangement."

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