



Consider Dad When Decorating

In honor of Father's Day, I thought it might be appropriate to spend some time discussing the man in your life, and how you can insure that he feels comfortable and at ease in the way your home looks and feels.

Many times, the woman of the house makes most of the primary decisions regarding the home: what furniture to buy, where to place it, whether to invest in window coverings, and what kinds of accents to accessorize with. Although there are certainly many men who have great taste, strong opinions, and enjoy the decorating process, many more are willing to let their partner make most of the decisions.

Sometimes, however, even the most easy-going man realizes that he is not sufficiently reflected in the form and function of his home. Signs of female dominance may include large amounts of floral patterns, pastel colors, lace or ruffles, or copious amounts of family photos and delicate collectibles. If the man of the house feels less than comfortable in certain rooms, he may often gravitate to a garage, study or den, where he can create a more traditional niche for himself.

As an interior redesigner, I generally ask a lot of questions at the initial consultation, to give me an idea of how the room works for all members of the family. Without intending to generalize, I do find that electronics are of more interest to the men, and if that is the case at your house, begin there. Is the television or entertainment center in the right place in the room? It is often advisable to place the TV on or near the same wall as the largest window, to reduce glare as well as provide common focal points. To avoid opposing focal points, try not to place the television opposite the fireplace. It may be worth the small amount of time and money involved to have the cable access moved to an adjacent wall instead.

Once the technology is in the right place, decide where the seating will be. Most men have a favorite chair, and I find that it is important to maintain that placement whenever possible. (Don't mess with Dad's TV viewing, reading or relaxing place!) A side table is advisable, which will hold the array of remotes, as well as a reading lamp, glasses and book, beverage and his snack of choice. When possible, use a side table with closed storage underneath, to corral the collection of magazines, games and other necessities.

Place additional seating nearby, so that a conversation area is created. Unless you have an unusually large room, it is often appropriate to place the arms of the sofa and chairs so

close to each other that they nearly touch. At each arm there should be a side table and lamp, so that reading and relaxing with a drink is an option from all seats.

In any room of the house, consider using colors that are neutral enough in color that they aren't overly feminine. If you have a set of furnishings, art or accessories that are predominantly pastels or floral prints, break them up into different areas of the house. The busyness of these fabrics on sofas or beds can be minimized with the addition of neutral accent pillows and throws.

If you are fortunate enough to have an extra bedroom in your house, it may provide the perfect place to incorporate some of your more feminine pieces. A guest room can be filled with the ornate bed, painted white furniture, or floral bedding that may be too delicate for the Master bedroom.

Straight lines, deeper or more neutral colors, and less decorative accents usually appeal more to men than the ornate. Keep in mind that men are often more functional by nature, and unless there is a specific use for an item, it is often not fully appreciated. This is not to say that we must live in empty, plain environments to appease the men, but just keep the guys in mind before buying too many chatzches.

There were a couple occasions when I actually went shopping with my husband for furniture, and it was interesting to see what appealed to him. I often wonder what style home he would choose if I didn't make most of the decorating decisions. I am especially fond of the large, sage green suede sofa we purchased together, as it was a definite compromise, and yet feels like a reflection of both of us.

There are ways to meet the needs of everyone, by taking advantage of all spaces in your home, large and small. A roll-top desk is a perfect example: it can be a functional workspace for him, while helping you maintain a clean and clutter-free look when the top is down.

A common male fantasy is having a room of his own. Whether a corner in the den, an entire study or the family garage, make an effort to create a space where your man can be alone, feel relaxed and appreciated. This may be the place to display his books, awards, or old rock posters, and become an area that he feels truly comfortable in.

Happy Father's Day to all of you!

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