

Decorate like Christopher Lowell... ...play poker like Chris Moneymaker

Decorating your room

You finally have a place to call your own. The only problem is, it's kind of empty. And you want to fill it with stuff so you can, have a party and impress your friends. You don't have a lot of money, and you're also kind of busy.

First off, first apartment decor - or first dorm room decor for that matter - doesn't have to be limited to beer posters and stackable storage crates. With a little imagination and the benefit of our guidance, you can put together a place you're proud of without breaking the bank.

Since many first digs are smaller than closets and darker than medieval dungeons, it helps to know how to play down your apartment's bad points. Then take a look around your new surroundings and make a list of its aesthetic pros and cons. Does it have big windows but low ceilings? Great wood floors but a boxy, square feel? While emphasizing positive qualities takes little or no effort, counteracting undesirable elements is a bit harder.

One-room living (studios and dorm rooms)

With single-room living spaces, you have two options. You can either keep the room as spacious and open as possible, or you can divide it into areas of activity by using screens and/or large pieces of furniture that appear to "section off" one area from the next. Depending on the size of your place, the décor you choose and your lifestyle (whether or not you'll be doing a lot of work there, entertaining often, etc.), you can decide which option is better for you. Either way, be sure to keep it simple. Limit your color palette, and avoid clutter and excess furniture. Consider getting a two-in-one piece like a sofa bed or a futon to save space.

Dark rooms

Don't know what time of day it is until you go outside? Well, brighten up dark rooms with light-colored walls, sheer curtains and plenty of plants. Mirrors also help by reflecting light and limiting the appearance of shadows. Opt for blinds instead of shades on your windows, and choose minimal lampshades with a translucent effect.

Tiny rooms

Go with pale, cool colors, and fill the space with as little furniture as possible. Instead of a free-standing bookcase, for instance, try a shelf that's mounted to the wall with brackets. Also, if your room is really small, avoid busy patterns on items like curtains, tablecloths and bedspreads.

Boxy rooms

The key is to create a focal point in the room. Paint one wall a different color than the rest, or hang up a funky mural or tapestry. Other focal point ideas include an attention-grabbing piece of furniture, or a ceiling covered with gauzy fabric and stick-on stars.

Low ceilings

Raise the roof by using up-tilting lamps to cast as much light on it as possible. Paint the ceiling a shimmering, satiny, pale color, and do the walls one or two shades darker. Draw attention to the bottom half of the room with floor cushions, interesting rugs and low-to-the-ground seating. Source: www.soyouwanna.com

Texas Hold'em Poker

Poker has grown in popularity over the past few years, so much so that it is now a regularly televised event on several cable stations.

The popularity of poker -- and specifically Texas Hold'em -- stems from the fact that poker is so easy to learn. Beginners can comfortably start playing poker within minutes. That being said, there is a significant amount of skill that can be learned over years of play.

This article discusses the rules for one popular version of Poker known as Texas Hold'em.

Poker Hands

Poker is based on 5 card hands. These hands are ranked in order of the difficulty in achieving these specific combinations of cards.

Cards from a standard playing deck are numbered 2-10, J, Q, K, A, from lowest to highest value. Each card also has one of four different "suits" -- hearts (h), clubs (c), spades (s), diamonds (d).

Specific combinations of these cards represent the Poker hands, and are listed here in descending order of rank:

- Straight flush** Consecutive #s, same suit
- Full House** Three of one #, two of another #
- Flush** All the same suit
- Straight** Consecutive #s
- Three of a kind** Three cards of the same #
- Two pair** Two pairs of cards with the same #
- Pair** Single pair of cards with the same #

Examples:

- Straight: 2 3 4 5 6
- Flush: 2c 5c 9c Ac Jc
- Two Pair: 3 3 8 8 X
- Three of a kind: 9 9 9 X X
- X = any card

Texas Hold'em rules

The game usually involves a table of about 10 players. One player is arbitrarily labeled the "dealer" (or "button"). Play starts to the left of the "dealer" and continues in a clock-wise order.

After each hand, the "dealer" designation moves one position to the left. So every player at the table has his fair share as "dealer". Note: in a casino, there is a designated dealer who physically deals the cards... but this naming convention remains to allow everyone to have a fair turn in the "dealer" po-

sition. The "dealer" position is advantageous because that player is the last to act during betting. Everyone else must either bet or fold before the "dealer" has to act.

