

**A Guided  
Journey to  
Creating  
the Home  
Your Spirit  
Craves**

**Awaken Your  
Interior**

*Designer*

by Marney K. Makridakis & Michael J. Holland

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*Awaken Your Interior Designer*

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**Dedicated to those who truly believe that a beautiful  
home is good for the spirit.**

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*Awaken Your Interior Designer*

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# Foreword

by Michael J. Holland

Michael J. Holland is the founder of ImagineQuest Information Products Inc., which is dedicated to providing e-goods that will enhance the lives and lifestyles of its customers.

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“All serious daring starts from within.”

— Eudora Welty

Without a doubt, decorating your home is a deeply personal process. It requires that you draw from your experiences, feelings, passions...in essence, your **inner guide**.

Surely, the writers and publishers of those other decorating books must know this, right?

Then why do they fill their books with lots of theories that aren't presented in a logical order to ensure decorating **success**? Where are the “**real-world tips and tricks**” to help put theories in action?

Why do they include photographs of beautiful homes that look nothing like those of regular people?

And **why** don't they at least provide basic information about the photographs such as the retailer for that gorgeous sofa or the manufacturer of that unusual paint color? After all, these are the pearls that could really help you **achieve** your decorating dreams!

The reason is...it's much easier and faster to churn out “formula” books with super-slick imagery, rather than to ask you what you want from an interior decorating book.

This was also the feedback I received from my friends. And so the idea for this book was born.

AYID...Foreword

I envisioned a book that would give decorating beginners the confidence to **create** beautiful spaces. I also wanted the book to be loaded with unique ideas and techniques that would even **benefit** more experienced home decorators.

Easy step-by-step instructions were a must, as were photographs with information of where to purchase items.

**Wow**....I was asking for a lot!

I had plenty of great thoughts **swirling** through my mind, but had never written a book. But where could I find a collaborator who shared my vision?

After searching for several months, I met Marney Makridakis, **who** had been toying with a similar concept over the years.

Let me tell you a little about Marney...

She is a spiritual, **high-energy** artist, designer, and writer who has an intense passion for decorating and the arts.

Her paintings, mixed-media collages, and three-dimensional assemblages have been shown in galleries and sold in arts and crafts shows nationally.

She has a large following of students in New York's Hudson Valley region, **teaching** classes in papermaking, handmade bookbinding, decorative painting, polymer clay, rubber stamping, and paper arts.

**In addition**, she has written creative feature articles for well **known** publications including Craft, Somerset Studio, The Rubber Stamper, and Stamping Arts and Crafts...(not to **mention** producing her own magazine, [Artella](#).)

For her **contributions** to the arts and art education, Marney was awarded the prestigious national 2001 Leonard Bernstein Award by the National Symphony Orchestra League.

With such a diverse artistic background, there was simply **no way** that I could pass up the opportunity to work with her!

AYID...Foreword

So our project began...

We **brainstormed** and then prepared comprehensive surveys. We obtained valuable feedback from many **home owners** and apartment dwellers — people just like **you** who told us exactly what they wanted from a home decorating book.

Marney immersed herself for months.

We would brainstorm periodically and survey **some more**. Marney would e-mail manuscript sections for my review. Then, together we would tear them apart, add a bunch of **new ideas...and** repeat the process over and over again.

Finally, after seven months...it was done. **Simple. Clear. Effective.** Written in a conversational style with one overriding purpose...to provide you with a do-able approach to finding and expressing **your** inner decorator.

*Awaken Your Interior Designer* is **bursting** with fresh and **original** ideas, practical time-saving tools, and easy do-it-yourself projects!

So grab your favorite beverage and put on some **soothing** background music...

You're about to embark on a fun and entertaining journey to creating the home that **your** spirit craves.

Wishing you all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'M' being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the name.

## I. How to Use AYID

*Awaken Your Interior Designer* comes with many special features to enhance your reading experience. If you are reading this e-book using Acrobat Reader, this section will introduce you to these features and show you how they work.

### I.i Links to Spots within AYID

If you've ever read a book and have been frustrated that you can't put your finger on information you read earlier, you'll be happy to know that AYID! has **internal links** that take you from one part of the book to a related section. Internal links appear throughout the text as [blue-underlined](#).

Clicking on an internal link may take you directly to another spot in the book where relevant material was previously discussed. An internal link may also lead to you an item in the Appendix, which offers special tools that we reference throughout the book. Blue-underlined text also indicates a link to a Web site...stay tuned for more information about Web links, later in this section.

### I.ii Navigation Features

Here are some easy instructions that will help you move around the book easily and effectively...

**Scroll Bar** -- click on the Scroll Box in the Scroll Bar and drag it **down** or **up** to rapidly move forward or backward through the book. As you click on the box, the page number displays on the screen. Then, all you have to do is release the mouse button when you get to the desired page.



You can click just **below** or **above** the Scroll Box to **advance** or **reverse** slightly within the current page.

Clicking the **Scroll Arrows** (at the bottom or top of the Scroll Bar, not shown in the illustration) will **advance** or **reverse** the page by a single line at a time. You also can scroll the page continuously by holding an Arrow down.

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**Arrow keys** -- Pressing the arrow keys on your keyboard will cause different actions to occur, depending on your Operating System and the version of Acrobat Reader that you have. Just experiment and see what happens when you press the arrow keys.

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**Table of Contents** -- The Table of Contents is a separate file labeled **TOC.pdf**. When this document is open in Acrobat Reader, you can click on any heading to jump to the corresponding part in the book.

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**Index** -- AYID has an index which is located at the very end of the book, after the Appendix A-D. You can browse the Index and click on any referenced page number to *link directly* to a relevant discussion on the page indicated in the index. This will make your life a lot easier, when you're trying to locate information about a specific topic.

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**Bookmarks** -- If you have a larger monitor, Bookmarks are a great way to get around AYID! To view the bookmarks, do one of the following...

Acrobat Reader v. 5...Click the **Bookmarks tab** on the left side of the screen

Acrobat Reader v. 4...Click **Window** and then click **Show Bookmarks**

Acrobat Reader v. 3...Click **View** and then click **Bookmarks and Page**

Here is what the Foreword and section 1.0 look like in the bookmark list or bookmark pane:



In the graphic below, the **+ sign** (or a triangle, depending on your version) to the left of sections 1.0 and 2.0 indicates that the bookmark can be expanded to display “sub bookmarks” below it. If you move your cursor to the + sign (see below)....



...and then **click the triangle**, a list of sub bookmarks under that bookmark will display:



To collapse the chapter so that the sub bookmarks do not display, just click on the + sign again.

If you move your cursor over one of the actual bookmarks, you'll see that the cursor turns into a “pointing hand” (see above). Click the bookmark, and you'll immediately leap to the beginning of that section!

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**Straight Page Jumps** -- At the bottom of the Acrobat window, you'll see something that looks like this:



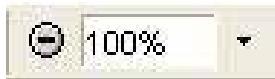
Click the single arrows on either side of the page number box to advance one page forward or move one page backward. (The appearance and mode of the page jump feature varies according to the operating system and version of Acrobat that you are using. Experiment with your version to get familiar with it.)

**Returning to your original position** -- If, as you navigate AYID, you want to return to your previous position, just click this button:



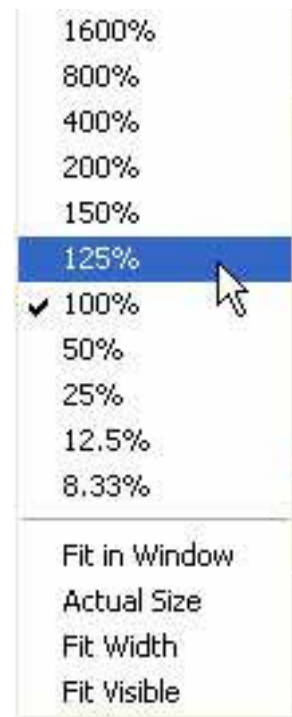
### I.iii Viewing Features

**Magnification** -- In the **upper left corner** of the Acrobat Reader window (or at the bottom of the window, depending on the version), there is a magnification window that looks like this:



This window indicates the current magnification at which AYID displays. We recommend viewing AYID at 100%, which will give you the best general quality and effectiveness.

However, if you want to change the magnification, simply click on the **down arrow** on the right side of the magnification box. A drop-down menu will display, like the one show here (right):



Just use your cursor to select the percentage at which you'd like to view AYID. You also can simply type over the 100% in the magnification box to change the magnification percentage.

Below the list of percentages, there are some other options in the drop-down menu, as you can see in the image on the previous page.

If you have a **small monitor** (15"-17"), you can select **Fit Visible** so that AYID is maximized in your window to take up the whole monitor screen.

If you have a **large monitor** (19" or greater) you may want to select **Fit Page**, which will fit one entire page into the vertical dimension of the AYID window.

You might want to take a moment and play around with different magnifications, scrolling through the pages you've read thus far, and see which one feels most convenient and effective.

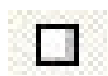


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**Page Display Layout** -- At the bottom of the window, you'll see page layout option buttons that look like this:



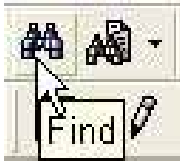
(These buttons may appear differently, depending on the version of Acrobat you are using. The button on the far right (above) does not display on the screen in earlier versions of Acrobat Reader.)

