



After: The window treatment of Hunter Douglas blinds and Kravet toile curtains was the starting point for the room makeover. A matching custom slipcover updates an existing wing chair, and a red area rug from Pottery Barn pulls in red accents throughout the room.



▲ Before: Undersized shutters on the large window looked skimpy and a furniture arrangement with the desk at the foot of the bed made circulation awkward.

▼ After: A subdued color palette of black and white, with splashes of red, help contemporary and traditional items blend together. The furnishings were rearranged for better flow and function, and the original bed was painted black to bring its look up to date.



black & white

A N D R E D A L L O V E R

BY JOETTA MOULDEN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANET LENZEN

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The thing I enjoy most about running an interior makeover business is taking very basic, boring rooms and transforming them into something very special. And when I can accomplish that mission in one of my very best friends' guest bedrooms, then it is especially fun and satisfying.

Lynn Hancock and I have been fast friends since the '70s, and I have helped her decorate way too many houses to count. The advantage is that I know exactly what she likes—my mother refers to us as the “champagne-taste-on-a-beer-pocketbook” brigade. But that just makes decorating even *more* of a challenge as far as we are concerned.

“Since I have lots of out-of-town family and friends, I wanted a guest bedroom that was inviting and comfortable—where my guests could really feel at home,” Lynn explains. “But I also was ready for a more sophisticated look.”

The serendipitous color scheme and concept for the guest room makeover

developed as the result of a magazine project I worked on for Hunter Douglas to install their 2-inch blinds with red tapes, and to pair the blinds with plenty of Kravet toile fabric (from one of their industry partners). As luck would have it, they liked Lynn's condo.

The old wood shutters immediately came down. And the wheels were set into motion for a complete redo. “My sister, Vaughn, was recarpeting her new town home, and she gave me the like-new carpet which had been in a large guest room in her house,” Lynn explains. Since Lynn already had a black nightstand and dust skirt, I suggested we

just commit to a black and white color plan. “I think the black and white scheme is very smart looking,” Lynn says, “and

because it isn't gender specific, both male and female guests feel very comfortable with the palette.”

*a
constrained
new color
palette unifies
the elements
of this
guest room*

Lynn began by painting her existing estate-sale bed flat black and lightly distressed it with sandpaper; then she bought a comfortable new mattress. Lined curtain panels were made to flank the new blinds. “I love the window treatments!”

Lynn exclaims. “They are dramatic, and really create tremendous impact in the room. Once they were installed, I really got excited about the room's possibilities.”

We scheduled a workday and began

moving her furniture around, so that the room not only functioned better, but also felt more spacious. First, we moved the bed over to the left, centering it on the wall. Next, we moved the small secretary from the wall opposite the bed to the wall to the right of the headboard, freeing up a lot of space near the entrance walkway. The black nightstand was repositioned to the left of the bed. The narrow encyclopedia bookcase that had been beside the door (not shown in the “before” photo) was moved to the right of the window and painted flat black. And a Restoration Hardware wood and metal console table with a TV on top was moved from the left side of the secretary and centered at the foot of the bed.

Once the furniture was in place, the decorating could begin. “I couldn't believe how the new furniture arrangement opened up the room and made it feel so large,” Lynn says. “By placing the secretary next to the bed, it can serve as both a writing desk and bedside table. It is very convenient for

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▲ **After:** Plates hung around a favorite family painting give the art piece, which looked too small otherwise, a stronger presence in the room. A slipcover was made to give the old console more weight in the room and provide needed storage.

guests to have a larger table by the bedside—now there is plenty of room for a book, a glass of water and reading glasses,” she adds.

I e-mailed Lynn photographs of some black and white rooms for inspiration and suggested she shop for both a black and white stripe and a small, black and white checked fabric to use as accents to the toile. She already had a black bed skirt, but it was way too short for the bed. Since it was already paid for, I suggested we add a deep border of the checked fabric to the bottom and line it so it would hang smoothly.

We additionally had a toile duvet cover made, which is totally reversible to the checked fabric side. Custom Euro shams were trimmed in the striped fabric, which was used as a bias welt cord for interest. A neck roll pillow and boudoir pillow were made for the bed, using both the toile and striped fabrics. A striped chair cushion was added to the small black dining side chair, which Lynn brought from her family’s home in Pittsburg, Texas, for the room.

Because Lynn needed storage and the console table looked very “lightweight” visually, I designed a tailored, pleated toile slipcover for it, bordered at the bottom with a band of checked fabric. Her existing combination TV/VCR, a basket of videotapes and a basket of family photo albums are all stored on the shelf underneath the skirt.

Always the great shopper, Lynn found some handsome black and white striped sheets at Wal-Mart, and began collecting black and white transfer ware plates at T.J. Maxx and Marshalls on

original etchings featuring cats, and Lynn had them framed at Michaels. I suggested she lighten the mat around her grandmother’s painting of a girl in graduation cap and gown. “It was one of my grandmother’s pieces and has a lot of sentimental value,” Lynn

explains. “The new mat is lighter than the original mat was, and really makes the piece stand out.” When I mentioned it would be nice to have a mirror above the secretary, Lynn cleverly bought a pre-made frame at Michaels and had Lone Star Glass install a beveled mirror in it.