First 2 Cards

Each player is dealt two cards face down. These are the player's private cards and should not be shown to anyone else. Each player looks at their cards and a round of betting ensues. As always, play starts to the left of the dealer and each player can either "bet," "raise" or "fold" depending on how strong they feel their cards are.

If a player "raises" by increasing the bet, then subsequent players must either match that raise ("call") or fold (put down their cards). This way, everyone still playing (ie, hasn't folded) has contributed an equal amount of money to the "pot."

The Flop

Once the initial round of betting has finished, then three cards are dealt from the deck face-up in the middle of the table. These three cards are known as "The Flop" and represent community cards shared by everyone at the table. At this point, each player has a five card hand composed of two private cards and the three community cards.

Another round of betting/raising/folding ensues.

The Turn

After everyone has bet on The Flop, a 4th community card is dealt -- called "The Turn." Another round of betting ensues.

The River

After betting, a final community card is dealt -- called "The River." A final round of betting ensues. And once this is complete, players reveal their two private cards.

The player with the best possible hand out of their set of cards is the winner and wins the money from the pot. If at any point during the betting rounds described above, only one person remains betting, while all other people have folded, then that one person wins the pot by default.

Blinds

One additional rule that helps keep the game moving is the concept of "Blinds." The two players to the left of the dealer are known as the small and big blinds, respectively. These two players must put money into the pot before they see their first two cards (hence the name "blind"). This is to make sure there is always someone who has contributed to the pot so that there is always someone playing in each hand.

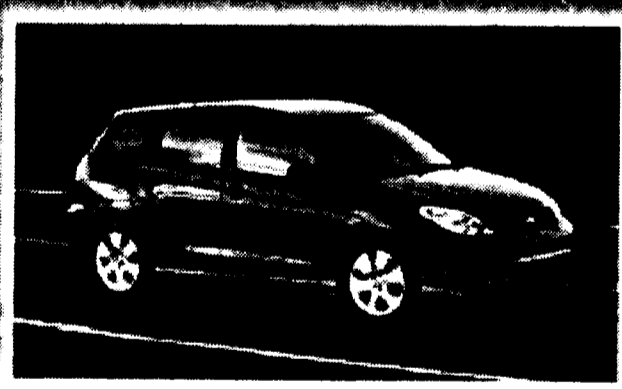
The small blind has to bet half of the minimum bet at the table, while the big blind has to bet equal to the minimum bet. Source: www.weeno.com

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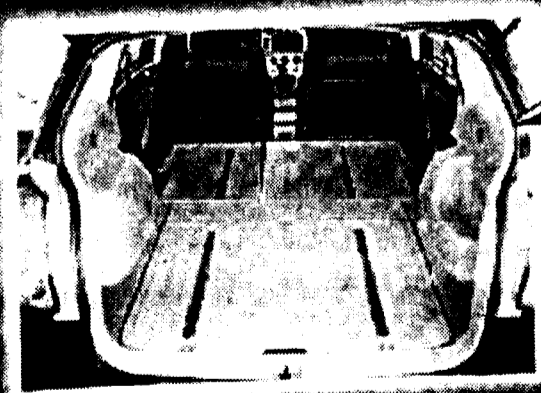
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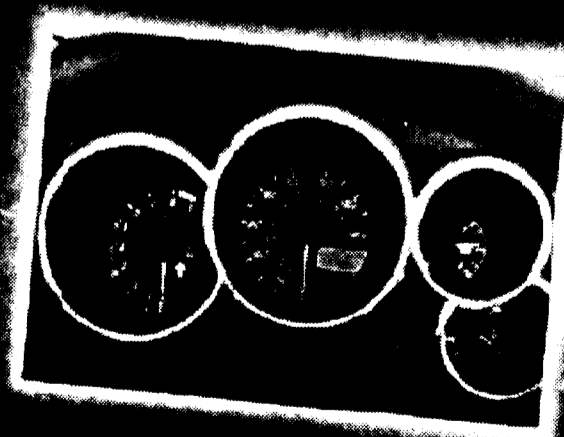
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