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What Susan wanted was to recover every piece of seating in the house as well as come up with window treatments to replace the store-bought curtains she'd been making do with for two years. She also wanted to do some new custom bedding, upholstery and window coverings in the master bedroom.

Designing custom fabric treatments like these are a passion for me. I usually lean toward understated designs that pull together architecture and furnishings. I love mixing classic old furniture with new fabrics because (as I've said in previous columns) I find that homes age and evolve much better with a mix of eras.

The client's preferred color is that warm blue that verges on periwinkle. The color is a natural in guest or children's bedrooms but can be challenging in public rooms like the living room and dining room. The challenge was to keep fabrics in the common areas from being too "sweet."

Susan's furniture is of excellent quality and merited re-upholstering. We covered the sofa in a heavily textured Pindler and Pindler blue linen blend and dressed it up with 18-inch down-filled throw pillows in GP and J Baker's classic Bird of the Nile cotton floral. We raised the sofa with new legs to gain some much needed seat height. We covered a curvy little wood framed armchair in a sunny yellow graphic Robert Allen print, and I designed a small round, tufted ottoman (which Susan refers to as a tuffet) to match.

A roomy club chair and matching ottoman was done up in a Stroheim

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Light blue a challenge to keep from being 'sweet'

One Saturday morning I received a phone call from a Sacramento resident who had just read an article the Bee had done about my design business. That first conversation led to a six-month project that grew into a special friendship between us.

Susan and Richard's house has the good bones we talk about in architecture. It is a 1940s house on a beautiful, tree-lined street in old William Land Park. As it turned out, the client had all the furniture she needed and all the expected artwork and mementos that are collected over a lifetime. The majority of the remodeling had taken place in recent years. Everything was as it should be except the sofas, chairs and windows.

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and Romann blue quilted fabric with a small yellow dot. Custom draperies were done in a crisp and subtle tone-on-tone blue stripe fabric mounted on custom painted wood traverse rods that perfectly flatters the room's architecture.

Though the other rooms were also done in warm blues, they have their own individual style. A den off the dining room is where Richard watches television and does light office work. We recovered the sofa and matching chair in a textured Kravet upholstery fabric in a warm, powdery blue chenille with flecks of cream. Eighteen inch down filled throw pillows were done up in a Kravet periwinkle and cream graphic print.

Next to a Hepplewhite mahogany dining set and sideboard in the dining room, we hung draperies in the same blue tone-on-tone stripe that was used for the windows in the living room. This provided a nice conti-



The lighter shades of blue paired with creams and yellows add light to a room.



Courtesy photos

nunity from room to room.

The brass chandelier hanging over the dining room table was an old reproduction from Richard and Susan's trip to Historic Williamsburg. Susan fondly talks about carrying it home to California on board the plane.

The master bedroom is a light-filled room overlooking a quiet tree-lined street. On the windows we did floor-length stationery drapery panels in a Fabricut's Collier Campbell periwinkle blue and cream

linen print. We recovered a little armchair that was Susan's grandmother's in an off white quilted Collier Campbell fabric with contrasting blue welts. It turned out to be my favorite piece in the home.

We were able to use Susan's existing pale yellow, quilt covered headboard and found a coordinating blue and yellow stripe quilted cotton fabric to have a bed skirt made. The duvet, pillow shams and throw pillows were done in the quilted stripe, and the

Shiree's Cheat Sheet

- When using "sweet" colors such as blues, lavender, pinks and yellows, offset them with masculine elements like dark stained or rustic woods.
- Having the same color scheme running throughout a home is hard to pull off. Try alternating one color per room. Instead of blue and yellow in every room, do a room in blue and green, and another in blue and red.
- Upholstery fabrics are heavier than window covering and bedding fabrics. Make sure your upholstery fabrics are double rub tested for longevity and your window covering fabrics are lightweight enough to use on a traverse rod. Throw pillows and valances can usually be done in either type fabric as long as the welts are lightweight.
- Never wash custom bedding, slipcovers, draperies or pillows. Dry clean only!

blue linen fabric we used on the curtains.

Normally I try my best to work within the client's tastes because if you take their tastes too far from their own comfort level, the project invariably becomes the designer's and not the homeowner's. The homeowner is much happier if their opinions are taken into consideration. It takes more effort to work this way because you have to do a lot of "tweaking" to get it to look right, but it's worth it in the long run because it

means the client is really happy with the end result.

There are many things that determine the direction of a design project: the architecture, the existing furniture you'll be working with, the location/geography, the budget, the client's personal aesthetic and their lifestyle. Whether I'm a fan of blue and yellow or not (I actually appreciate all colors), it's helpful to realize that each homeowner has different frames of reference and unique ways of seeing color and style.