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HOUSE CALLS

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Bring warmth to the space with soft, neutral paint. Elliott recommends Benjamin Moore's Rich Cream for the walls and Wheeling Neutral for the fireplace.

Update the room's architecture by removing the undersized mantel and taking out the dividing wall and shelving near the front door, which will open up the living space.

Peggy Shopland is looking for ways to furnish and define her combination living and dining space.

District designer Annie Elliott of Bossy Color (www.bossycolor.com) has ideas.



Fabric window treatments are cozier than blinds. Elliott suggests relaxed Roman shades on the bay windows and floor-to-ceiling, ring-top drapes in the dining area for warmth and texture. One possibility: The nubby Fiddlestix Cream fabric from Smith and Noble for both (<http://www.smithandnoble.com/>). A tip: Extend the drapery rod six to nine inches past the sides of the molding to make the window look more substantial and fill that corner of the room.

Keep the focus on the newly painted fireplace by housing the TV in a low, plain media cabinet. A light maple finish will help it melt into the wall. Elliott likes the Linear Series 1: Two-Insert Custom Cabinet from Room and Board (\$1,099 <http://www.roomandboard.com/>).

Anchor the living area with a graphic 5-by-8-foot Persian rug. Elliott says pairing a traditional rug with modern furniture gives a room individuality and prevents it from looking like a big-box showroom. A predominantly red rug with hints of burgundy and beige will complement the existing red sofa. For its reasonable prices and varied rug designs, <http://www.rugman.com/> is a favorite source of Elliott's.

Add a chair next to the fireplace to create a conversation area and define the two spaces. A small-scale chair with exposed legs such as the Webbed Accent Chair in black/blond wood by West Elm rather than a chunky upholstered piece -- will keep the living area feeling spacious. (\$329, <http://www.westelm.com/>)

Define the dining area with a hefty, 42-inch round table and four chairs. Elliott likes West Elm's Dining Table with Cutout Legs in white (\$399) and Crate & Barrel's Folio Leather Dining Chairs in kiwi, (\$219 each, <http://www.crateandbarrel.com/>). Hang a modern light fixture over the table to distinguish the space further.

Finish the room by hanging large-scale artwork in both areas.