We scheduled a picture-hanging day and Lynn assembled her art, the plate hangers she bought at Michaels and all her black and white transferware plates. We placed the big art first. The black and white contemporary piece was centered over the bed. Next, we laid out a symmetrical pattern of matching plates around it, which created a stunning focal point for the headboard wall, mixing contemporary with traditional. We hung the mirror over the secretary. The newly framed cat etchings were hung—one over the black bedside table, one above the mirror, one over the encyclopedia bookcase, which Lynn also painted black.

Then we turned our attention to the wall opposite the bed. I suggested we hang the dogwood painting over the skirted table. “The still life of the dogwood was painted by my cousin

dogwood painting, which additionally kept the painting from looking too small. “I would never have considered hanging plates around existing artwork,” Lynn says. “It is such an inexpensive way to create strong focal points in a room and tie traditional and modern art styles together.”

Once the art was hung, we made a list of remaining tasks to “finish” the space. I asked Lynn to find a large, comfortable chair to place beside the console, and from Pittsburg, she brought home a seldom-used wing chair, which was treated to a new slipcover by Deco Custom Furniture. She also needed a pair of lamps to flank the dogwood painting, which I discovered for \$22.99 each at Linens ‘N Things.

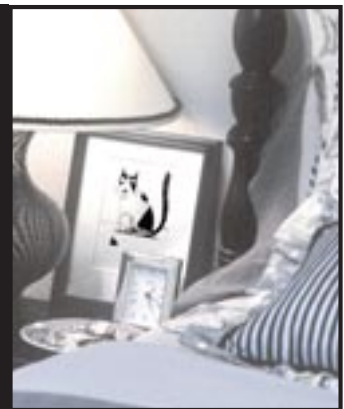
Art-wise, we needed to fill in some holes. Lynn brought out two more paintings from a closet; one was hung next to the secretary, and the other was hung to fill a void next to the wing chair. The only thing left to find was a rug, to tie the red tapes into the room. I found the perfect 3’ x 5’ rug online from Pottery Barn, and Lynn ordered it. Other finishing touches included arranging stacks of books and family photos in silver frames, adding baskets to the encyclopedia bookcase, and adding a throw to the bed.

“I’ve had lots of repeat guests since the room has been completed,” Lynn says. “I think guests are a little surprised that a room so attractive can also be so cozy and comfortable.” ■

▼ **An existing cat etching was re-matted and framed for the room, finishing off a charming black and white bedside vignette.**

TRADE | secrets

- Unify mismatched furniture with a quart of black paint.
- To keep feminine fabrics from becoming too “sweet”, add bold modern art, a colorful Kilim rug and a sophisticated wall color.
- Create drama and unify diverse art by hanging transfer ware plates around it.
- Glue black braid around an old lampshade to make it “new” again.
- Sometimes the most effective strategy is not to buy more furniture and accessories for your home, but to rethink the pieces that are already paid for.



regular shopping trips. She found three plates at Metals, Petals & More in Old Town Spring. A friend who was moving his office gave her a large, contemporary paper piece in a chrome frame, and I suggested she spray paint the frame matte black. To top off the bargains, she found a small lamp for the secretary for \$12.99 at Kirkland’s.

Other artwork was re-matted and framed for the room. Lynn’s brother, Counce, had given Lynn three humorous

Madeleine Albright,” Lynn explains, “who owned a florist shop and from whom I took art lessons when I was a young girl. She let me choose a painting when I graduated from high school, and for sentimental reasons I selected the dogwood. The flower always blooms at Easter in Pittsburg, and when I look at it I am reminded of home,” she says.

For fun and to tie the plates to the opposite wall, I suggested hanging the remaining transferware plates around the

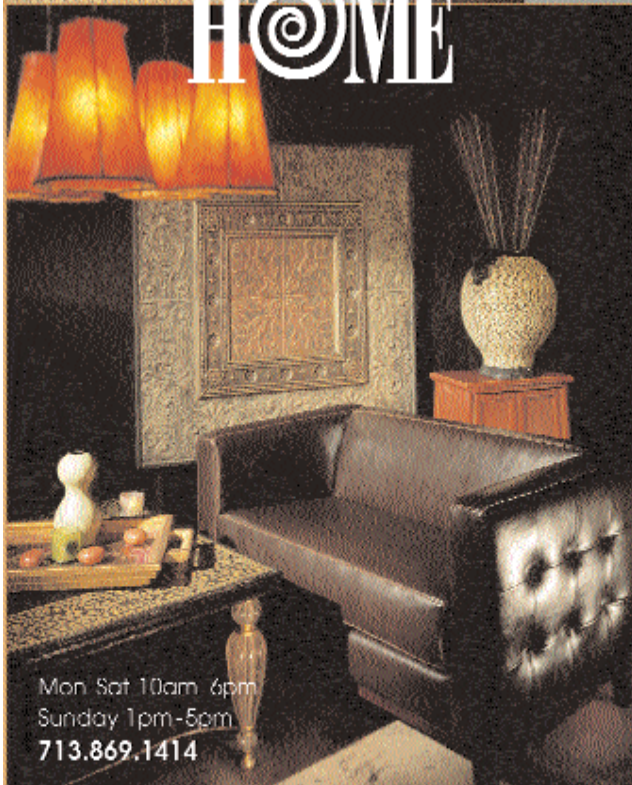
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