

Make a stunning first impression with a grand entrance

By **Merlisa Lawrence Corbett**
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The foyer is the first room people see when they enter a house but often the last room they consider when it comes time to redecorate.

That's a mistake, says Kelley Proxmire, an interior designer and member of the Washington Design Center Hall of Fame. A master at creating dramatic elegance, Proxmire says a home's foyer is the best place to make a stunning first impression.

Proxmire designed the foyer for the D.C. Design House at the Washington Design Center. She fashioned the room as the entrance to a New York City socialite's Upper East Side apartment. Even with a bold floor, vibrant fabrics and glitzy accessories, this foyer wows without overwhelming.

"Keep it simple," Proxmire says. "Take all elements of the space into account." This includes the floor and ceiling, as well as walls.

In the Design House foyer, Proxmire painted the floor in a David Hicks-inspired black-and-white octagonal pattern that looks like a room-size area rug. The floor almost outshines the centerpiece, a large round table draped with turquoise fabric outlined with black-and-white trim.

Suspended above the table is an oversized gilded chandelier by Niermann Weeks that dangles like a diamond earring. Proxmire loves strong contrast in colors, such as the deep chocolate with bright turquoise. Turquoise accents are also found on white silk window treatments and the upholstery on accent chairs that flank two console tables.

Proxmire infuses glamour and glitz with jeweled accents on the table. Crystal table lamps sit on two console tables. The room is 18 by 27 feet, a giant foyer even by Manhattan penthouse standards. But you don't need a Manhattan apartment to make a statement with your entrance.

Paola McDonald, a Virginia-based designer and owner of Creative Elegance Interiors, says a great piece of furniture, like a small-scale console table with a mirror above, are the basics. "All you need is a free wall next to your door," she says.

"Many homes have an entryway that leads directly into a living

room or a living room/dining room combination," McDonald says. "In these types of spaces, I love using a fabulous round foyer table with a beautiful vase and some books or other accessories stacked onto it. It makes a great statement and gets people excited about what is to come in the rest of the home."





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