

WEEKEND PROJECT/INSTANT MOLDINGS

Trading Spaces design whiz Leslie Segrete thought her guest room was unexciting, so she added a few decorative architectural details—with paint, and a very free hand



ANNIE SCHLECHTER

WHAT LESLIE WANTED When I saw a picture of a trompe l'oeil doorway that the designers Jean-Michel Frank and Christian Bérard painted in the 1930s for the Guerlain boutique in Paris, I decided to steal the idea. I liked it because it was whimsical, inexact, and took only three paint colors. >

WEEKEND PROJECT



"Paper is a lot easier to practice on than a wall and a lot easier to correct," says Leslie Segrete, LEFT, of her photo mock-up, CENTER. With a loose brushstroke, RIGHT, she uses Benjamin Moore Classic Brown for the deep tone; Mesa Verde Tan for the middle tone; and Simply White for the highlight. Leslie appears on *Trading Spaces* and cohosts "The Money Pit," a syndicated weekly radio program. Visit her Web site (www.lesliesegrete.com).

LESLIE SHOWS US HOW

Begin by choosing a style that suits your home. For inspiration, look for architectural details you like in houses or buildings; check out online catalogs of retailers who specialize in trimmings, like Dykes Lumber (dykeslumber.com); or an architectural resource book. My favorite is *The Styles of Ornament* by Alexander Speltz (Dover Publications).

Photograph the area you want to paint. Then on the prints, practice your designs, first in pencil, then in paint. My first designs were too ornate—it took me a few tries till I was happy with the look. You'll need three colors to create a shadowy trompe l'oeil effect: a dark, deep one to create depth; a warm tone for definition and to bridge the dark and the light; and a true bright white to highlight. I always use a matte finish.

Prep the wall. Work on a clean, dry surface. First make a template of straight baselines that will serve as your painting guide. I like to use a mountable laser level that gives me straight lines that also wrap corners. I simply trace them with a pencil. You'll want these baselines where long lines occur. For details,

like my dentil molding at the ceiling base, make a cardboard template—I did one 12-inch-wide piece—and then keep loosely tracing around it.

Start painting. Buy good 3½-inch scenic fitches—or brushes—like the pros use (go to rosebrand.com). They hold a lot of color and allow for both thick and thin smooth lines. Working in small areas, follow the mock-up, painting with a very loose hand for a scenic effect. Lean into the brush for a wider stroke. Use the tip for a thin one.

Always take a step back. You might need to make adjustments, like adding highlights to get a true 3-D effect. But the design isn't meant to be an exact duplicate of the real thing, so don't aim for perfection. Keep it loose. ●

"The whimsy of this technique allows you to be bold and simple at the same time."



ANNIE SCHLECHTER, FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES