



NIGHT AND DAY

UP THE GLAM FACTOR BY PAIRING BLACK WITH EVERYTHING FROM CRISP WHITE TO MIDNIGHT BLUE.

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH L. MARTIN

There's a reason that the Little Black Dress is essential and the most elegant tuxedos are black accented by crisp white. Once a color that was used only for mourning clothes, it is now *de rigueur* for everyone from fashionistas to country squires.

But what is black, exactly? According to science, is a color which results from the absence or complete absorption of visible light. It is an achromatic color, along with its associates, white and gray, and has no hue. But black is also a chameleon—when mixed with other hues it can transform to something warm and toasty, or cool and deep.

Because of its changeable nature, black can be paired successfully with just about any color, providing a rich mysterious background, an unexpected accent, or the main focus of a room. Unlike other trendy palettes, it never seems to fall out of favor, and can be found in rooms that range from ultra-modern to Gothic traditional, and everything in between.

Most designers agree that black adds a touch of gravitas to any space. Designer Jamie Drake of Drake/Anderson says, "The first room I ever decorated—for my 10-year-old self—had black patent-leather walls and glossy white trim. These days, black helps keep my hyper-colorful schemes from becoming too 'Good Ship Lollipop.' But I still love black patent!"

Get inspired to incorporate this achromatic chameleon into your decor through the pages of this portfolio, which includes beautiful rooms and exciting furnishings and accessories to bring this look home. ■

For this modern library in McLean, Virginia, Nestor Santa-Cruz created a black envelope to showcase works of art, like the shelves of Warhol soup cans or the sculpture from HOLLY HUNT. Instead of white, Santa-Cruz used warm creams and wood tones to create a serene atmosphere. The desk, by Century Furniture, sits on a textural area rug by Stark Carpet. PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON BEALL



In this urban loft, **Artistic Tile** helped create a dramatic focal wall that is part art gallery, part fireplace, part entertainment center, and all glamour. Black Nero Marquina surrounds the fireplace, while pure white and black marble tiles make up the rest of the wall.



For a softer way to incorporate black, a wallcovering like **Mantra** by **Innovations** emulates the movement of blades of grass, and adds a metallic sheen.



The Idris mosaic collection by **Ann Sacks** is handcrafted by Moroccan craftspeople in the traditional style. The Itzer terra cotta mosaic shown here adds geometric style, and can be used for walls or light-duty floors.



The Mallorca two-drawer buffet from **Ebanista** comes in various finishes, but is most striking in this high gloss black with white inlays.



The Dean table, designed by Moss & Lam for **HOLLY HUNT**, is a one of a kind piece crafted using the ancient technique of scagliola—a cast marbled compound of plaster and pigment. Shown here in carbon.



For a residence in the Hayden Building in Chicago, the designers at **Brass Tacks Studio** combined shades of blue with black cabinetry from **Bentwood of Chicago**. Vintage chairs are covered in velvet from **ROMO** are joined by a bistro table from **CAI Designs**. The black-painted window mullions frame the picture.

Loretta Crenshaw of **Crenshaw & Associates** created this black and white chinoiserie guest suite for the Junior League of Detroit's Designer Showhouse in 2020. The black box contrasts with crisp white linens, toiles, and geometric patterns, all from **Shumacher**. The centerpiece of the room is the ornate mirror, also from **Schumacher**. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF GARLAND



Designer Lakesha Rose of **L Rose Interior Design** created this striking room for a client who was ready to entertain. Comfy armchairs are covered in graphic fabric by **Kravet**. Contrasting pillows from Kravet, with trim by **Samuel & Sons**, rest on the chairs and **Baker Furniture** sofa. At the window, a floral by **ROMO** frames a dining table and chairs by **Baker Furniture**.

For a dramatic feature wall that works in both modern and traditional settings, Fioravanti Noir from **Designers Guild** through **Osborne & Little** is an elegant, flockprinted design based on a repeating classical motif.



Mixing black into a room can be as easy as adding fabrics such as (left to right): **Fabricut's** Savile Row Arthur Onyx; **Thibaut's** Serengetti; Blackwoods by **Pindler**; **Fabricut's** Savile Row Pinstripe Caspian; Prince of Wales by **Holland & Sherry**.