These three buttons allow you to select from the following layouts:

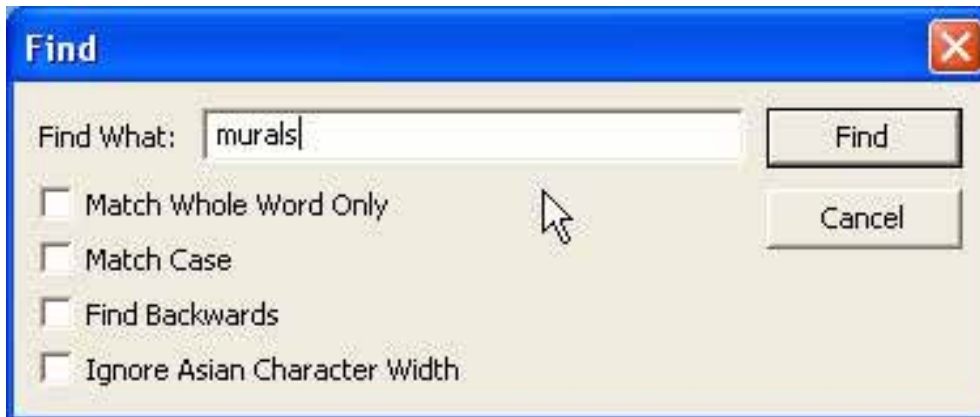
-  **Single page** -- displays one page in the document at a time
-  **Continuous** -- arranges the pages in a continuous vertical column for easy scrolling
-  **Continuous facing pages** -- arranges the pages to appear side by side. This is only a good choice if you have a very large monitor.

## I.iv Search Features

If you want to search for a particular word or phrase in AYID, you can click the **Find button**, located on the menu bar at the top of the window:



You can also click **Edit** on the command bar and then click **Find**. Either way, the **Find dialog box** will display:



Simply type what you want to find in the Find What box. Use the options below the Find What box to make further specifications about your search:

**Match Whole Word Only** -- if you only want to find the whole word you type, as opposed to another word that might include the word you have entered

**Match Case** -- if your search criteria is case-sensitive

**Find Backwards** -- if you want to move backwards in the book as you search, instead of moving forward

Then, just click the Find button and dialog boxes will lead you through the results of the search.

## I.v Print Feature

You can print this document in the usual fashion. Please respect the [intellectual rights](#) attached to this book. Do not make copies for others.

## I.vi Links to the Internet

We've already told you about internal links in AYID. The majority of text in [underlined blue](#), however, are links to Web sites. When you move your cursor over a link, the cursor changes to a "pointing hand". Simply **click the link** and the Web site will open up in your browser.

(Note: Sometimes a link may not work due to heavy traffic or technical difficulties. If this occurs, try again in a few minutes or the next day.)

AYID has **more than 530 links** contained in its pages!!!!

These links include the following:

- Web sites for companies where you can purchase items shown in the photographs
- Web sites for interactive tutorials and further "how-to" information that expands on the information we give you right here
- Links to the Web sites of specific designers and manufacturers of custom-made items shown in the photographs
- Links to books we LOVE and recommend

and **much, much more!**

Now that we've told you all about the great features of AYID...it's time to move right into section 1.0, *Let Your Interior Designer OUT!*

**So get ready....your home will never be the same....**

# 1.0 Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

## 1.1 Are You Ready to Create Your Dream Home?

Are you ready to rediscover your life, your graceful joy, and inner harmony? Are you ready to greet the day with crisper breath, lighter steps, and a dream that dances in your heart? Are you ready to look through your home – whatever its size or shape – and sigh a colorful smile, thinking, “I can’t believe I LIVE here!”

Are you ready to....



be guided through an intuitive process for decorating the home of your unique dreams



gain confidence in making decorating choices



complete creative projects while saving time and money

**We’re ready to take you there!**

In this book, you’ll be given the opportunity to look deeply within to find exactly what you’re seeking in the room or rooms you want to decorate.

Our interactive guidebook formula is designed to be foolproof in helping you identify your decorating needs, desires, and resources.

**And we plan to have LOTS of fun, while we’re at it!**



We also give you all the tools you’ll need to create your dream rooms, and take you by the hand as we go through each step, together.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

You'll see lots of pictures of varied and inspiring homes...homes that look like REAL people live there! **To get a closer look at the photos, change the magnification in the box on the upper-left of corner of your screen to 125%.**

We will also provide contact information and links to Web sites where you can purchase items featured in those homes. **(Note that stores with Web sites are *active links* and are underlined in blue. Contact information for stores without Web sites are listed in [Appendix A.](#))**

Color schemes, fabrics and texture, furniture, walls, window treatments, accents ...we promise to be right with you every step of the way! Thanks for entrusting us to be your humble guides on this journey.

Are you ready to give a makeover to that tired sofa that's accompanied you since your college days? Ready to add some unique charm to your dingy kitchen cabinets? Or bring some light into your dark and confining bedroom?

Or ....(dramatic gasp) do something about those lackluster white walls?

Then pack up...

your secret dreams,  
your spirit,  
and your sense of humor.

Everything else is in the pages that follow...



*Imagine walking through your home and knowing that you were born to live there. That's what it means to "come home"!*  
(Sofa and coffee table are from [Ethan Allen.](#))

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

## 1.2 Inventory, Insight, and Inspiration are the Keys to Decorating Success!

Here's an overview of this book and how it works:

**1. INVENTORY:** First, we will determine, together, the building blocks that we'll use to fulfill your decorative and functional requirements, while adding lots of personal ingenuity and flair to your home.

You'll participate in a comprehensive personal inventory using our **Interior Interviews** and **Discovery Playsheets**. These tools will evaluate what you're looking for in your home or the room you're decorating.

We highly recommend that you start the process by working through these activities. Now don't let visions of 8<sup>th</sup> grade math tests come into your head...these exercises are easy and don't have any wrong answers.

Even if, by some chance, you already have a pretty clear sense of what you're going after with this décor project, it's still a great idea to work through these exercises.

You're bound to pick up at least a few new ideas. Perhaps you'll end up with an even deeper intuitive sense of what you can bring to your new room or rooms.

If you have absolutely NO idea what to do or where to start, even better! These exercises are tremendously effective when you allow your gut level feelings and reactions to rise to the surface, without having any expectations for the final results. Trust us, this works!

**2. INSIGHT:** After completing the inventory, you'll be guided through an interactive, step-by-step process of decorating your home. Whether you're decorating one room, or taking on several rooms, or even decorating a brand new house, the steps are foolproof for guiding you to decorating success.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

We'll consistently refer you back to your work in the **Discovery Playsheets** and **Interior Interviews** to keep you on track, while giving you all the tools you need as you go along.

You'll learn about color schemes, wall treatments, texture, floors, furniture, window treatments, lighting...in essence, EVERYTHING you need to know, **in the order in which you need to know it.**

After getting a firm grasp on the elements of decorating (and realizing that it is far easier than you ever thought it could be!), we'll lead you through putting it all together, making the elements work to their best advantage in your home.

**3. INSPIRATION:** Throughout the book, you will be invited to a wealth of decorating inspiration with hands-on projects and ideas to apply in your home.

And...keep your eyes out for our friendly icons that offer various bits of information, including:



Coffee Break – quick check-ins to see how you're doing and how we can help



Sit 'n Summarize – summaries on topics for quick reference, simply put



Marney's Memo – a glimpse into Marney's mind as she solves her own personal decorating challenges



Ancient Wisdom – little known facts of home and style through the ages to inspire you along the journey

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

### 1.3 Tools, Not Rules!

We'd like to briefly mention just a few things that are very important to us in writing this book. These are the guiding principles behind the process we're presenting to you, and we thought we'd better come right out and admit a few things right now.

So...

...here are our true confessions:

1. If you're looking for a book that lists all of the golden rules of decorating – the static Do's and Don'ts, well, this is NOT it. We believe in **TOOLS, not RULES**, and we're proud of it!

Even when we give you suggestions of things that usually are effective in decorating, we don't think of them as rules.

We want you to take our suggestions and feel free to run with them as far as you'd like (just don't forget to take the book with you; you may need it closer to the finish line!)

2. If you're looking for a book that tells you how to decorate one specific room...this is NOT it. We want to present you with a solid understanding of the tools that you can use every single time you decorate or redecorate a room...ANY room.

These same basic principles and sequential processes are involved with decorating a bathroom or a dining room or a bedroom.

Our heartfelt intent is to give you a resource to which you can refer for a lifetime of happy decorating!

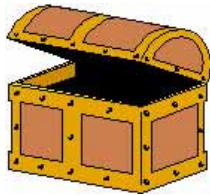


© Marney K. Makridakis 2002

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

3. If you're looking for a book that presents decorating as merely an aesthetic entity, you had better keep looking. We believe decorating is an extremely personal experience. Not only is it dependent on personal taste, it must take into account the function of the rooms and the emotional and physical needs of the people who will inhabit them.

In this way, decorating is a deeply spiritual process. Following intuition and creating a mental picture of what "bliss" looks like to you is just as important as painting a wall!



## Ancient Wisdom

An ancient series of writings called *De Architectura*, written by Vitruvius, was the first "how to" book on home decorating.

Written between 90 & 20 BCE, the papers covered aspects of Roman Design, including technical information about bricks and concrete, water supply, and design principles.

