

* SPECIAL DECORATING ISSUE

Metropolitan Home

**WE
LOVE
COLOR!**

**BRIGHT & EASY
IDEAS FOR
EVERY ROOM**

Jamie Drake
Thinks Pink,
p.106

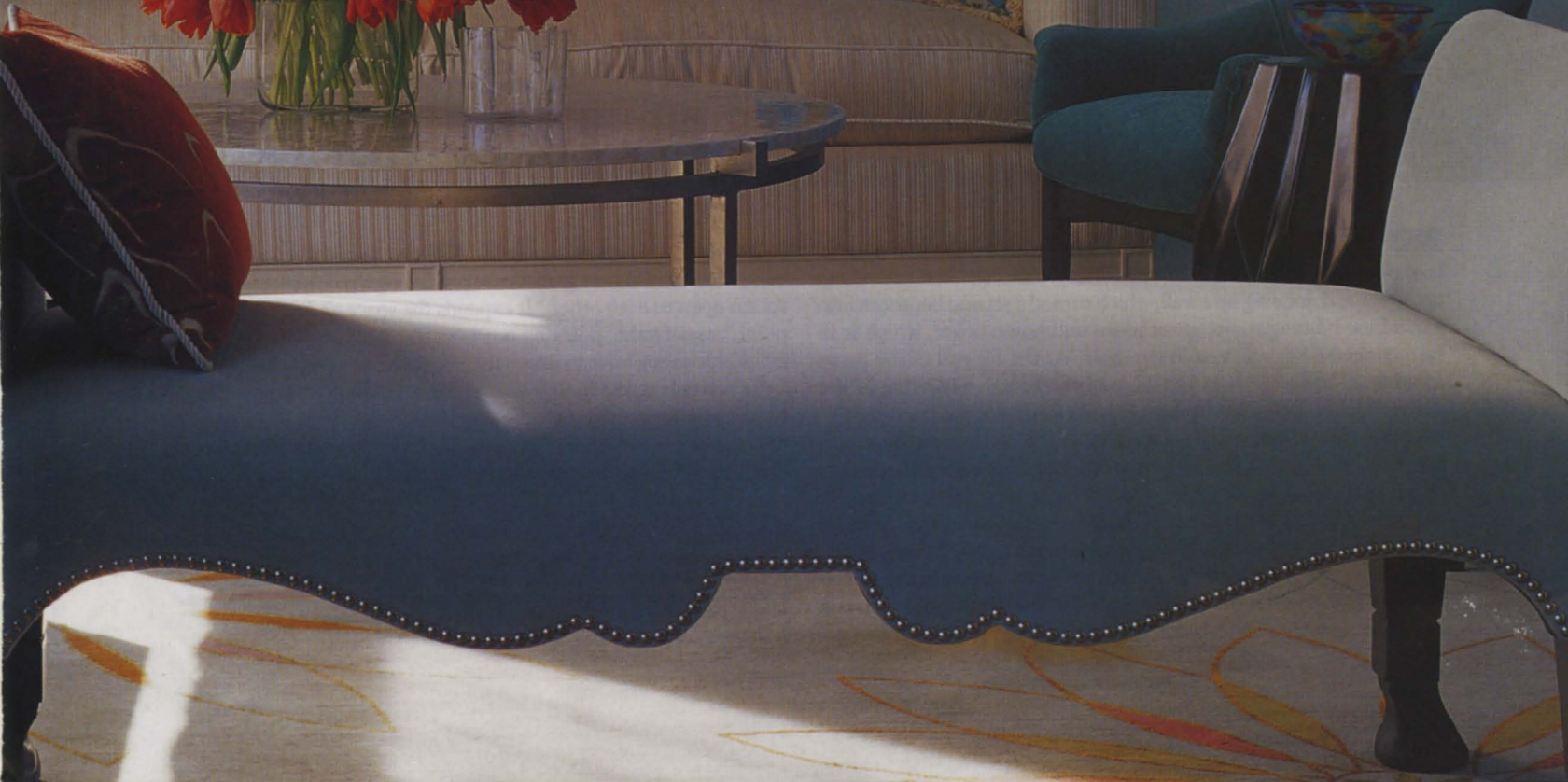


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BEFORE DRAKE COULD apply his fanciful palette, however, there were some structural changes to make, such as walling up a door and opening up a wall, which turned a second bedroom into a combined dining room, guest room and home office, which is in turn connected to one vast living room. At the far end of the living room is an open kitchen. Drake used the oldest technique in the design book to define the spaces: He used different paint colors.

