

## INTERIOR MOTIVES

## Wicker can add sophistication to any setting



NAOMI STONE LEVY

There is a whole, wide, wonderful world of interiors out there that can be added and abetted by including wicker furnishings. Wicker no longer is confined to porches and sunrooms. It can add sophistication to any room, as well as charm to a country-inspired background.

Wicker is available at almost any price level. Visit the huge import showrooms and you will find stacks of modestly priced tables, chairs, sofas, lamps and other accessory bits and pieces. Arrange your room, of course laid out in a pre-planned assemblage. Not the best plan of attack!

At the outset you should think of (1) color, (2) comfort and of course my battle cry (3) quality. When I mention color I am thinking of natural wicker, other stains, black or white lacquer or painted in a vast variety of gorgeous colors. Arriving at your ultimate choice will involve decisions about fabrics. Always keep in mind that because of the unstable weave of wicker, chips of paint are bound to occur as the furniture "gives." This doesn't minimize its in-

trinsic beauty, perhaps it even enhances it.

Comfort may be compromised by too many pieces of wicker seating furniture, without an upholstered deck. Why not create a mix? A lounge chair and ottoman of spring construction does no harm to your overall wicker look. You may not even be aware of its presence. You WILL be aware and grateful of the added comfort.

Quality in wicker has no limitations. Your interior designer knows of handsome designs and sturdy construction not to be viewed at the import showrooms. These may be more sophisticated in character, more classic in design; not curlied or cute. Investigate.

Sisal carpeting has just come into its own and is unsurpassed as the right accompaniment to wicker. It is now available in an array of textures and natural coloring. There are new, on incredible borders, mitered at the four corners to resemble an antique Oriental rug.

Locating several antique objects of wicker should prove aesthetically pleasing. If you are lucky enough to secure old wicker it will undoubtedly date from the 1890s. It will have a Victorian flavor and be very charming, but not truly mixable with more modern furnishings. It will most likely be painted white.

I think of fret-work as an awesome ally to wicker, to be used in combination with it. The geometrics of fret-work look handsome in black lacquer. There is a new grouping of wicker that consists of stalks of bamboo artfully bound together with rawhide. These columns are endowed with the architectural look attuned to contemporary.

A rattan coffee table base with a thick glass top becomes a fabulous centerpiece for a furniture grouping. Likewise an endtable. DON'T SKIMP on the thickness of the top. Nothing bespeaks lack of quality as does quarter-inch or half-inch glass. Never use less than three-quarter-inch thickness; one inch is worthy of the additional cost.

A dining or games table should have a wicker base. Several of the possibilities include the shape of an X or of a drum. And the inevitable glass top — the better to view the base.

Herein lies the success of your wicker room. FABRICS. A tasteful printed chintz is particularly appropriate to the aforementioned selections. I recently used wicker painted a glassy deep forest green. The leaves of the print harmonized exquisitely with the paint. It set an incredible and subtle combination. Added to this were fresh green plants in a corner, never fakes. The plants were

in clay pots and saucers to add to the natural look of the room.

In direct antithesis I worked another room; painted the wicker white, and combined it with the sole colors of a lovely gray and white print, also combined in a "garden room" atmosphere — lots of sunshine, and clay pots.

I can envisage the beige beauty of natural wicker with a small black and beige plaid, a black and beige soft chenille tweed on all of the upholstered sofas and chairs, and lots of black pillows tossed into the mix. All three schemes so different from one another, each with its own personality.

Tiny repeat prints that coordinate with the coloring of the larger prints can find their niche in any of these schemes. Additionally there are luxurious textured fabrics that are tasteful, harmonious and quietly elegant. Glorious coloring is essential to the outcome of this wicker project.

Naomi Stone Levy, a Franklin resident, is an interior designer and a former secretary of the American Society of Interior Designers. You can leave her a message by dialing (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then her mailbox number, 1897. Her fax number is (810) 644-1314.

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