

Sorting through the mail bag

Your unwritten questions might be similar to those I have received in the mails so I will proceed to answer as many as space will allow.

Q. — How would you treat windows in an old house (or any house for that matter) where windows are all sizes and heights?

A. — The object is to achieve a semblance of uniformity. Using one color, one pattern, or one style or treatment will help. Windows of uneven heights can be leveled off with valances.

The highest window sets the pace. On low windows the valance will be high above the frame, but the fall of the curtain will conceal the trick. Narrow windows may be made to look wider if draperies are installed on adjoining walls outside the frame by as many inches as you wish. The simpler the treatments, the better.

Q. — What should I look for in good upholstery workmanship?

A. — Number one, a reputable dealer. Upholstery is a long term investment. The problem is compounded by the fact that you are buying an iceberg, i.e., the most important part of your purchase is hidden. The value is the unseen portion — the springs, filling and frame and the way it is put together. Therefore, a good manufacturer is of utmost importance. Check all visible details with care.

Note the trimness of workmanship, the firmness of welting, the sturdiness of stitching, the placement of nail-heads, the meticulous matching of fab-

ric pattern. Check arm heights; seat depth, the angle of the back and comfort of the way it sits.

Q. — Do you recommend wall-to-wall carpeting or is it more "in" to have hardwood floors with area rugs?

A. — "In" has nothing to do with it. If you have or wish to have very handsome flooring it might be a shame to cover it with wall-to-wall carpeting. But if the flooring is poor, you can cover a multitude of sins with wall-to-wall. It is also a way to increase apparent spaciousness.

If you move often, room size rugs are the way to take it with you and not be buying new carpet with each move. Rugs can be used anywhere, on top of carpeting also. On the other hand, if you prefer easy maintenance, wall-to-wall carpet is for you. You don't need a mop, all you need is a vacuum.

Q. — We've just bought an old house with the master bath solidly tiled in a hideous lavender. Shout of retelling, how do I take the curse off the color?

A. — There are straws in the wind indicating that violets and mauves are making a big comeback — but every woman to her own fancy. You can hide the tile color with waterproof paint, in white or a color of your choice. You might also investigate vinyl wallcovering, which is applied with a special adhesive paste.

Q. — My living room is 13 by 21 feet. It sounds larger than it looks. What can I do to make it seem more spacious?



design
Gloria Cohen

A. — No one solution applies to all rooms. In general light and cool, recessive colors increase the illusion of space. A monochromatic room, done all in one color or shades of one color, tends to look larger than it is.

Low, underscaled furniture simply arranged, increases spaciousness, so, conversely, may the use of one or two oversized pieces. The idea is to get the eye off the room and onto the furniture.

Avoid clutter at all cost. A mirror can be a magic-worker; on a long wall it tends to broaden a room, on a short wall, it lengthens.

Q. — What do you say about using several patterns in the same room? Do I dare try to mix them — or would visual disaster strike?

A. — Currently there seems to be a vogue for rooms in which several different patterns are used — but mixing patterns is a sticky wicket and can be disastrous unless it's done by a trained eye.

Patterns can, of course, be mixed with charming effects — provided they relate either by color and mood or contrast in scale. Be especially careful mixing similar large patterns, such as overscaled florals, in one room.

Before doing a whole room in your selections of the mix, better to invest a few dollars in one roll of your selected wallpaper, one yard each of your chosen fabrics and put them together on trial.

If you are happy with it, go the whole shot with confidence. It is difficult for the inexperienced to make a judgment from several small samples held together.

QUICK QUESTION: Do you advise using different colors in different rooms for diversity?

QUICK ANSWER: No, no, no. Different shades of a color with different accents in each room are interesting, but ONE basic color scheme flowing throughout the house is the way to go.

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