

THE POWER OF PINK
THE COLOR ISSUE

all dressed up

WITH
A KISS OF
COLOR

Interior design by
TRACERY INTERIORS

Interview by
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A quiet living room in Mountain Brook, Alabama, took on a sexy personality when Paige Schnell and Doug Davis of Tracery Interiors added hot pink accents. OPPOSITE: The entry's framed wallpaper fragment and antique French chest establish the neutral palette of the house.



MIMI READ: Amazing how a few pink accents bring out the flirt in a quiet, sophisticated house.

PAIGE SCHNELL: It's like hot pink lipstick on a pale face. The pillows and throw and flowers have more oomph and stir up bigger drama because of the contrast with all of these soft-hued neutrals.

Why not use more of it?

DOUG DAVIS: There's actually more impact when you use less—you experience the pink more. We generally pick one color to accent a neutral palette, and we like to use it in small, specific doses to make it more meaningful.

Why hot pink in this Alabama house?

DD: It's the homeowner's favorite color. She's blonde, and she wears it all the time.

Tell me the truth: Are you a man who inwardly cringes at pink?

DD: I have to admit, it was a departure for me. My house is white, with little shots of charcoal and lime. No pink. For clients, I've used soft pink in Carrara marble bathrooms, but I'd never before even thought about using hot pink. I found out why some people love it—it's like throwing sexiness into a room.

It certainly throws it into the living room, doesn't it? It's a very proper room, otherwise.

DD: This couple wanted a formal, adult room for entertaining. They host a lot of charity events, cocktail parties, dinners. But we wanted to convey that they're a 40-year-old couple, not a 70-year-old couple. So we covered the French armchairs in a silver metallic damask, for a fresh take on tradition.

PS: We also swapped a heavy limestone mantel for a more delicate antique surround. And although we contemplated putting a traditional pair of sofas facing each other in front of the fireplace, we decided on an antique French daybed facing a smaller-scale sofa. The effect is still balanced and formal, but more interesting than matching pieces would have been.

I'll tell you where I'd entertain—in that glamorous bathroom! The upholstered



ABOVE: Walls painted China White by Benjamin Moore set off a Swedish demilune table and French pen-and-inks.

OPPOSITE: Hot pink hydrangeas bring the dining room alive, and the mix of cane-back and slipcovered chairs keeps it interesting. The walls above the wainscoting are stenciled with a clear glaze in a historical pattern, Troupe Square, from Whitewall & Co. An antique beaded-crystal chandelier “has an ethereal quality that doesn't overpower this small room,” Schnell says.

screen makes it feel more like a salon.

PS: Yes! A cocktail party with a pianist and jazz singer... and lots of Champagne. Not to disappoint you, but the screen was a pragmatic gesture. We needed something to block the view—the driveway of the house next door is only 20 feet away. If we'd draped the entire window it would have been too dark, so we came up with idea of the screen. On the other hand, it does create a stunning focal point for the room, and with that deep charcoal gray cut-velvet, it evokes an elegant dressing room.

What's the architectural history of this house?

PS: It was a small house from the 1930s that was renovated and enlarged. Now it's a Tudor, but the interior has almost a French look. Tracery designed all the interior paneling and cabinetry and chose all the finishes and fixtures.

Where did the name 'Tracery' come from?

PS: It's the term for the ornamental carvings and stonework in Gothic architecture, those interlacing pat-

terns you see in windows and panels. We love fanciful patterns and curving lines.

You really do. I've noticed swirls everywhere. On the screen, the coffee table base, the chandelier...

PS: Well, that's one reason we love neutrals—they allow you to see all the intricacies and textures.

The kitchen feels quite modern.

DD: It's one of my favorite rooms we've ever done. I love that stove hood we designed—a metalworker made it for us. He found a source that could match Benjamin Moore colors in automotive paint, so we had them mix up China White car paint for us. It makes me want to paint my car China White!

PS: Everything in the kitchen is cleaned. We liked the mosaic tile backsplash so much, we extended it all around the room. It's this expanse of tiny gray and white Carrara marble tile, and it makes it feel like some café in Paris. And we used two counter-height benches instead of four stools, because stools would have always been at messy angles. The four kids sit together on them after school, eating their snacks.

Painting all the walls and woodwork white and gray could turn out looking blah. What's the secret to making them look rich and complex?

PS: Using variations of white and gray paint in the same color, but different tones. That adds textures and layers and gives the house an ethereal feeling.

Can you give me specific examples?

PS: In the master bath, the Venetian plaster walls are painted China White, and the ceiling is a China White wash. We just added water to the paint, for a milky look. They're the same colors in different tones, and that always looks good together. It's great when you don't want to see wood but you still want to see grain. We also used a wash on the poplar ceiling in the kitchen—and a charcoal gray on the island, with a lighter gray on the cabinets. All three variations add layers to the house, and a house with layers looks complete.

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LEFT: The kitchen has “a vintage restaurant look,” Davis says. “A kitchen tiled from floor to ceiling is a workhorse kind of thing.” Tiles are Akdo’s Mini Brick. Lee’s Dual Seat Counter Benches accommodate the family’s four children at the island. The hood over the Wolf range was made by a metalworker, who had car paint matched to Benjamin Moore China White. Urban Archaeology pendant light. TOP: In a dining spot off the kitchen, a Circa Antiques runner dresses up a farm table. ABOVE: A desk chair is slip-covered in a cheerful stripe, Trasimeno by Designers Guild.





Patterns and textures give a greige-toned bedroom a subtle richness. Walls are Benjamin Moore's Revere Pewter. The Bernhardt bed in natural linen is from Three Sheets. Throw pillow from Ankasa.

OPPOSITE: "We intended for the master bathroom to feel more like a dressing room than a bathroom," Schnell says.

They designed the screen and covered it in a luscious Designers Guild cut velvet, Fredensborg. Its curves echo the curves in the Waterworks Empire tub.

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