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## 1.4 Changing Your Home Can Change Your Life!!

**We believe decorating can change your life!**

And we're not the only ones....read on...

Joy, a psychotherapist: "When I redecorated, I was afraid about what I would do with all of my sentimental possessions. I have a large family and have inherited a lot of things through the years, and I am always picking up items that speak to me.

The result has not been all that inspiring – it's actually been cluttered. What I learned is that I can work with my cherished belongings and not against them. I figured out what I wanted to keep and display and found that I could integrate those items into new color schemes and design choices.

AYID...Let Your Interior Designer OUT!

Marie, a writer : “The best thing I ever did for myself was redecorate a room with conscious thought about every single object I placed in the room and every adjustment I made in color, furniture placement, and lighting.

It was like a meditation for me. Now the room feels like mine, and it is my favorite place to go to ‘fill the well.’ I have more energy than ever.”

Denise, a homemaker: “For me, the big link was realizing the emotional impact of color. I set out to choose colors for my rooms that would trigger the response I sought when I was in that room.

My entire family feels the difference...we are more calm and peaceful and enjoy our fresh new space.”



*When you consciously give objects a special place, it is an act of artful decorating. Even on a bedside table! (Lamp is from [JC Penney Home Store](#).)*



*Colors are rich with emotion...the trick is to find the right combination for you!*

Deana, a medical librarian: “Apartment living can be a challenge, but I finally realized that there’s really no difference between decorating an apartment and decorating a home you own.

When I gave my small apartment a full makeover, I fell in love with the space. I stopped wishing for what I didn’t have – a house – and instead found the gifts that lay right here in front of me, simply by making some simple and affordable changes.”

## 2.0 The Designer Within: Interpreting Your Decorating Dreams

### 2.1 Interior Interviews



So, now's the fun part where we'll get down to business and help you uncover your decorating vision. The first step is the **Interior Interviews**, which are free-form writing experiments with absolutely no right or wrong answers.

For this step, you'll need something to write in. It can be anything, from a legal pad or spiral notebook to a hardbound journal with an inspiring cover.

You also can print multiple copies of the lined page found in [Appendix B](#) and place them in a binder or notebook.

Whatever form it takes, this book will act as your journal for your decorating spirit. It's important to keep all the pages together for organizational purposes.

We'll be coming back to these answers from time to time, so it will make things much easier for you if you have all of your writings together.

If you print out the pages of this book, we've given you space to write shorter answers to questions that are used as consolidation tools; that is, they ask you to summarize information that you write in the free-form questions.

If you do not print out these pages, you should write the answers to these "consolidation" questions in your journal.

We encourage you to set aside some time to yourself and dive into these questions as soon as possible. Even if you're just planning to make a small change — such as changing the wall color — getting an intuitive sense of what you truly desire in a room will be helpful.

AYID...The Designer Within

In exploring these activities, you may glean information that drastically changes what you originally had in mind, as you more fully discover what you are seeking in your home.

There is no “right” way to decorate, except to be in tune with a concept that is aligned with your heart.

In writing free-form answers to these questions, you’ll be getting right into the home that exists in your heart...and that’s the first step!

It’s time to get absolutely giddy with excitement for the home that will unfold right before your eyes!

So...make a cup of your favorite comforting beverage....

find a comfy spot to think and write...

and let’s begin!



*We'll show you how to keep an eye out for cozy corners...like the one created in this very small kitchen. Often, charming corners have been right in front of your eyes, just waiting to be discovered! (Wallpaper is from MacAfee Designs, available at [Home Depot](#); dinette set is from [Pier 1 Imports](#).)*

## Write your answers to the following in your journal...



**1. What are the very first rooms you remember from childhood? What sticks out the most in your memory? One room at a time, jot down your most sensory-specific memories.**

Here are some memory joggers....

What did it smell like?

What did the fabric of the quilt, curtain, or carpet feel like to touch?

What colors were in the room?

Did the room feel warm or cold to you?

Did the room seem happy or serious?

Were there breakable things around?

Did the room seem big or small to you?

**Now, repeat these questions for other rooms you remember as a child.**



**2. Continue to recall your childhood...did you ever play “house”? What did your house look like, either in your imagination or as an actual playhouse?**

Here are some memory joggers....

Did you create homes for your dolls?

Did you have a miniature dollhouse, or did a friend have one that you coveted?

What did you love most about these homes...the frilly pink lace on Barbie’s bed?

The view of the apple tree outside your playhouse window?

The miniature grandfather clock in your friend’s dollhouse?

Or perhaps the grand piano or tiny rosebuds on the wallpaper?

**Take a moment and write about these “play” homes that played a role in your childhood.**



## Coffee Break

Thinking about childhood memories often unlocks a door to the most intimate experiences that you continue to hold in your heart through adulthood.

Remember that no one ever need see these answers but you. The purpose of these exercises is to get you thinking about the role that the idea of “home” plays in your life...and the role you would like it to play.

---



**3. When you think of the word, “home”, what are the first five words that come to mind? Write your words here:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



**4. Look back at your answers to the first two questions. What has the word “home” meant to you?**

What key feelings about "home" were revealed?

Review all your responses for these first four questions and select the top three words that seem to best capture your vision of "home".

(For example, three words that could sum up your childhood experiences could be something like: 1. antiques; 2. feminine; 3. cozy.)

4. (continued)

Enter your 3 words here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



*While not every child lives in such a magically decorated space as the one shown here, we all had imaginations with limitless rooms and windows. (Walls designed by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)*

(For do-it-yourself projects like this decorated wall, consult our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls and Furniture*, for unique projects you won't find anywhere else.)



**5. Imagine that money, time, and resources are not an issue, and describe your perfect day “at home”. What would you spend your day doing?**

What time would you wake up, and what would you see as you got out of bed, got dressed, showered, ate breakfast, and started on your daily tasks?

**Check in with your senses:**

- What would you see?
- What would you hear?
- What would you smell?
- What would you taste?
- What would you touch?

Let yourself dream big here -- don't be limited by any thought of what is or is not feasible.



**6. Think of a home you've visited in the past year or so -- perhaps it was like one of the homes pictured below.**

It could be the home of a friend, or a home in which a business or social gathering took place. It could even be a home you saw on TV or in a movie.

**What one word describes what you liked about it?**

Enter it here:

---



*The word for this home might be "cozy"...*



*While the word for this one might be "classic". (Sofa and coffee table are from [Ethan Allen](#); side table is by [Hitchcock Chair Company](#).)*



**7. Take a moment and think about having your dream home. How would you know if you had it?**

Don't think in terms of specific decor...rather, think about how the lives of you and your family would change if you were living in your dream home.

**7. (continued)**

**Now, make a list of several things that come to mind that would make you know you were living in your dream home.**

For example:

“I would feel cheery every time I walked into the kitchen.”

“My friends would love to hang out here.”

“I would drift off to sleep basking in my favorite color.”

“The family room would be organized and completely devoid of clutter.”

Questions 5-7 encouraged you to articulate your dreams, without limitations. Look through your answers and, again, look for patterns.



**8. Are there any specific concepts that were repeated throughout these answers? Write three words that summarize what you have answered in those three questions.**

(i.e.: 1. elegant; 2. simple; 3. sunny)

**Enter your three words here:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



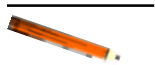
*An elegant, simple, sunny bedroom - 3 words in action!*



**9. Imagine that you have just been informed that a flood or fire is on its way to your house and there is nothing you can do to stop it.**

**Which room, above all others, do you hope is spared from destruction?**

Room: \_\_\_\_\_



10. Think about the room you wrote down in the last question, and describe what you like about that room in three words:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



11. In the same emergency situation, which room are you least fond of and would hope is destroyed, with insurance to pay for the complete rebuilding and redecorating of it?

(You can only choose one room here...we know, it might be tough!)

Room: \_\_\_\_\_



12. Think about the room you wrote down in #11, and describe what you *don't* like about that room in three words.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



13. Look at the 3 words you just wrote in #12. In the spaces below, write the **opposite of each word you wrote**. For example, if an aspect you don't like about a room is "messy", you could write the word, "clean" or "organized", here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

You're doing great! You've come up with some important puzzle pieces, and now we'll start putting them together.



14. In the spaces below, transfer the answers from the other pages, indicated by the question numbers. (If you're reading this on the computer, just jot these down in your journal)



- word 1 from question #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 2 from question #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 3 from question #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- word entered in question #6: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 1 from question #8: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 2 from question #8: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 3 from question #8: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 1 from question #10: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 2 from question #10: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 3 from question #10: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 1 from question #13: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 2 from question #13: \_\_\_\_\_
- word 3 from question #13: \_\_\_\_\_



15. Look at your list of words and see if there are any patterns among, or similarities between, the words.

Then narrow your list down to five words that seem to resonate most deeply in answer to the question, **“What is the essence of my dream home?”**

Enter them here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



16. Look at your list of 5 words in #15, and select the 3 words that characterize the changes in your home that would make the biggest difference in your life. Write them here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



17. Now hear this: **YES, You CAN have the home of your dreams!** When you read these words, what are the very first thoughts that come to mind?

Some thoughts to ponder...

When you dream about your home without limitations, does any resistance come up for you?

What, if anything, makes you hesitate?



