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

NIGHT AND DAY

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

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH L. MARTIN

here'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 hypercolorful 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.





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 marbleized compound of plaster and pigment. Shown here in carbon.



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.

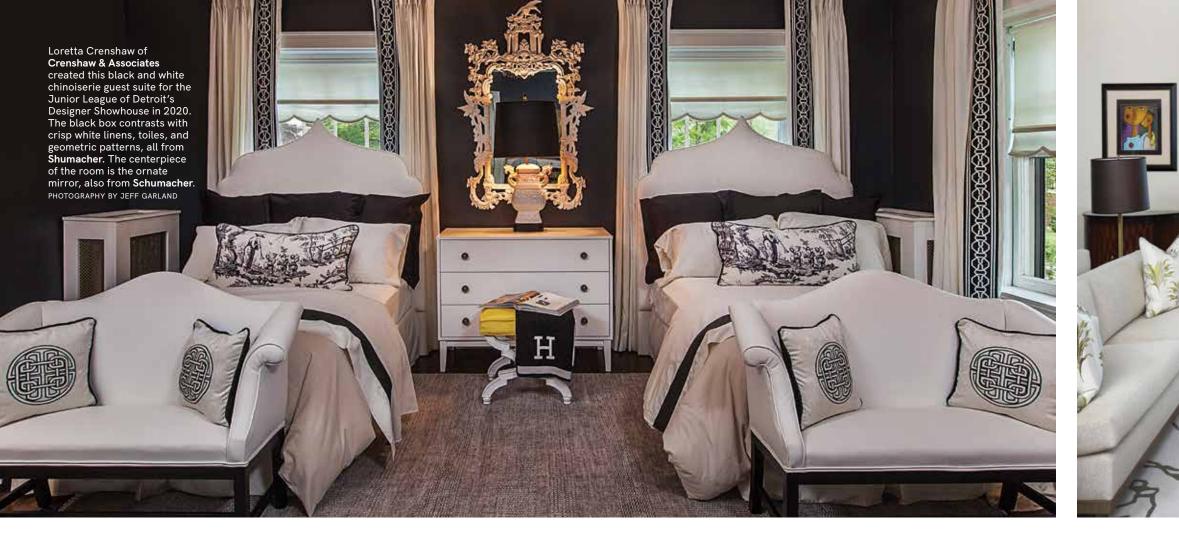


The Mallorca two-drawer buffet from **Ebanista** comes in various finishes, but is most striking in this high gloss black with white inlays.

S CARDA

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.









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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**.