

DESIGN & DECORATING

**1. KEEP COLOR OFF THE FURNITURE**

"I wanted all the upholstery to be black-ish. Or black-and-white-ish," said Ms. Rosenfeld. "It creates a more sophisticated overall tone than color." She likens the versatile roll-arm sofa to a black cardigan. Similar: Eaton Custom Upholstered Sofa in Boden Sand/Black Sunbrella, \$3,644, [BallardDesigns.com](#)

**4. EMBRACE TARNISH**

Ms. Rosenfeld appreciates the contrast between the new coffee table and the weathered brass tray on top. "It's a found object—rusty and kind of ratty," she said of the server. This currently lustrous Moroccan Metal Brass Decorative Moorish Tray will eventually show its age with an equally graceful patina. \$950, [1stDibs.com](#)

**5. FLUFF IN SOME FLOWERS**

"Without those florals, there is no pattern in the room other than a few stripes and checks, which is a total snooze," said Ms. Rosenfeld. Toss on your own for a little thrill. From left: Terracotta Pillow Cover, \$27, [Color Amazing, Etsy.com](#); Throw Pillow in Fleur De Leaf, Blossom, \$63, [LoomDecor.com](#)

**6. CHILL WITH A KILIM**

A bohemian, multicolored rug mediates between the classic and modern choices—and helps the room relax and exude warmth. "I didn't want it to be a stuffy space, I wanted it to be a little more cool and informal." This antique Shamsan Kilim Rug will add a comparable hippie vibe. \$2,600, [Kilim.com](#).

2. DON'T SPARE GRAPHIC DETAILS

Art was hung nonchalantly. "I think it makes [the room] look quirky and unintentional," said Ms. Rosenfeld. The work of Charleston's Whitney Stoddard—acrylic paint on tea-stained paper—blends a graphic, modern sensibility and an old-fashioned technique. "Cola," right, is from the same series. \$1,180, [WhitneyStoddardArt.com](#)

**3. TOP THE LIGHT RIGHT**

The lamps contribute to the room's balance of "then" and "now." The floral-patterned shade from Bunny Williams Home counters the modern base, said Ms. Rosenfeld. A stand-in that would work: The Faris Ceramic Table Lamp in Matte Black, \$299, [PotteryBarn.com](#). Wild Ginger Lampshade, \$275, [BunnyWilliamsHome.com](#).



ANATOMY LESSON

The Power of Black

Without its super-dark hits, this sitting room would be just granny, not granny chic

BY ELIZABETH QUINN BROWN

TUCKED INTO a 1926 Tudor-style home, Katie Rosenfeld's parlor is plush with comfortable furnishings in such semisweet patterns as the ticking stripes of the roll-arm sofa. "It has very Anglo-Indian vibes," said the interior designer of her sitting room in Wellesley, Mass. "All the elements are

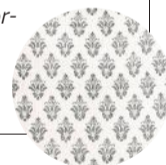
there. There's chintz, there's ticking, there's floral, there's plaid, there's paisley." But to dodge potential stodginess, she introduced black.

Result: A room with a somewhat darker vibe. "There's a slight edge," Ms. Rosenfeld said, pointing out the black in the art, lamps and window details as well as the coffee table's brooding hue. "It's graphic, and it's certainly not precious," she said of the space.

Other decorating moves that pull the "granny chic" room into the 21st century: stark cream-colored curtains, and walls that are "clean, clean, clean—and where you're feeling the modern touch," she said. And while Ms. Rosenfeld took a hard pass on passementerie (bullion fringe, tassels), she embraced bohemian accents like the kilim rug to add an extra layer of interest. Here, her tips for nailing a neotraditional interior.

**7. ROLL UP A THROW-BACK SILHOUETTE**

A Victorian-style seat from LEE Industries—on casters, no less—skews ye olde, but the fabric and near-black wood stain cut the cuteness. Ms. Rosenfeld considers black-and-white pattern a neutral. About \$2,200, [WHDesignsForLife.com](#); GP&J Baker Thornham Warm Grey Fabric, \$147 a yard, [DecoratorsBest.com](#)

**8. BRING 'THE CROWN' INTO THE PRESENT**

The Campaign Coffee Table retains classic brass hardware, but its atypical black finish and simplified legs update the British Empire style. "It's cool in the room because it's got clean lines but is very traditional in spirit." \$2,495, [Memoky.com](#)

CHIC TRICK

Think Inside the Box

A wallpapered closet makes putting things away less dreary

The Appeal Closets are, surprisingly, among Jewel Marlowe's favorite spots to wallpaper. "I believe the smaller the space, the better the opportunity to make a statement," said the Washington, D.C., interior designer, who clad every wall and shelf of her kitchen pantry in a green geometric pattern (right). She loves the unexpected splash and seeing guests' reactions when she asks them to fetch an onion from the charismatic closet. Los Angeles interiors photographer Sara Ligorria-Tramp opulently papered her walk-in closet (left) to inject some liveliness into her home's mostly neutral design scheme. "It's a great place to take a risk without committing to an entire room. And it makes me happy every time I'm in there," she said.

The Tips When choosing a pattern, carefully ponder scale. For a small space with shelves, select a print with a small "repeat"—i.e., the number of inches before the pattern starts over again. Too large a repeat and the motif will look chopped up, chaotic and hard to appreciate. Larger-scale patterns work

better in closets with fewer shelves, such as walk-ins. "Scale also relates to what's outside the closet door," noted Ms. Marlowe. "It is easier on the eyes if the closet wallpaper pattern is either smaller or bigger than the patterns" in adjacent rooms. Another source of guidance when picking patterns: The accent colors in the adjoining room often prove useful as a starting point. Ms. Marlowe's kitchen is a pale blue, but in choosing her pantry paper, she took

clues from the greenish hues in a nearby painting, wainscoting and copious houseplants.

The Caveats If you decide to sell your house, potential homeowners might curse you. "Un-wallpapering a closet, I could only assume, would be a drag," said Ms. Ligorria-Tramp, pointing to the many hooks, shelves, and hanger bars that must be removed to peel the paper. When installing it in the first place, measure precisely or outsource the task of anticipating the right quantity. Ms. Ligorria-Tramp thought she had done a good job by using an online wallpaper calculator, "but I should have given the measurements to the wallpaper installer directly." She had planned to cover her closet's ceiling, too, but barely had enough paper to span the walls, paying about \$500 for the installation.

DIYers will need patience, not perfectionism. Said Ms. Marlowe, "When you are covering entire shelves and working around angles of existing brackets, there are bound to be slight variances, but trust me, probably only you will notice." —*Alice Welsh Doyle*



PAPERED PANTRY In her home outside Washington, D.C., designer Jewel Marlowe covered all surfaces, including shelves, in a kitchen closet.



HISTORIC REPEAT To transform a closet in her 1920s craftsman-style bungalow, interiors photographer Sara Ligorria-Tramp chose a pattern created by 19th-century Arts & Crafts textile designer William Morris.