18. If you indicated a hesitation or resistance in your answer from #17, see if you can label your main resistance in terms of lack (i.e., lack of funds, lack of space, lack of time, lack of self-esteem).

If applicable, pick one or two that most accurately describe your resistance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



**19. The next step is to create an affirmation to help you move beyond the lack that you perceive.**

An affirmation is a sentence that is stated in the positive, in the present tense.

Affirmations can be very powerful tools. They can help you stay focused and optimistic while you draw good things into your life and manifest your dreams.

An example of a health-related affirmation is, "I am full of energy and enjoy the freedom that comes with good health." Get the idea?

*Affirmations change the focus from lack to abundance.*

**Now, it's time to write an affirmation for your decorating adventure. Think of it as your "mission statement."**

**Take the 3 words you wrote in #16, and combine them with the lack(s) you listed in #18, stated in a positive way.**

Here's an example: "I enjoy designing an elegant, comforting, and pristine home using the funds and space that I have."

Write your affirmation/mission statement here:

**What does all this have to do with decorating?** EVERYTHING. In order to have something for your very own, you must first know what it is!



## Coffee Break

If, after you've written your affirmation, you'd like to go back and change the three main words you wrote in #16...be our guest! Your affirmation is entirely flexible – you may, in fact, change it several times as we go along.

---

## 2.2 Discovery Playsheets - What's Your Style?

The next step is to work through the Discovery Playsheets, which are fun little quizzes to help you identify some of your key wants and desires for your decorating projects.

Feel free to use your affirmation - and the questions leading up to it -- as an anchor to help connect you to your vision.

But, you are also free to let go of the work you've done so far, and just answer the following questions easily and freely.

Then, you can see how well your answers match up with what you've determined about your decorating vision thus far.

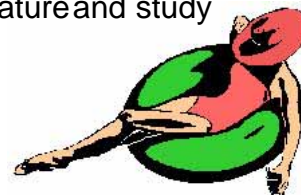


*Often overlooked, stairwells can serve as inspiring "rooms" of their own! In this home, the stairwell acts as an art gallery of sorts. Thus, "taking the next step" becomes a fascinating and captivating experience for both residents and visitors!*



**Question #1. Consider the following vacations:**

- a. Taking an impromptu tour of the French Countryside, staying at small inns, visiting the formal French gardens, and eating at stylish cafes
- b. Staying in a converted one-room schoolhouse in a small Pennsylvania town, spending your days at auctions and craft fairs, and relaxing in the evenings
- c. Embarking on a relaxed and leisurely road trip through the midwest, staying in comfortable hotels, stopping at national parks and whatever destinations strike you
- d. Toasting the town in Manhattan, staying at the most chic and trendy hotel, catching several Broadway shows, visiting modern art galleries and dancing each night until dawn
- e. Renting an adobe cabin in Santa Fe, visiting the New Mexican craft fairs and art galleries by day and sitting peacefully under a huge sky to count the stars by night
- f. Taking a historical organized tour of Europe, with a schedule packed with visits to the finest museums, castles, and historic sites
- g. Relaxing in a quaint bed and breakfast in a small New England town, with drives through the countryside in search of used bookstores, antique shops, and exquisite restaurants in surprising locations
- h. Designing your own custom vacation through Great Britain that includes visits to the most famous tea rooms and the locales associated with your favorite Jane Austen novels
- i. Escaping to a remote retreat center to connect with nature and study meditation and yoga



(Question #1, continued)

**Now, enter the choice closest to....**

1. Your ultimate DREAM vacation of a lifetime: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your second choice: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The least appealing choice: \_\_\_\_\_



### Coffee Break

If you're having difficulty selecting between two choices, ask yourself which choice would make the greatest difference in your life right now, considering how you've been feeling lately.

---



**Question #2: The following are comments made by a friend or neighbor:**

- a. "Your dining room is so pretty...I love the floral fabrics on the chairs, the cherry wood table, and that amazing china collection on the sideboard is exquisite!"
- b. "This is the CUTEST kitchen! I love the gingham drapes, and is that bread basket really from a general store in 1920, like it says?"
- c. "Your family room is so cozy and airy....gosh, I feel like I could just plop down anywhere and relax!"
- d. "Wow, your living room really makes a statement! The colors are so fantastic and bold, it's extraordinary! How long have you been a collector of modern art?"
- e. "Your house is so rich with meaning - everywhere I look, there's some wonderful object with a story to tell...I love the earthy colors and the natural wood furniture! "

(Question #2, continued)

f. "This room is so elegant! Were those full-length tailored drapes custom made? Those chairs are just heavenly...are they Chippendale? And where did you buy that oil painting?"

g. "The creative things you've done in this breakfast room are charming...the dinette set is so sweet and feminine, it's hand painted, right? And how unique to use an ironing board as a sideboard - you've draped it so beautifully!"

h. "This bedroom is so lavish and extravagant...I mean, I feel like I'm away in a castle somewhere, and someone's about to deliver my evening tea on a silver platter. "

i. "Your house feels like a retreat..the simplicity is so heavenly, and I love all the elements of nature you've incorporated everywhere, and that little fountain is so peaceful. If I lived here, I think I'd be calm all the time!"

**Now, enter the choice closest to....**

1. What you would DREAM someone would say about your home: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your second choice: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The least appealing thing you'd like someone to say about your home: \_\_\_\_\_



**Question #3: Consider the following leisure activities:**

- a. Taking a series of classes in French cooking and gardening
- b. Taking classes in sewing, needlework, Tole painting, and basket weaving
- c. Going on an all-day picnic or to an amusement park with close friends or family
- d. Attending a trendy, sophisticated wine-tasting gala at an art gallery

(Question #3, continued)

- e. Touring a little-known wood and pottery studio in a remote location
- f. Taking a class in art history
- g. Meeting your girlfriends for a local cafe for heart-to-heart talks with laughter, tears....the works
- h. Hosting an elaborate formal parlour tea with engraved invitations and all the trimmings
- i. Attending workshops on aromatherapy, yoga, and natural healing

**Now, enter the choice closest to....**

1. The activity you'd enjoy most: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your second choice: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The least appealing thing you'd want to do: \_\_\_\_\_



**Question #4: Consider the following pairs of adjectives:**

- a. Formal and cheery
- b. Cute and homey
- c. Comfortable and relaxing
- d. Trendy and sophisticated
- e. Earthy and unique
- f. Formal and conservative
- g. Feminine and cozy
- h. Lavish and elegant
- i. Simple and peaceful

**Now, enter the choice closest to....**

1. The pair that describes what you'd like your home to exude: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your second choice: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The pair that is least appealing, when describing your home: \_\_\_\_\_

**Okay.... here's the fun part.....photos!!!**



**Question #5: Consider the following dining areas:**

a.



b.



c.



d.



AYID...The Designer Within

e.



f.



g.



h.



i.



**Now, enter the choice closest to....**

1. The picture closest to your ultimate dream of a dining area: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your second choice: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The least appealing choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Ok...It's time to tabulate your results!!!

First, write down the letters (a. - i.) in a column in your journal (see below), or you can print out this page and write directly on it.

For the five questions you just answered, tally up the points for each letter choice, according to the instructions below:

For questions #1-#4:

- add 2 points** for each letter written as your top choice
- add 1 point** for each letter written as your second choice
- subtract 1 point** for each letter written as your least desirable choice

For question #5:

- add 3 points** for the letter written as your top choice
- add 1 point** for the letter written as your second choice
- subtract 1 point** for the letter written as your least desirable choice.

<u>Letter Choice</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	
f.	
g.	
h.	
i.	

**To find out what your score means, read on...**

## 3.0 Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

### 3.1 Summarizing the “Perfect 10” !

You’ve scored your quiz, have you? Well, the letter with the highest total points is likely your most dominant decorating style.

The choice with the second highest total corresponds to another style that also may interest you. This is useful information for reasons we’ll discuss in a moment.

The choice with the lowest number of points will likely be the style that interests you the least. This also is helpful, as knowing what you don’t like can often help you zone in on its opposite.

Find your decorating style(s) by matching your quiz results to the following list:

- a. European Country
- b. American Country
- c. Casual Contemporary
- d. Formal Contemporary
- e. Rustic
- f. Traditional
- g. Casual Romantic
- h. Traditional Romantic
- i. Spiritual

But wait! There is a tenth style to add to this list....Eclectic style! If your answers were a combination of several letters, it is most likely that your style can be defined as Eclectic.

In some way, almost all homes are Eclectic. More often than not, effective decorating mixes elements of at least two styles together. We’ve found that homes can actually adhere to a style TOO much, and end up looking like a catalog, rather than a home inhabited by real humans with beating hearts.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Rooms in which every single element of a room is representative of only one style can come across as distant or “not lived in.” The key lies in knowing how the different styles can work together to enhance, rather than oppose, one another.

This is a reason why it is helpful to determine not only your most dominant style, but other styles that appeal to you.

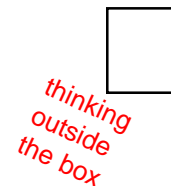
### 3.2 What a Style Can Do, and What it Can't!

A word about **decorating styles**, before we move on.....

It's useful to have a sense of your preferred decorating style because it can anchor you as you make decorating decisions.

If you learn about styles and the basic components that define them, you can grasp how different elements work together in harmony.

