

BLAC Detroit 2014

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DETROIT

by Roger M. Greenlee, writer

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Designing Detroit

Four fabulous home décor ideas from HGTV Design Star and hometown boy Mikal Welch.

HGTV Design Star (rival) Mikal Welch recently was in town to host the Ruth-Elis Center's Voices Fashion showcase and fundraiser (see this issue's SEEN on page 48). Before the show, the set designer for the Steve Harvey Show who has worked for First Lady Michelle Obama and Her Highness Oprah, offered to give *BLAC* readers some superstar design tips with a Detroit spin.



1 Don't recycle.

Take your empty glass Fajgo bottles—or Vemors. If you are a ginger ale fan—and coat them with a thin layer of your favorite paint color. Fill them with flowers and arrange three together to make a home corner vase in your living room.

Our tip: Vintage-styled Fajgo and Vemors glass bottles can be purchased at The Detroit Shoppe at The Sorrento Collection in Troy.

2 Love mistakes.

The “oops” paint section at Home Depot is where rejected custom paint mixes go to die—or to find new life with someone else. “That paint at the end of the night is returned to the paint department. And they have a rack called ‘oops’

paint. Basically, they will sell you these gallons of paint for about \$5 or \$6 a gallon as opposed to \$30 or \$40.”

Our tip: The Home Depot at 29001 Southfield Road in Southfield has the largest selection of “oops” paint.

3 Frame your city.

Save a buck on vintage-styled city art by creating your own. Using a high-pixel camera—or even a smartphone with a black-and-white filter—take photos of your favorite city sites around Detroit. Have the photos enlarged to fit your desired frame size. “This is also a fun family activity. A lot of the time you live in the city, but you don’t really explore the city. And I did this for Steve Harvey in his Chicago office.”

Our tip: Go big! Get an oversized printing (\$22-

\$129.99) of that Joe Louis fist at your area FedEx Office.

4 Embrace the Motor City.

Have you ever wanted to own a Cadillac? Would you settle for owning the inside? Use the interior fabrics purchased from automobile plants to reupholster your old couch or seat for durability meant to last. “The fabric stores will purchase the upholstery fabric from automobile plants that have been shut down. This fabric (which costs between \$2-\$4 a yard) is great because it is extremely durable and stain resistant.”

Our tip: Not into DDT? Get help from a local business like Home Beautiful Upholstery in Oak Park (248-547-1169) or Hollywood Upholstery & Interiors in Mount Clemens (586-465-5164).



A dream almost deferred ...

Before his Design Star success, Detroit's Mikal Welch wasn't sure if a creative designing career would be a good match for him.

“I was very nervous and apprehensive about taking on that job just because of the expectations that would come behind it—being a Black man, saying I am an interior designer. But for me, it was life-changing,” says Welch, 33, who graduated from Southfield-Lutings High School and majored in business marketing at

Morehouse College in Atlanta. “Design has been a tremendous outlet of self-expression. I can relate it to the kids at the Ruth-Elis Center. Any time you're allowed to showcase your talents and you are not judged based upon your sexual orientation, I think that is a tremendous thing.”

Says Welch is not afraid to open up to some stereotypes associated with his sexuality. “Fortunately for whatever reason, God has blessed the LGBTQ community, a lot of us, with creative genius.”