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ROMANTIC RETREAT

Not unlike most parents with young children, the couple who share this master bedroom sought to create a romantic, quiet space apart from downstairs play areas filled with toys and commotion. But their room turns out to be a favorite destination for their three children, who sit with their mother on an oversize brocade-covered chaise to hear bedtime stories every night. The parents have happily adjusted to the presence of their children, who settle in as the storytelling begins. And the soothing colors, motifs and textures of the walls,

conceived by designer Irwin Weiner, surely add to their dreaminess.

A tray ceiling—the only significant architectural feature of the expansive room—add interest, but also posed a problem. “A tray ceiling can loom as a blank canvas,” says Weiner, “and so the challenge is to do something clever.” His solution was to create faux paneling with a trompe l’oeil painting technique. As rendered, the faux-painted beams appear architectural, imbuing the room with an enhanced sense of scale and height. (The paneling also offers the added benefit of bringing character to the room at a much lower price than the real thing). Pale terra-cotta colors, glazed with texture, give the room a sense of warmth and age. As a finishing touch, delicate floral motifs and flowing vines, which appear in the egg-shaped oval of the ceiling and in the corners of the room, add notes of romance.

RIGHT: In this bedroom, the terra-cotta walls tie into the amber chandelier, which in turn relates to the bedding and draperies.

ABOVE: An 18th-century writing desk, used as a dressing table, helped set the color tone for the room. Upon finding the painted Louis XV-style desk at a flea market in Paris, the designer began to formulate the color scheme for the entire room.

Burnishing Beauty

To create character and romantic richness in a bedroom design, Irwin Weiner suggests these ideas:

■ **ESTABLISH SCALE.** “This bedroom lacked detail and impact,” says the designer. “The faux-painted beams and tall draperies now give the room good bones.”

■ **USE WARM COLORS.** The soft terra-cotta hues imbue the room with serenity and comfort.

■ **CREATE SUBTLE INTEREST** with layers of texture, light and shadow. Creating texture on walls and ceilings is not always about applying pigment. (In this case it was also about removing it.) The various techniques for removing pigment—ragging, stippling and sponging—determine the textual effects of the painted surface, as does the color and its ability to reflect light. Here, a glaze was applied over base coat of paint, then partially removed with a fine cheese cloth to create a polished, marbled effect. “The method results in a layering of colors, like an Impressionist painting that plays with light,” says Weiner.

■ **PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS.** Natural motifs, such as delicate flowers and vines, add a soft touch.



ENGLISH CHARM

Paraphrasing an old saying about how “mothers like girls in ribbons and bows,” Weiner says he took that notion to heart when designing a bedroom for the 5-year-old daughter of a client in Westchester County, New York. “The intention was to create a romantic, thoroughly feminine room that would not be overly sophisticated but rather a place to be enjoyed by a young girl,” says the designer. He also wanted to create a room that would not date easily, but carry its female occupant well into her teenage years without her blushing in embarrassment at decor appropriate for only little girls. “Classic furnishings and classic color schemes lessen the likelihood of a child’s room becoming dated,” Weiner says.

In this room he chose a wall covering defined by narrow pink-and-blue pinstripes, colors that echo in other elements throughout the room—blue carpeting, glazed-cotton chintz draperies, pink-and-blue bed linens and the decorative coronet above the bed. The coronet, which matches the window treatments and is lined with sheer pink fabric and adorned with trim, brings a soft, feminine touch to the walls. In drafty English castles, the draperies of such a coronet could be drawn around the sleeper’s head for warmth. Here, they’re strictly ornamental, cascading dramatically to the sides of the bed. To keep the demicircle of a Palladian-style window from becoming the focal point of the window wall, Weiner covered it with fixed plantation shutters that he had painted and glazed, rather than adorn it with an expensive fabric treatment. ■

A dramatic sweep of fabric brings a feminine touch to walls covered with crisp stripes.

Rooms that Grow

To create a room for a young girl that will grow as she does without becoming dated, Weiner suggests keeping in mind the following tips:

■ **ESTABLISH CONTRASTS** when choosing colors and textures. “I like to combine a warm color with a cool one—the idea is not unlike the concept of yin and yang, or sophisticated Chinese cooking that uses sweet and sour elements,” he says. “Such contrast creates a sense of excitement or buzz in a room.” For this little girl’s room, Weiner chose a pink-and-blue-striped wallcovering. Its contrasting colors, indeed, foster energy and calmness at the same time.

■ **USE SOFT**, but not too sweet, hues on the walls and echo them on draperies, pillows, lamps and other accessories.

■ **APPLY A CREAMY WHITE** on the ceiling as a way to make a small room appear larger. Also, a solid ceiling serves as a kind of pure frame beneath which you can develop the busier canvas of the room.

■ **CHOOSE CLASSIC PATTERNS**, such as florals, stripes and checks, that appeal to people of all ages.



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