



THE ART OF ...

PUTTING A ROOM TOGETHER

The pieces in the room help determine what colors and textures will compliment and enhance our backdrops. For example, warm gold and green tones bring out the natural grain and texture of wood furnishings and cabinetry while white walls tend to emphasize the contrast between walls and woodwork. A room with many fabric elements and textures requires subtle background colors to balance and compliment the patterns. At the same time, a kitchen or dining room that contains mostly wood cabinetry and furniture is best served by a patterned wall covering that introduces several colors and can turn these areas into memorable spaces.

Today, there are so many fabulous choices in flooring. Tile, carpet, laminate and wood are all available in a variety of styles that can compliment your existing pieces. The color of ceiling is an equally important decision. Remember, there are hundreds of square feet that typically go unadorned and uncovered. The ceiling must compliment the vertical walls and depending on its height, shape, emphasis and lighting, should be a few shades darker. The trick here is to make the ceiling disappear and bring the attention back to eye level.

by Victoria Flores

The interior design question I am probably most asked is, "Where do you begin?" While the majority of my clients probably expect to hear: the furniture, the walls, or the carpet, the real answer is much simpler — every great design begins with the first piece.

It could be a sofa, a window fabric, an antique secretary or a flea market vase. The only requirement is you love its style and color.

After an assessment of the function of the space and the special needs of its inhabitants, this first piece is the most critical. I equate an interior plan to a giant jigsaw puzzle. That first piece opens many possibilities while simultaneously narrowing down the choices and, in some cases, completely eliminating

certain colors and styles.

Scale, balance, color, proportion and other elements of design determine if the pieces fit and where. A unique, comfortable space is the sum of differing patterns and textures blended into a whole. Furniture size, function and arrangement are crucial elements, but color is the real key to uniting unlike elements in a harmonious way.

Walls are the canvas for our space designs. The fabrics, furnishings and accessories are only parts of the puzzle until they are highlighted against a perfect backdrop. Most rooms contain six "walls" — four vertical rectangles displaying openings and embellishments, a floor covered by a variety of surfaces, and the ceiling, generally covered by very little.

Every room needs a focal point. Sometimes it's a fireplace or a fabulous view. Other times we need to create our own focal point with a piece of art or family heirlooms. Any of these can enhance your personal space and should reflect the interests and uniqueness of the occupants. Keep in mind a few larger pieces make a greater statement than many small ones.

When the design puzzle is complete, it should be viewed as a whole of its many parts. But usually it's that first piece that pulls everything together. From that one piece, a finished design can grow - a beautiful, inviting room that reflects your own personal sense of home, whatever that might be. ■

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