

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

Does designing your home have you confused? Elements of Design's Owner & Lead Interior Designer Lina Quintero answers your questions each month.

Question: My entryway has me stumped! It is small and dark. Is there anything I can do to create a welcoming environment?



Neglecting the interior design of an entryway is analogous to going on a date and making a bad first impression. The entryway is the first space that guests view and it sets the tone as they proceed into the rest of the home.

Consider incorporating a mirror in the entryway. Adding a mirror will instantly increase the perceived size of the space and make the area feel much larger. A mirror will also reflect light and brighten the area.

When selecting a console or table for the entryway, be sure to measure the path of the door swing to confirm clearance without intrusion. Without taking up any space on the console table, wall sconces are great options for infusing subtle decorative lighting and initiating a formal mood.

By keeping fresh flowers in a vase on the console, you can add a pop of color in an organic fashion. The flowers will also extend the outdoors into the interior space and they will offer an inviting fresh scent to the home.

Question: I love wallpaper but I am worried about the expense. Are there any options for me?



In the last few years, wallpaper has come a long way from the mass produced, one dimensional, boring wallpaper that was often found in homes dating from the 1930's thru the 1970's. Wallpaper of the modern era is fun, decorative, and full of rich colors and textures. Companies like Phillip Jeffries and Arte offer seemingly endless options of wallpaper that range in price and style.

Framing is an excellent cost effective technique that can be achieved with modern wallpaper. By combining several jazzy wallpaper cuttings and framing them, it is possible to create a fabulously unique piece of wallpaper art. The best part is about framing with wallpaper is that you are not forced into committing to a single option. In addition to creating artwork, you can utilize wallpaper as an inexpensive faux headboard option above a bed that is against a wall.

Question: I am so tired of the same colors that I see in nurseries. What are some other stylish color schemes that don't include pink, blue, and chocolate brown?

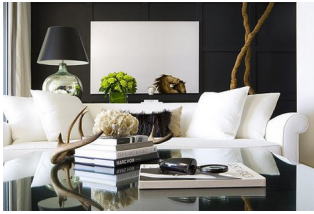


As long as a color is used strategically, there is no right or wrong color for a nursery. However, I do recommend staying away from gimmicky color schemes, fabrics, and wall coverings that specifically classify the room as a nursery. Adding a splash of white to any base color will help to lighten the intensity of the color and soften the overall design scheme.

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A well thought-out, timeless color scheme that uses gray as a neutral and adds accent colors such as yellow, orange, or icy blue is far more interesting than the typical pinks, blues, and chocolate brown combinations that are in found in every mail order catalog.

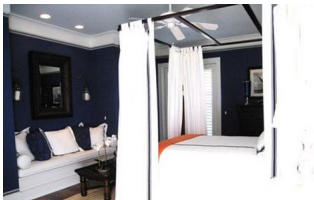
Question: Is it better to chose contrasting colors or similar colors for furniture and wall coverings?



In almost every case, I would recommend selecting contrasting colors for furniture and wall coverings. Contrasting colors add depth to a room and they cause the critical design elements like furniture, accessories and artwork to stand out.

In the few cases where monochromatic color schemes are a fit, it is critical to balance the equation of depth and interest by combining fabric textures on upholstered items and window treatments. For instance, combine linens with velvets or leathers with silks. The varying textures will personalize the room and heighten the level of interest in the space.

Question: I love the dark brown color of my walls in my bedroom but, the room has an ominous dark feeling to it? Is there any way to change or lift the mood of the room and keep the dark wall color?



One of the most critical design elements that people tend to underestimate is the affect of lighting on all other elements in a room. As is the case with your scenario, I have had numerous clients who like the rich dark color of the walls in their home but, they are concerned about challenge of being able to properly illuminate the rooms.

Rather than changing the wall color, I recommend a strategic interior lighting plan that incorporates a balanced mixture of recessed lighting, sconces, and lamps. Canned lighting is an inexpensive recessed lighting solution that any licensed electrician can easily install. Many people invest a substantial sum of money in their furnishings, artwork, accessories, etc... but if adequate lighting is not available, these items will lose the luster effect. An interior lighting plan should not be overlooked.

Question: How many accessories should go in each room? How do I know if I have over accessorized?



Less is always more. Keep this simple tip in mind; it is better to invest in fewer quality accessories than a lot of ordinary accessories. Accessories represent the "Bling" factor of a home. It is important to choose accessories that express your taste and personality.

If you run into the a situation where you are having a difficult time trying to find a place for a specific accessory because other accessories occupy a possible niche of choice, consider putting one accessory in storage and the other in the aforementioned niche. Every few months, you can switch your two accessory options and your home will have a fresh new look throughout the year.

Don't force accessories. It is always better to wait to find the perfect item for the perfect space.

Send your design questions to Lina at feedback@mediathatdelivers.com and visit Elements of Design at www.elementsofdesign.com.