"I thought of broken glass washed in the waves so that pieces become frosted, cool shades of aqua blues and greens," Drake says of his tonal inspiration. As to relating those ideas to the space, he wanted to create "a progression from pale to deeper tonalities so that as you move through the space, the palest color, aqua, acts as the neutral and intensifies into a rich teal-y turquoise in the multipurpose and powder rooms," he says. "In the bedroom there is a complete surprise of wonderful orchid pinks and purples."

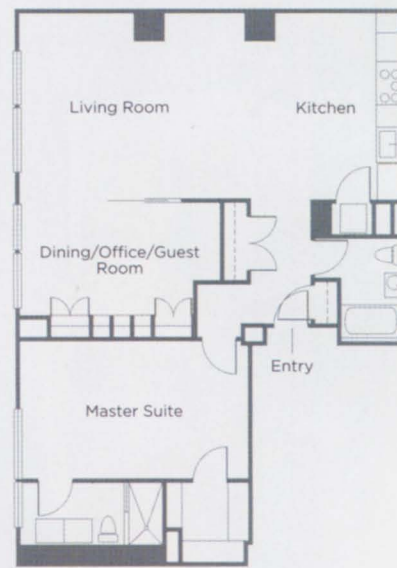
It sounds outrageous but isn't, thanks to the layering of the same basic color in different gradations, producing a painterly effect in the rooms open to each other. "It expands the space and provides a focal point," says Drake, pointing out how the multipurpose room's luscious blue-green built-in draws the eye from the serene living room.

Key details frame it all with structure. "Darker elements like the Macassar-ebony tabletop, ebonized chair frames and bronze end tables give it a backbone," he says. "And traditionally neutral tones like the light velvet sofa and fluffy sheepskin rug are accented against the wall color."

Above: Another view of the living room shows Roman shades made from a Bergamo gauze. The *Tailleur* love seat sofa by Jamie Drake for Lewis Mittman is covered in an ivory bouclé, also from Bergamo, with contrasting green welting. The *Lady Mendl* chair from Geoffrey Bradfield is fashioned of reflective Lucite and upholstered in a Clarence House velvet. Right: A custom rug by Christine Van Der Hurd.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW

When working with color, Jamie Drake advises, start with fabric. "There are endless paint shades available, and you can modulate their tones to suit the fabric, but the selection of fabric is finite: A green velvet you love often only comes in one shade of green." Then plot tone. "Move from light tones in public spaces to darker tones in private spaces, all in the same color family, for depth." He also capitalizes on a space's existing conditions when choosing color. "Paint the room with the most light a light color and the darkest room a dark color, so you don't fight the natural conditions in a space." If you go dark, flirt with texture. "Surface reflectivity or texture is important with an intense color; otherwise it can look cheap, and deep colors without sheen can be too heavy." Establish movement from one room to the next so that a pillow in acid green in the living room is reflected in the chartreuse upholstery of chairs in the dining room.



A

AS SYMBOL SYSTEMS GO, color is the top communication banana: Green means go, red equals stop, orange suggests caution. Color is also highly emotional, as in the moody blues, mean reds and green envies. It's a grammar-free language that instantly conveys meaning, and when that dialect is applied with deftness to decoration, it can tell a compelling story, just as it does when you walk into Bari Mattes's exuberant Manhattan apartment.

"I wanted something that was just about me," says Mattes of the 1,400-square-foot condo she purchased before construction, sight unseen and postdivorce, based on the developer's floor plan and the fact that she had friends in the smart West Chelsea neighborhood. "I'd been married my whole adult life; this is the first apartment I have ever lived in alone."

The move was a departure in more ways than one. Mattes was leaving behind a 3,000-square-foot loft—and an old life: First she quit her job as a corporate lawyer and went to work for a nonprofit agency. Then she shed six dress sizes and moved on to a job in local politics, working as an advisor to Cory Booker, the up-and-coming mayor of Newark, New Jersey. "I wanted something that was happy and up," she says. "I wanted glamorous."

She needed a translator to take her newfound vivacity and transform it into the happy headquarters from which she would lead her new life, so she turned to her friend Jamie Drake, a designer known for romancing the color wheel.

"She needed something refreshing," says Drake, who took his cues from Mattes's prompts—she referenced beach glass and owns an extensive collection of Venetian glass in watery hues.

The cotton-viscose Castel fabric on the sofa is a subtle textured stripe, but Drake's notion of neutral extends to Benjamin Moore's Icing on the Cake blue (on the walls). For luster, Drake chose chrome and Lucite as well as Thai silk (from Donghia) and panne velvet (from Brunswig & Fils). The Twig chair by Erika Brunson is silver-leafed, and the cocktail table has a mother-of-pearl top. The painting is by Steven T. Jones.

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