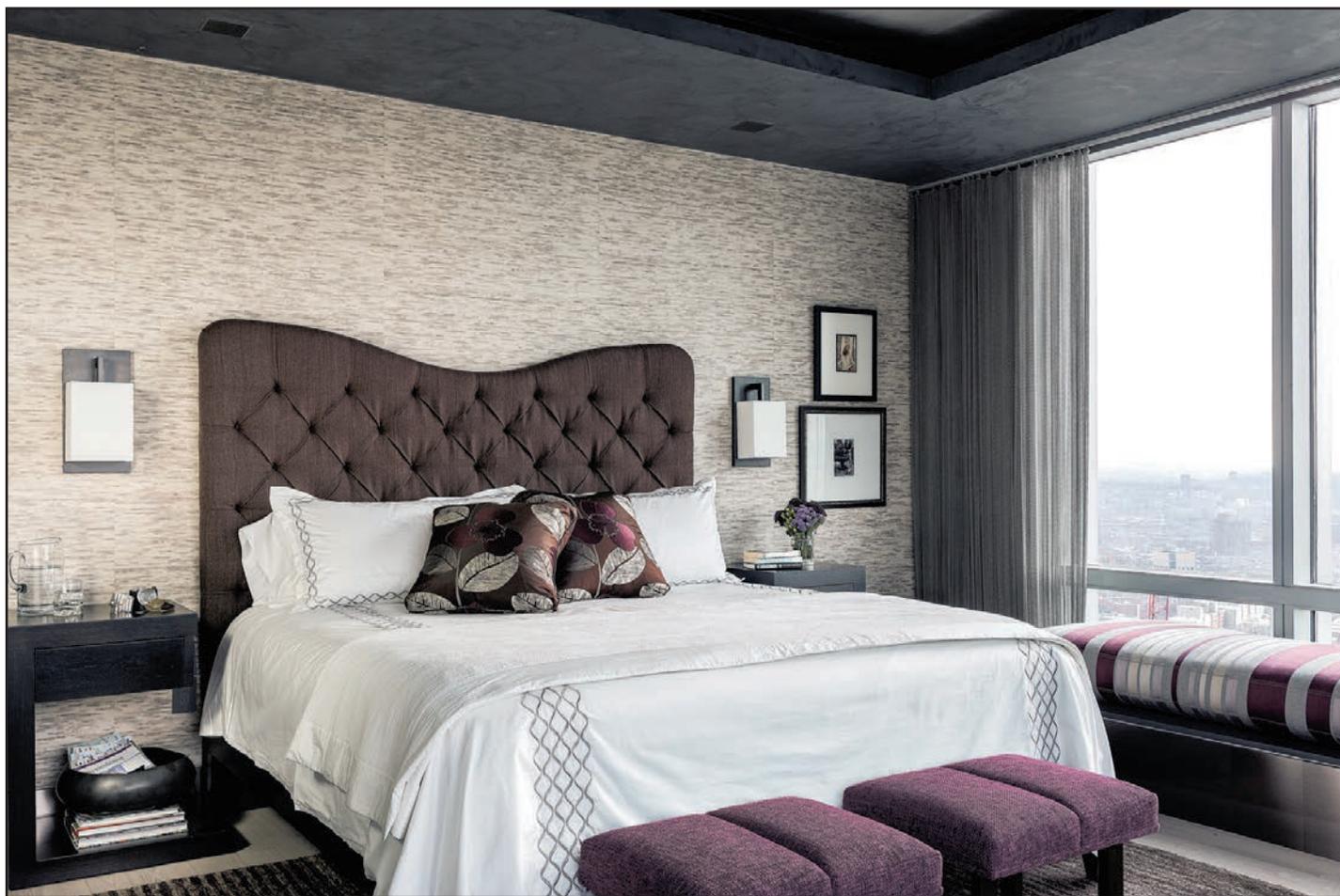


Using Neutrals & Bold Accents for the Spring



Gray with a plum accent

by Julie Hatfield

We know that you must want to get out of your house for spring. Cooped up in the snow, you are tired of looking at the four walls of what has become a veritable winter prison.

Give Mother Nature a few more weeks though, and spring fever will make you want to spiff-up the old manse. We talked with two Boston designers to find out the latest news in spring décor.

Gray has been a very strong color, according to Paula Daher of Daher Interior Design.

It continues to be an important neutral, she added, “but there will be strong colors used as accent pieces with the gray, including lots of shades of purples into fuchsias, cerulean blues and oranges.”

Susan Dearborn, of Susan Dearborn Interiors, Inc., echoes this feeling. “(Gray) took the design world by storm two years ago, replacing beige as the new neutral,” she said. But now gray and beige are friends, she added. “They’re no longer adversaries, and they work together and are mixing nicely in close proximity.”

She showed us a sofa with squares of fabric

in both shades woven together into a fresh spring use of neutrals.

Even kitchen cabinets “are becoming more interesting,” according to Dearborn. Two different colors of cabinets are being used in the same kitchen.

Dearborn adds that blue is also back, “and will stay awhile after a notable absence the last four or five years.” She has been using strong blue prints, as in a chair “done in the wildly popular Ikat design,” for spring décor in Boston homes.

Daher, who has just returned from her annual visit to two trade shows in Paris, said

the window treatments she observed featured “lots of curtains, but less fussy ones,” and “there were motorized curtains, pleats and lots of glass in city homes shown,” adding that new wall coverings were more engaging “There’s a definite resurging of wallpaper,” she said, “and grass cloth saturated with metallics, such as nailheads.”

Another example, in a bedroom she designed, featured a Weitzer wallcover made from small pieces of paper woven to look like a magnified jacquard fabric.

Fabric-wrapped furniture, noted Dearborn, is a texture trend. It does not look like textured grass cloth or painted linen paper after the designer finishes with it, she says. For example, a linen-wrapped coffee table, painted white and then sealed with several protective coats of polyurethane retains the texture of linen but can last for years without damage. “I have a wrapped table that has been passed down to my daughter,” she adds. “20 years and still a wonderful piece.”

Daher notes a “big shift to retro ’60s and a pendulum swinging toward less severe modernism.” She says, “An antique or traditional piece mixed with modern furniture softens the room. There’s also a use of old document fabric, reconfigured from either the 1800s or the 1960s.”

The biggest change in spring décor, according to Daher, is in flooring. “Hardwood floors are getting lighter,” she said. “On the West Coast they’re using bleached oak, very washed out, with a soft matte finish, not waxed. When the floor becomes light, it changes the whole look.”

“Designers are trending away from the traditional Mediterranean shades, which are the earth tones,” Daher says, “and going into light colors with bright interiors, porcelain tile with a driftwood, beachy, coastal feel.”

Remember that beachy, coastal feel? Hang on a little longer; it’s coming.

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