That being said, this is one decorating book that wants you to think outside of the box when it comes to decorating styles. That is, you should not be confined to a style, just because you've identified it as your dominant style.



What makes us all wonderfully human is our individuality, and there's no greater place to express that than in the home. As individuals, our tastes may be complicated and even downright paradoxical.

So, we encourage you not to hang everything on a label...but instead to allow yourself to be open to all the things that you love, and to be excited about figuring out how they can work together.

What follows is an introduction to each of the ten styles referenced in the quiz. We will show you the same photos of the dining areas that you saw in the quiz...this time, pointing out various elements in the room that signify its style.

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

Then, for each style, we've paired the dining area photo with another photo that shows how that style can be used effectively with other styles.

We suggest that you read through the descriptions for all styles mentioned, even if some of them do not seem all that interesting to you.

You may be surprised to see how styles can work together in unusual but effective ways.

### 3.3 European Country Style: The Old World Charm

This style includes two decorating styles that happen to be very fashionable today: **English Country** and **French Country** (which also can be called French Provencal).

However, unlike some decorating trends, the timeless grace of European Country is not at risk for becoming passé.

European Country style is dominated by extensive use of pattern, especially cheery florals. Colors are bright, bold, and often include jewel tones.

In this photo (right), a vibrant red and yellow floral wallpaper sets a garden-like atmosphere for a simple, understated dining experience.



*A relaxing English garden created in the breakfast nook of a kitchen. (Chandelier is from [The Great Indoors](#); table is from [Restoration Hardware](#).)*

This style presents natural woods such as cherry, oak, and mahogany in a mix of mismatched traditional 19th style furniture pieces, blending the classical and comfortable together. In this photo, antique 19th century chairs are paired with a reproduction English dining table.

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This makes shopping for European Country furniture easy - just go to your local antique shops and find pieces you like....there's no hesitation in mixing them together!

In European Country style, **chintz**, a patterned floral fabric with a crisp and polished finish, is mixed and matched with thoughtful abandon.

Like in planting a garden, mixed florals of diverse sizes and shapes work well together, as long as they maintain a harmonious color scheme. Chintz also refers to floral patterns in fine china.

Another common fabric is **toile**, which is short for the French, *Toile de Jouy*. Toile (pronounced *twall*) depicts the joy and activity of French life, illustrated in a solid color on a white or cream background.

While both English Country and French Country styles can be categorized as elegant, they do have some subtle differences.



*Toile patterns are enchanting because, like books, they tell a story.* (For toile fabrics, we recommend [DecorateToday.com](http://DecorateToday.com).)



*The European Country rooster takes its place in these kitchen tiles.* (Tiles are by [American Marazzi Tile](http://AmericanMarazziTile.com).)

French Country style tends to be more delicate than English Country. French Country style furniture often is hand painted and/or gilded with gold and silver leaf, with extreme attention to detail.

Blue and yellow are popular colors in French Country style, and the the quirky decorative use of roosters often is a defining characteristic of the style.

A staple in French Country decor, roosters show up on everything from paintings to pillows to floor tiles!

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English Country style takes the “accumulated look” we discussed earlier all the way. A multitude of contrasting fabrics are paired with dark woods (such as cherry and mahogany) and old, worn-out leather furniture.

English Country entertaining rooms - such as dining and living rooms - tend to be more formal and traditional than French Country, which lends itself to a more “bohemian” look and feel.



Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of European Country:

Armoires  
Bookcases  
Chintz  
Duvets  
Elegant pillows,  
Full-length curtains

Greenery  
Heirlooms  
Italian tile  
Jewel tones  
Linens  
Marble countertops

Oil paintings  
Portraits  
Roosters  
Sculptures  
Toile  
Valances

---

### 3.4 A Little Bit Country: European & American Country Mixed

On the following page, you'll see another breakfast nook with European Country flair. But what happens when you add a pinch of American Country to the mix? You get a cute and cozy room that is draped in elegance!

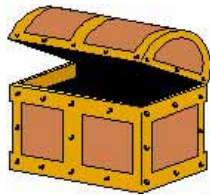
True to European Country form, the full-length draped curtains are made of toile, and the furnishings are a mix of antiques.

This room, however, also embraces the charm of the American Country style, which is the style that we will discuss next.

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The red-and-white checkered tablecloth, lattice design on the walls, and the lace sheer panels used with the toile curtains are accents that bring an American spirit to the forefront.

The result is a look in which country coziness and European elegance dance together in their own sweet time.



## Ancient Wisdom

European Country style is the result of aristocratic gentry forced to “scale down” for financial reasons. Thus, while some “finery” was kept, it was mixed with more provincial furnishings, fabrics, and accessories.

Combining European Country with American Country produces a charming, stylish environment. ([Waverly](#) offers a wide variety of toile curtains. Refer to our e-book, *Creative Stamping for Walls & Furniture*, for instructions on how to create a repetitive design, such as this yellow lattice, using stamps.)



## Marney's Memo

I absolutely love toile, but the authentic version can be rather expensive! I've had luck finding the pattern in inexpensive bedsheets at stores such as [Wal-Mart](#), [Bed, Bath, and Beyond](#), and [Linens 'n Things](#).

You can use bedsheets to make curtains, covers for throw pillows, even slipcovers! (Refer to our companion e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*, for instructions on making a no-sew slipcover!)

---

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

### 3.5 American Country Style: Anyone for Apple Pie?

American Country style has a distinctive look associated with the old farmhouses of late 18th- and late 19th- century America.

Its trademark is cute coziness punctuated by an abundance of accessories and accents that pay tribute to all things Americana.

American Country is popular in homes all around the United States, but is especially prevalent in New England and in southern states.

Like European Country, American Country makes use of mismatched antiques. However, American Country antiques are American in origin, such as those manufactured by the Shakers or Amish.

In addition to antiques, American Country style also uses plenty of hand painted furniture as well as hand painted decorative accessories such as serving trays, and dishes.



*The perfect setting for an All-American Dinner. An American quilt acts as a unique tablecloth. (Dinette set was purchased at an Amish auction in Lancaster County, PA; dollhouse kit is from [A.C. Moore](#). For affordable quilts, we recommend [Ebay](#) and [Texana Quilt Company](#).)*

Walls and shelves are piled high with accessories ranging from birdhouses to hand-sewn samplers to old photographs and souvenirs. Collections are displayed proudly, such as those of postcards, dolls, sewing supplies, old clothing, teddy bears, decorative boxes, thimbles, china, and just about any other cherished possession.

The garden is an important motif in American Country, and homes decorated in this style often include elements that bring the garden inside. Thus, common accents include antique garden tools, garden-themed artwork, painted flower pots, and lattices and picket fences draped with artificial flower garlands.

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*Hand painted wooden decor pieces bring out the country style in this corner. (For a large selection of unfinished wood items, we recommend [A.C. Moore](#) and [Michaels](#).)*

Synonymous with American Country is “life on the farm”, so farm animals such as roosters, hens, pigs, horses, and cows are often featured in wallpaper, fabrics, and hand painted furniture and décor.

Colors range from bright and bold (including the traditional red, white, and blue) to soft and cheery, such as the sage green of the built-in hutch (left).

There is also a current decorating trend (often referred to in magazines as “new country” or “contemporary country”) that utilizes surprisingly vivid colors to add modern drama to American Country style furniture and accessories.

Popular colors for this “new country” style include hot, punchy shades of pink, violet, blue, and orange.



Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of American Country:

Amish-made furniture

Birdhouses

Cross-stitch wall hangings

Doilies

Earthenware

Fresh flowers

Greenhouses

Hutches

Knitted blankets

Latticework

Mementos

Nesting baskets

Outdoor ornaments

Plate collections

Quilt racks

Rocking chairs

Sewing machines

Teapots

United States flags

Vases

Wallpaper borders

---

AYID...Finding the Style Your Spirit Craves!

### 3.6 A Country Romance: American Country Mixed with Traditional Romantic Style

The fact that it is so distinctive does not mean that American Country cannot be combined with other styles.

In the unusual guest room pictured here, American Country is mixed with Traditional Romantic, also known as Victorian style.

While the room features several American Country signatures, such as handmade quilts, lace curtains, and a country fresh pink on the walls, the furniture style of the bedroom set is late 19th century, at the height of the Victorian Era.



*A bedroom trapped in the quaintest of time machines.* (Bedroom set purchased at [Lafayette Mill Antiques](#) in Lafayette, New Jersey. For reproduction Victorian furnishings, we recommend the [Home Decorators catalog](#).)

The knickknacks in this room are also from different eras. A Victorian-era tea set is paired with American teddy bears and toys for a cross-century tea party.

Similarly, the artwork on the walls dips from across centuries and countries.

The result is a whimsical, museum-like intrigue that is fit for a princess.



*Memorabilia from across the centuries adds fascinating charm to this bedroom.* (For vintage clothing and toys, we recommend [Ebay](#).)



## Marney's Memo

Displaying artwork is a wonderful way to add character and style to any room, but sometimes the cost can be prohibitive. You know what I do? I buy calendars, cut the pages out, and frame them using ready-made frames. It's a great way to showcase art of any style -- from country samplers to oil paintings.

Since most calendars focus on one topic, I can create several art pieces from one calendar! After-Holiday sales are the perfect time to buy calendars at drastic discounts.

