

BEAUTIFUL ROOMS!



PAM SORENKO/PHOTOFOUP

A BEAUTIFUL ROOM IS ONE THAT LURES YOU IN AND THEN IS WELCOMING. IT REPEATS SHAPES AS WELL AS COLORS.

Style & symmetry

Designer: Suzanne Novik

IF “SEEING RED” PUTS YOU IN MIND of bullfighting and Carmen’s gypsy threads, Suzanne Novik’s revisionist strategy will change your mind. In this living room, she took the homeowner’s request for red and proved that a limited palette need not be timid, while an assertive one can certainly be sophisticated. Novik used to teach art, which is how she honed her senses of color and design. As a designer for more than 25 years, she practices what she used to teach:

- Simpler shapes and furnishing styles can accommodate lots of color; a greater stylistic mix dictates a more limited palette.
- A sophisticated palette (like this one) combines hot colors with neutrals.
- Some neutrals are more interesting than others, i.e., the “muddier” hues in Benjamin Moore’s Historical Colors collection.
- Walls that recede visually thrust furniture forward. In this room, paler hues do the trick; in other projects, darker jewel tones achieve the desired outcome.
- Repeating colors within a room, and carrying some from one room to the next, yields desirable continuity.

A beautiful room is one that “lures you in” and then is “welcoming,” says Novik. Her advice: “Repeat shapes as well as colors.” Her rules of thumb: Balanced furnishings foster harmony while curves promote a visual flow that pleases the eye and draws it around the room.

Location, location, location

Sometimes a room can have all the right elements and still fall a bit short on the beauty scale. Why? Truly beautiful rooms require an artist’s sensibility. This project challenged Novik to create a space worthy of its prominent location, directly opposite the front door of a new home.

A curved, paneled arch frames the generous entryway. Curves repeat in the velvet-covered ottoman, detailed with antique gold buttons and trim, sited front and center. Matching transitional curved-arm sofas from Swaim are upholstered in a broad-striped, cotton-blend damask. The drapery pan-

l continued on page 60

left: An ample archway announces the boldly scaled room, and then color takes it away. Deep reds, when used judiciously, pack a punch if they are combined with calming neutrals.

els sweep back in a graceful curve. The antique chair arms curl with equal grace.

Furniture placement is critical. A sofa facing the fireplace is a reasonable suggestion, says Novik, except that the sofa back would visually close the space and divert your eye away from the hearth and artwork.

Novik's open arrangement employs size and scale purposefully. The tone-on-tone Tibetan rug is sized to anchor the furnishings; its quiet color showcases them. Shorter furniture like the ottoman and low plant stand in the forefront and graduate to the tallest elements, such as the palms, at the back. The incline leads your eye to the contemporary abstract oil, bracketed by vases in the garnet hue.

Lighting makes a beautiful room (or breaks a wannabe). Novik always specifies several types, to produce a complex vignette that functions well. In most rooms she recesses ceiling lights about 18 inches off the walls to provide ambient illumination. She favors sconces at a fireplace, and deploys lamps strategically, here antique ones set on pedestals. Dimmer switches are requisite.

Expect the unexpected

Another must-have is an idiosyncratic touch. The designer surprises by contrasting new with old or by including personal pieces. Curiosities and mementos inject personality and individuality.

Most furnishings in this room are new. Exceptions are a pair of fruitwood armchairs and a tôle decoupage container (use the antique red glass doorknob to lift off its top). The designer also upsets expectations by removing one item from a symmetrical plan.

Novik infuses many projects with a knowledge of Chinese feng shui principles, which guide how buildings and rooms are designed and furnished, with balance and harmony as goals. It is just another tool in her designer's kit, another way to make all her rooms beautiful. □

Nena Donovan Levine is a freelance writer and certified kitchen designer who writes frequently on home topics. She lives in West Hartford.

resources

INTERIOR DESIGN

Suzanne Novik, ASID
Suzanne Novik Interiors, Inc.
4 North Ave.
Weston 06883
203/454-5557
suzannenovikinteriors.com

FURNITURE

Sofas
Swaim*
1801 S. College Dr.
P.O. Box 4189
High Point, NC 27263
336/885-6131
swaim-inc.com

Sofa upholstery, damask
Romo*
D & D Building
979 Third Ave.
NY, NY 10022
212/319-7666
romofabrics.com

Cocktail table, black & gold lacquer
Niermann Weeks*
232 E. 59th St
NY, NY 10022
212/319-7979
niermannweeks.com

Ottoman
F. Schumacher & Co.
79 Madison Ave.
NY, NY 10016
800/523-1200
schumacher.com

Ottoman fabric, cotton velvet
Gretchen Bellinger Inc.*
24 Mill St.
Albany, NY 12204
518/445-2400
gretchenbellinger.com

Draperies fabric
Osborne & Little*
90 Commerce Rd.
Stamford 06902
203/359-1500
osborneandlittle.com

ANTIQUES

Fruitwood armchairs, Chinese planter,
lamps, tôle decoupage container
Owner's collection

LIGHTING

Sconces, painted metal
Hart Association*
Box 1387
Ruston, LA 71273
800/592-3500
hart-associates.com

PAINT

Benjamin Moore Historical Colors
benjaminmoore.com

* TO THE TRADE ONLY