Other sources that I've used for images include:

posters	stationery	magazines
catalogs	children's books	recipe cards
advertisements	computer clip art	textbooks
discount art books	old record covers	seed packets

(You can find instructions on how to rescue garage sale frames to make them look polished and authentic for all decorating styles in our e-book, *Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts*.)

---

### 3.7 Casual Contemporary Style: The Livin' is Easy

A relaxing, comfortable, functional environment -- that's the Casual Contemporary mantra.

This decorating style, on which the majority of American chain retail furniture stores are based, is created with the furniture elements we know so well: sofas, loveseats, entertainment centers, dinette sets, table lamps, and area rugs.

Generally round in shape, these furniture pieces suggest ease, comfort, and simple luxury.

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But just because such furniture items are familiar, they needn't be staid or boring.

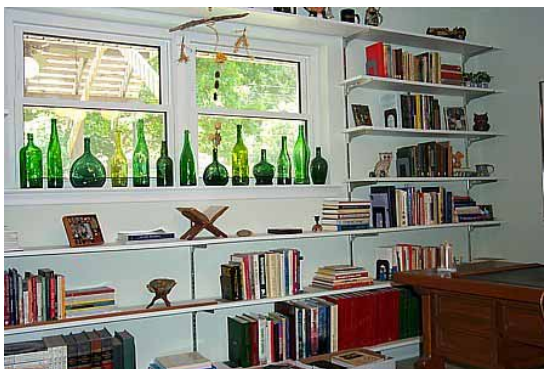
Casual Contemporary style, when carried out effectively, can be infused with style, while maintaining its signature of comfort, ease, and convenience.

The key in Casual Contemporary style is to place furnishings in arrangements that are both pleasing to the eye as well as functional, and to use pattern and color in ways that enhance the comfortable feel of the room.

Color schemes for Casual Contemporary vary from bold to pastels, but most often are light and fresh midtones mixed with neutrals.



*Interest is added to this casual dining area by displaying a collection of international artifacts. (Chairs are from [Levitz Furniture](#).)*



*Inspiring collections grace the shelves of this study. The green glass bottles punch up the comforting sage green on the walls. (Paint color is Peaceful Green by [Sherwin-Williams](#).)*

Personal collections bring character and uniqueness to rooms decorated in Casual Contemporary style, ensuring that the room does not appear to be manufactured or mass-produced.

As with a room of any style, the key to an inspiring home is to fill it with things that you adore!

Casual Contemporary is an affordable style in which to decorate. It lends itself to mixed furniture pieces purchased in a variety of stores at different times.

The key to making a Casual Contemporary room work, however, lies in unifying elements. Color is an excellent unifier, as are matching accents, such as matching lamps, side tables, and throw pillows.



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Casual Contemporary:

Accent tables

Bar stools

Collections

Dinette sets

Entertainment centers

Floor pillows

Game tables

Hanging plants

Knickknacks

Loveseats

Message centers

Photographs

Quilts

Reclining chairs

Sectional sofas

Throw pillows

---

### 3.8 Comfy Grandeur: Casual Contemporary with Traditional Romantic Style

Casual Contemporary style is also quite versatile. So, if your results from the previous **Discovery Playsheet** showed a combination of this style and another, you're in luck!

The family room pictured in this photograph (right) and on the following page is a great example.

The room conveys a casual feel, with soft, round furniture, fresh and crisp color, track lighting fixtures, and an overall laid-back environment.



*Contemporary and Traditional lighting fixtures are mixed together for variety and interest. (Tiffany chandelier and track lighting are from [Lights Fantastic](#) in Dallas and Austin, TX.)*

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It is a stylish room, yet you feel as if you could just plop down and watch TV on the loveseat, or play a game on the game table in the corner.

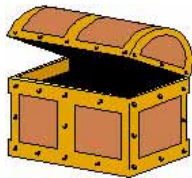
But look closer, and you'll see other elements at work.

The forest green chaise, as well as the Tiffany lamp over the game table, bring Traditional Romantic style, the style of the Victorian era, into this Casual Contemporary room.

Without becoming overly formal, these touches add a hint of understated grandeur to the room. While subtle, this sprinkling of elegance strikes a balance with the comfort inherent in the room's design.



*Understated elegance in a casual family room.*  
(Chaise and loveseat are from [Gabberts Furniture](#); game table is from [Freed's Furniture](#); chairs at table are from [Wicke's Furniture](#).)



## Ancient Wisdom

The chaise longue (often called a "chaise lounge", which is a misnomer) was a highly criticized furniture piece in the Victorian era.

MMe. de Fenlis - a "Miss Manners" of the age - said that the chaise lent itself to women demonstrating sloppy and indecent behavior by placing their uncovered feet on the chaise.

She insisted that ladies should use a *couvre pied* (foot cover) to cover their feet in order to stop this appalling habit!

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### 3.9 Formal Contemporary Style: The Latest and the Greatest

Formal Contemporary style is deliciously modern, sleek, and elegant.

Rooms decorated in this style can be very formal and highly accessorized, like the dining room pictured here. It utilizes the popular black, white, and gray Formal Contemporary color scheme.

Abstract and “artsy” styles also fall in this category. These styles are more simplistic, with less elegance and grandeur.

Whether a Formal Contemporary room is formal or casual, what differentiates it from Casual Contemporary style is its focus on line and angles.



*The common contrasts of black, white, and gray create a sleek sophistication in this dining room. (To create this stylish look affordably, we recommend the Lilian style at [FurnitureFind.com](http://FurnitureFind.com), which offers a wide variety of furniture in all styles.)*

Casual Contemporary traditionally emphasizes curves, comfy round shapes, and neutral colors interwoven with classic color schemes. Formal Contemporary style is more angular, abstract, and features bold, stark colors. Modern art such as abstract paintings and sculptures are used for added drama.



#### Coffee Break

If you find yourself responding negatively to this style, that is clue that you should stick with its polar opposite - the traditional styles.

If you find it intriguing, consider adding modern elements in rooms, even if you don't wish to decorate an entire room or home in this style. Accent pieces like lamps, end tables, and artwork are excellent for this purpose.

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Furniture considered to be Formal Contemporary can date back to the 1960's and 1970's, when the Pop and High Tech styles were in vogue.

Furniture of this style can be made from wood, formica, metal, or chrome silver, and often uses glass in place of traditional surfaces.

*Formal Contemporary furniture maintains a focus on line and angle. The red accent pillow provides a sharp contrast with the white chair cushion. (Chair and lamp are from [IKEA](#).)*



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Formal Contemporary:

Art books  
Backlighting  
Chandeliers  
Dali paintings  
Eccentric accents  
Ficus plants

Glass tabletops  
Hanging lamps  
Inventive artwork  
Jumbo light fixtures  
Leather sofa  
Mirrors

Open spaces  
Puddled drapery  
Spot lighting  
Throw pillows  
Verandas  
Window seats

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### 3.10 Earthy Sophistication: Where Formal Contemporary & Rustic Styles Meet

Here's an example of a living room (right) that combines Formal Contemporary style with Rustic style, which is the next style we will discuss.

The glass coffee table, sleek window blinds, modern artwork, and contemporary sectional sofa create a formal, lustrous atmosphere.



*An aerial view of a formal living room that brings elements of the desert into modern terrain.*

The rough hardwood floor, cacti plants, and Native-American knickknacks pull in the Rustic elements, creating a haven where sophistication and nature sing in harmony.

### 3.11 Rustic Style: Back to Nature

Santa Fe, the Adirondacks, North Woods, Mexico...all of these transportive locations can be conjured up with the effective use of Rustic style decorating.

A Rustic-style room gives the appearance of having been decorated by time and nature. Rustic style features unfinished, rough woods, meaningful artifacts and knickknacks with stories to tell, and an embrace of nature and the outdoors.

Rustic homes strive to bring the outdoors in, and in doing so, create a contrast between dark woods and the light of nature.

While Rustic style typically exudes a casual, comfortable living environment, it can also be used within a more formal setting. Take a look at the dining room pictured on the next page, which showcases stunningly handcrafted furniture, and a weathered hand painted hutch.

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As this photograph demonstrates, Rustic style is typified by sparse, simplistic, handcrafted furniture. In addition to old wood, wrought iron and rusted metal are also prevalent in furniture pieces.

In contrast, decorative accents such as knickknacks, souvenirs, and artwork are used with abandon, creating colorful landscapes of narrative intrigue.

Color schemes for Rustic style vary widely, from bold and vivid to dark neutrals. Color selection is often determined by the locale the decorator desires to reflect in her home.

For example, Santa Fe style is often conveyed with muted pastels interspersed with accents of bold color, while Taos, New Mexico, conjures up the warm earth tones like orange and rust.



*Rustic simplicity is infused with elegance to create an earthy dining room. (For rustic furniture, we recommend [Southwestern-Rustic-Furniture.com](http://Southwestern-Rustic-Furniture.com).)*



*An earthy, kaleidoscopic collection of colorful rustic artifacts.*

Adirondack and North Woods styles usually subscribe to a darker color palette, with forest greens, deep reds, and midnight blues.

Rustic style can also be used to create whimsical, Bohemian environments reminiscent of Morocco and Mexico. Perhaps more than any other decorating style, Rustic style throws out the rules and encourages bold experimentation.



*A collection of Mexican brooms is paired with Native artwork and a weathered bookshelf overflowing with old books. (For rustic décor accents and artifacts, we recommend searching [Ebay](http://Ebay) or surfing the Web for a variety of private dealers and artisans.)*



## Sit 'n Summarize



### The ABC's of Rustic:

Afghans  
Braided rugs  
Colorful accessories  
Denim  
Exposed beams  
Flannel

Georgia O'Keefe prints  
Hardwood floors  
Kokopelli art  
Log furniture  
Masks  
Native-American tapestries

Oak tables  
Pottery  
Skulls  
Tarnished metal  
Unfinished wood  
Wrought iron

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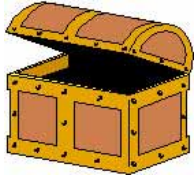
### 3.12 Comfy Southwest Nests: Rustic Mixed with Casual Contemporary Style



The living room corner pictured here (left) illustrates an interesting combination of Rustic and Casual Contemporary styles.

The weathered armoire, textured paint finish on the walls, and spicy earth tones convey Rustic style. The slipcovered oversized chair and throw cushions enhance the corner with coziness.

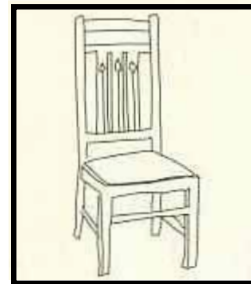
*A comfy corner from the old world blooms whimsically with a larger than life tissue paper sunflower. (Flower is from [Home Goods](#); armoire is from [Seaman's Furniture](#); chenille throw and decorative pillows are from [Bed, Bath and Beyond](#); chair is covered with a no-sew slipcover using upholstery fabrics from [Joann Fabrics](#). You can see project directions for no-sew slipcovers in our e-book, [Quick & Stylish Decorative Crafts](#).)*



## Ancient Wisdom

Furniture inspired by The Arts and Crafts Movement of 1870-1920 is often utilized in Rustic style homes. This movement began as a protest against Victorian mass-manufactured and ornate furnishings, which proponents of the movement believed to be a great detriment to society.

The movement was an effort to promote the value of precise construction and hand craftsmanship in furniture.



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### 3.13 Traditional Style: Hooked on Classics

Traditional style is a general heading for the décor styles produced in the 18th century. The specific styles from this century, such as Louis XV, Louis XVI, Colonial Georgian, and Neoclassical, vary, but there are commonalities in the way in which overall design is approached.

During these years, furniture was created with a focus on form and shape. Much attention was paid to ornate decorating, such as special carvings or inlaid wood pieces built into the furniture.

This century was highly driven by decorating trends. Most often, the style present in the castles and homes of the ruling class was popularized among the nobility and upper-class home owners.

For this reason, a particular decade did not offer a wide selection of furniture styles. Traditional furniture pieces, such as this pair of antique chairs (right), are easily identified as being of a specific era.



*Two antique chairs in the style of Louis XV.*

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*A true classic: the Traditional dining room.*  
(For affordable oriental rugs, we recommend [The Oriental Rug Warehouse](#).)

While decorating styles such as European Country and Traditional Romantic rely heavily on the use of antiques, Traditional style needn't. Reproductions of 18th-century furniture pieces are readily available in most furniture stores.

Furthermore, furniture, fabrics, and accents that vaguely resemble 18th century styles are also considered to be Traditional style.

The dining room table in the photograph (left) is an excellent example. The chairs and table are not designed to be exact replicas, yet the set exudes a classical style and flair.

Traditional style employs classical artwork, such as oil paintings, busts and sculptures. It also makes frequent use of accents such as oriental and kilim rugs and conventional-style lamps.



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Traditional:

Antiques  
Bone china  
Crown molding  
Dado moldings  
Friezes  
Grand pianos

Headboards  
Inlaid wood  
Jabot curtains  
Kilim rugs  
Libraries  
Mantels

Neoclassical art  
Oriental rugs  
Pewter vases  
Rococo furniture  
Sideboards  
Trompe l'oeil murals  
Wine cellars

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### 3.14 Homey Elegance: Traditional Style Mixed with American Country

In this bedroom (below), Traditional style is elegantly mixed with American Country. The dark cherry wood bed (below left) and traditional bedroom furniture (below right) frame the room in Traditional style.

While oil paintings are a staple in Traditional Style, the subject - a horse - shown in the oil painting above the bed, along with the quilt used for bedding, adds American Country ambiance.

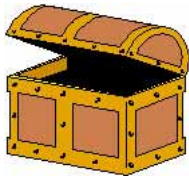
The lamp base on the dresser (right), while classical in shape, is painted in an American folk art style. This enhances the country character of the room.



*A traditional bedroom with a bit of country charm.*  
(Bed is from [Ethan Allen](#); dresser is by [Hitchcock Chair Company](#).)



*A folk art lamp base adds whimsy to a traditional bedroom.*



## Ancient Wisdom

In a 1928 book called “Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them”, Ruth E. Finley said, “There is not antique more expressive of our foremothers than patchwork, which, in the main, took the form of bed-quilts...a wholly feminine creation.”

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### 3.15 Casual Romantic Style: A Dance with Romance

The Casual Romantic style has come into the forefront recently, with the popularity of “Shabby Chic” and “Cottage” styles.

Casual Romantic embraces a style that is cozy, dreamy, and relaxed, with a sweet and sophisticated charm.

Embracing the feminine, Casual Romantic rooms generate softness and light. Flowing, lightweight and sheet fabrics are draped in abundance, and color schemes are fresh and crisp.

Traditional Romantic style, which is the style we will discuss next, was born of the Victorian era, when romance defined the home. While influenced by romance and gracious living, Casual Romantic style negates fussy backgrounds or accessories with an overall straightforwardness in design choices.

Elegance is found in simple items, such as soft fabric slipcovers and throw blankets, fresh flowers, and simple hand painted designs on furniture.

Casual Romantic style lends itself to décor that is highly unique. Furniture pieces found at garage sales and flea markets are altered in a variety of ways -- paint, papers, decoupage, fabric, fibers, and simple carpentry -- to create one of a kind pieces.

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Casual Romantic can range from understated sophistication, as in the pictured dining room (below right), to dream-like whimsy. For example, the desk shown in this photograph (below left) was a garage sale purchase that underwent a radical makeover to claim its new fanciful personality.



*This hand painted desk looks like it came from a magic cottage!*

Because a piece of furniture or a decorative accent in this style can be created out of just about anything you can find at a flea market or garage sale, Casual Romantic is a wonderful style choice if you are short on funds or space, but crave a stylish and unique look.



*Empty distressed picture frames serve as wall décor, keeping the atmosphere breezy and casual while maintaining elegance. (For slipcovers, we recommend [Surefit Slipcovers.](#))*



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Casual Romantic:

Adirondack chairs  
Birdcages  
Comforters  
Distressed furniture  
Easy chairs  
Faux finishes

Gliders  
Hand painted furniture  
Junk made beautiful  
Lace  
Milk wood  
Overstuffed chairs

Paper lampshades  
Ruffles  
Sleigh Beds  
Table runners  
Vanities  
Wicker

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### 3.16 Mystical Romance: Casual Romantic and Spiritual Styles Join Forces

Casual Romantic can be mixed with virtually any style.

A Contemporary Casual room can be offset with a chandelier made from an old whitewashed birdcage....or a Traditional bedroom can top a classic 18th-century inspired bed frame with a quilt made from vintage handkerchiefs....

Or a small living room filled with hand painted treasures can invoke the spiritual feeling that defines Spiritual style, which we will introduce shortly.



*Japanese characters for Good Luck, Long Life, Good Health, Prosperous Future add a touch of spirit to this room. (Art prints are from [IKEA](#).)*

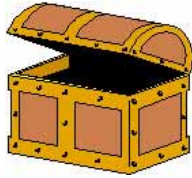


*A vintage hanky quilt - the epitome of Casual Romantic!*

This is the case in the room pictured here (left). The desk (see a close-up of this desk on the previous page) and the large console were both “rescued” furniture pieces painted and refinished by the owner.

The turquoise color of the console ties in with the color of the hand painted desk, but the dark wood grounds the room with an earthiness that is typical in Spiritual style rooms.

Prints of Japanese characters and an exotic candle complete the touches of Spiritual style in the room. The result created is that of a romantic Zen cottage!



## Ancient Wisdom

Sprinkling the home with romance dates all the way back to the origin of Greek mythology. The Greek goddess, Aphrodite, was the goddess of love. She symbolized romance, beauty, and sensuality.

There are several recorded myths in which she conspires with Hera, the goddess of the home and hearth, to bring romance into the home in order to inspire amorous activity and general peace and goodwill.

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### 3.17 Traditional Romantic Style: Remembering the Gilded Age

Traditional Romantic style is inspired by the style of the 19th century, known as the Victorian era, which typically refers to the years between 1837-1901.

During these years women spent the majority of their time tirelessly preparing their homes and decorating. New decorating opportunities were available to them because of the boom in technology.

Elaborate, ornate furnishings were being mass-produced, and fine fabrics were readily available.

Home decorating became much more flamboyant than the restrained, conservative traditional styles that preceded these years. Victorian women subscribed to the idea that “more is more” and decorated their homes in ornate eclecticism.



*A Victorian dining room represents what Mark Twain coined as “the gilded age”. (Photograph is courtesy of Judith and Martin Miller and [VictorianStation.com](http://VictorianStation.com), where you can find an extensive line of Victorian décor items.)*

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For the majority of this time period, furnishings were made from dark woods, especially mahogany. Colors used in the home were rich and deep. Victorian women were fearless in their use of color, draping their homes in bright red and pinks, purples, greens, and gold.

Toward the end of the century, the style changed to embrace lighter colors and woods, and became less fussy and cluttered.



### Coffee Break

If you are drawn to this style but do not wish to decorate your entire home in such an ornate way, Traditional Romantic lends itself to being isolated in one formal room, such as a dining room.

A dining room like the one pictured on the previous page could be “at home” anywhere!



### Sit ‘n Summarize



The ABC's of Traditional Romantic:

Atriums

Butler's pantries

Chaise

Drapery

Entry halls

Four-poster beds

Gilt

Jewelled chandeliers

Lambrequins

Mahogany

Opera curtains

Portraits

Queen Anne furniture

Raw silk

Stained glass

Tiffany lamp

Victrolas

Winding staircases

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### 3.18 A Lavish Potpourri: Combining Traditional Romantic with Casual Contemporary & Traditional Styles

The eclectic room pictured in these two photos (below) combines several styles, but the overall feel that permeates the room is definitely Traditional Romantic.

Traditional furniture and even Casual Contemporary items - such as the floor lamp, white easy chair, and TV tray - add to, rather than detract from, the ornate and luxurious environment.



*The timeless grandeur of the Victorian era in a 21st-century living room. (For Victorian-inspired window treatments, we recommend [Victorian Drapes and Interiors.](#))*

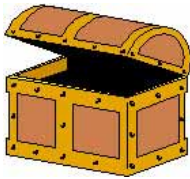


*Traditional Romantic with casual overtones. (For Victorian-style furniture such as the chair on the right, we recommend [Victorian Showcase.](#))*

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Accessories such as candlesticks, elaborate mirrors, statues, and velvet footstool emphasize the Traditional Romantic mystique.

The lambrequin window treatments in the room pictured on the previous page (middle) are authentic to Traditional Romantic style. A *lambrequin* -- from the French word for drapery -- is made from fringed damask fabric and accented by decorative embroidery, combined with lace panels.



## Ancient Wisdom

In the Victorian era, if a visitor came to call and the homeowner was not home, the visitor would leave a calling card in a silver tray in the entry hall.

The visitor would fold down a corner of the card to indicate a message, in accordance with the following:

- upper-right corner: a visit
- lower-right corner: to take leave
- upper-left corner: congratulations
- lower-left corner: condolences



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### 3.19 Spiritual Style: At One With Home

Spiritual style combines elements of nature, spirit, and minimalist simplicity to create rooms that are calm, balanced, and soothing.

Spiritual style - which is completely non-religious in nature - recently has become popular, as more and more people are feeling the call to simplify their lives and counterbalance the hectic, frenetic nature of modern living.



*A spiritual hallway welcomes inner bliss.*

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But the influences of this style go back to the ancient ages. For hundreds of years, the Chinese have practiced the discipline of *Feng Shui* to establish harmony and balance in their lives and environment.

Feng Shui involves the mindful arrangement of living spaces to create vital energy in all areas of our life.

Spiritual style does not necessarily have to utilize the components of Feng Shui, although rooms decorated in this style most often have many Feng Shui elements inherent in their design.

We'll discuss Feng Shui a bit further in section 13.8, *It's All About Energy*.

The key to Spiritual style is simplicity. Rooms are sparsely furnished and any potentially distracting decor beyond the necessities is kept to a minimum.

For example, a living room may contain one or two seating areas, a small table with candles and a modest assortment of small meaningful objects.

Spiritual homes strive to bring components of nature indoors, and often include representations of all five elements - earth, wind, fire, water, and space.



*Living ficus plants join this dining room with nature's simple peace.* (For instructions to make your own artificial ficus plants, see our project instructions at [Home-decorating-made-easy.com](http://Home-decorating-made-easy.com). Scroll down to "Do-It-Yourself Ideas"!)

The dining room pictured here is completely enclosed by windows, and makes use of living ficus trees to complete the sanctuary-like environment.

The chairs and table are made of natural oak that has been bleached and stained to cast a subtle white hue on the wood, bringing another earth element to this serene space.

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In the dining room pictured on the previous page, the furniture is made of simple wood and iron, with seat cushion covers made from earthy gray suede. The table and chairs serve as the focal point in a room that is not offset by other accessories.

Spiritual rooms often are sensory-specific, with purposeful selection of objects to create a desired mood. Fountains, lamps, aromatherapy essential oils, candles, soft fabrics, and soothing music are treated as important decorative accents.

Since the goal of Spiritual style is to create an environment free of external stimulation, black and white photographs or prints are often the artwork of choice. Minimalist modern art paintings also are used to add color.



White is often the main color used in Spiritual style rooms, and frequently is paired with green, which is the most neutral of all colors on the color wheel. You'll be taking a quiz to find your inner color scheme, next!

*A simple arrangement of black and white photos showcased by soothing lighting adds interest to a sparsely-decorated sitting room. (For wicker furniture like that pictured here, we recommend [WickerFurniture](#).)*



Sit 'n Summarize



The ABC's of Spiritual:

Altars  
Black and white photos  
Candles  
Dried flowers  
Essential oils  
Fountains

Handmade furniture  
Incense burners  
Japanese prints  
Lanterns  
Modern art  
Offering plates

Plates  
Quaker furniture  
Rock gardens  
Stacking tables  
Throw blankets  
White walls

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### 3.20 A European Sanctuary: Spiritual Style Joined with European Country

While the look of Spiritual style is very unique, it can be achieved using elements that are distinctive of another style.

For example, the bedroom in this photograph showcases an iron four-poster bed that is most closely associated with European Country style.

The luxurious linens and down comforter are white, as is the color of the walls. Accents are limited to a lamp, a chair, and a live plant.

The result is a sacred and peaceful resting place reminiscent of an English Garden.



*A peaceful bedroom with European flair. (Bedding is from [Horchow](#).)*

### 3.21 Eclectic Style: A Home of Many Faces

You've just seen nine examples of eclectic rooms that feature one style intermingled with aspects of another. These could all be described as rooms decorated in Eclectic style....and, as we've said, most rooms are eclectic in one way or another.

Eclectic style can also refer to a room that pushes the limit by decorating with unusual elements... just look at our Eclectic Gallery on the following page!



*In this living room, bright blue velvet bucket chairs and the modern artwork, glass table top, and chrome silver bookcase represent Formal Contemporary style; the classic console in the hallway, the old piano, and oriental rugs represent Traditional style.*

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## PUSHING THE LIMITS...WITH ECLECTIC DECOR



*Glass Christmas ornaments serve as a centerpiece for this table, which is fitting, considering the room's unusual color scheme. The hutch is graced by little vintage dolls, dried flowers, and handmade candles.*



*A retro cafe kitchen adorned with vintage menus decouped on the walls, inspired by this life-sized pizza chef! (Statue is from [Home Goods](#).)*

*A bold mural sets the tone in an entry hall. (Design is by [Sandra Gustafson](#).)*



*A bookshelf is lined with a menagerie of vintage toys.*



*A piece of sculpture you can sit in... alongside a life-sized baby burro statue.*



## Coffee Break

Now that you've read a bit about the different decorating styles, we encourage you to go back to the your [affirmation](#).

Do the three words you included in your affirmation seem to be consistent with your results from the quiz on decorating styles?

If not - there's no problem! It just means you need to tweak things a bit. Remember, everything we've been doing is just research. We want to guide you to make conclusions from that research that feels right.

Here are some examples:

If the three words in your affirmation were elegant, comforting, and pristine, and your results of the decorating style quiz yielded European Country in the top position, then your research is consistent and you're ready to move forward!

If the three words in your affirmation were formal, conservative, and classic, and your results from the decorating style yielded a combination of Casual Romantic and Casual Contemporary, then you should do some more thinking before plunging ahead.

If this is the case, which is more in line with your true vision: your three words, or the results to your quiz? If there is a very evident contradiction between the two, do you think that might mean that you should lean more toward an eclectic approach, combining several decorating styles?

We'll reiterate that a design style (or combination of styles) is not the be-all, end-all of decorating. But it is a helpful tool to ground you as we move forward. So the time spent in revisiting your affirmation and perhaps modifying it is time well spent.

Hi

Did you enjoy reading the first few chapters of this very unique e-Guidebook? If so, you'll absolutely love what's waiting for you in the remaining 256 pages!

Getting a firm handle on your decorating style is just the first step on your path to creating beautiful and inspiring rooms. Continue the guided journey with us and you'll gain the decorating confidence that could potentially change your life!

Here's a few of the helpful aids you'll find inside the rest of this e-Guidebook:

- Interactive quizzes to help you discover your perfect decorating colors and furniture needs
- 135 pre-designed paint colors schemes, complete with brand names.
- Over 500 links to Web sites with products you see featured in the photos...saving you hours of time, as you shop from your home.
- Over 600 shortcuts and do-it-yourself alternatives to save you time and money.
- 70 scaled furniture pieces and floor plan instructions so that you can try different looks in your room before actually going through the back-breaking effort of moving furniture around.

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Marney and Michael