

# Tips for decking halls with holiday villages

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Next, Graves recommends adding a layer of white to the winter wonderland. Batting cotton, available at local craft stores, can be rolled out over the elevated display to create a snowy landscape.

Sprinkle iridescent white glitter to add a finishing sparkle and a little holiday magic.

#### • Let there be light

For a soft, warm glow, Graves recommends displaying illuminated village pieces. The It's a Wonderful

Life holiday village has eight collectible pieces, each illuminated with soft reflective light.

#### • Festive finishing touches

While the miniature buildings are filled with holiday character, it's the festive fin-

ishing touches that add unexpected charm and frivolity. Tiny cars on the street and little trees towering above the rooftops are essential elements in holiday village decorating. Graves recommends getting creative with some of these touches

and turn to nature. Pebbles from the garden and twigs from the front yard can easily become boulders and trees in the village scene. The It's

A Wonderful Life Illuminate Village is available at Walgreens stores nationwide. Visit [www.walgreens.com](http://www.walgreens.com) for more information.

## Updating accessories in bath is quick and simple in time for holidays

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rary designs in brushed chrome...dramatic wrought iron finishes and even accessories made in brushed nickel, homeowners have a wide variety of new and innovative design options for the bath.

With all of the new options, Americans still hold true to a traditional finish. According to a survey by Creative Specialties International and Rooms of America, a consumer research organization, chrome is still the most popular bath accessory finish, but consumers' second choice, brushed nickel, is on the rise. In addition, other finishes, such as oil-rubbed bronze and wrought iron, are also increasing in popularity with consumers. In fact, non-chrome finishes now represent almost half of bath accessory sales. Relying on this survey, and other extensive consumer research, Cre-

ative Specialties International recently introduced four new bath accessory collections designed to reflect the styles used in today's bath. Sold under the Inspirations brand, the Stockton, Danbury, Sage and Avery collections each fall into one of three design categories — traditional, contemporary/casual or country. Easy as 1-2-3 Once you have selected the right style of accessory to match your bathroom décor, installing the accessories is a snap! First, position the assembled unit, such as a towel bar, on the wall where desired. Lightly mark the outline of each base. Next, center a mounting bracket within each base outline and mark the hole locations of each mounting bracket. Attach each mounting bracket to the wall, using mounting bracket screws and wall anchors. A special

tip, according to Rowell, "While it's not necessary to mount accessories into wood studs, we highly recommend it. It makes for a more secure connection and will hold weight more evenly." Finally, mount each base on the corresponding mounting bracket, making sure that the base set screw hole(s) are facing down. Assemble a set screw to each base and use an Allen wrench (included in most accessory hardware kits) to tighten each set screw and secure the assembly to the mounting bracket. To ensure an accessory is mounted in the proper location, some manufacturers, such as Creative Specialties International, offer templates with each product. The template can be hung and taped to the wall, giving the consumer the exact location of where the accessory should be mounted.

As for final words of advice,

Rowell added, "The powder room isn't the first on the list when we think of entertaining, but it can leave quite an impression with guests. Remember to continue your holiday spruce-ups into the bath and you'll be surprised at the compliments you receive." For more information on bath style trends, or accessory products available from Creative Specialties International, write 25300 Al Moen Drive, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070-8022, call toll free (800) 882-0116, or visit [www.moen.com](http://www.moen.com).

## Brown, brown all around

By Patricia Dane Rogers  
THE WASHINGTON POST

The design world has been tossing a lot of intense colors at us lately. And there is one school of thought that all that hot pink, lime green, sizzling orange and shimmering blue can stand a little sobering up.

Enter dependable, steady, comforting brown, a color much mentioned in knowing design circles these days as being just the thing to ground all that fizzy vibrance.

Legendary designer Billy Baldwin is often credited with being the first to use brown with panache. His glossy tortoise-shell library for composer Cole Porter's Waldorf Tower apartment in New York more than 50 years ago is still considered the benchmark of brown rooms.

Later, Baldwin, who died in 1983 at the age of 80, treated walls of his own glamorous midtown Manhattan apartment a shade he once described as "my favorite" — a shiny "Cormandel black-brown."

Editors of top design magazines see the brown uptick in houses from coast to coast, in its deepest coffee and chocolate incarnations down to paler bronzes and caramel. "There are a lot of brown walls out there," says House Beautiful's Mark Mayfield. "The easiest thing is to do them against cream upholstery à la Billy Baldwin, but the trend is toward creating a different, more adventurous formula with splashes of vibrant color that we haven't seen with browns before: Put pinks, turquoises and chartreuses against brown walls, and they pop."

Just such color combinations are turning up in a wide range of home products, from bed linens (Atlanta-based Sway, a luxury bed-linen design company recently introduced a "caffé and bamboo" combo with reversible shams, duvets and pillows [[www.sway-home.com](http://www.sway-home.com)]); to rugs (a brown wool area rug with shocking pink dots by Maine designer Angela Adams can be ordered at Apartment Zero in downtown Washington as can Sway products); to fabrics (pink peacocks and strawberries flock together on a brown background in "Bakerbird," a top-selling cotton print at Calico Corners).

At the recent International Designer Show House in New York, curtains in "Abbondio," a dramatic \$350-a-yard chocolate Rubelli silk with jumbo blue arabesques, was the star of a study by Parisian designer Jean-Louis Deniot; it's available through designers at J. Lambeth & Co. at the Washington Design Center. New York interior designer Victoria Hagan based her entire new fabric, furniture and accessories collection, sold through Holly Hunt showrooms nationwide, on a deep brown color she calls espresso. "I like its boldness," she says, "and its warmth."

Mark Woodman, color marketing and design manager for Beltsville-based Duron Paints & Wallcoverings, credits the current popularity of brown to its honest appeal to the senses. "Brown has morphed into something extremely sensory, and people take the same kind of lovely solace in it as with Godiva or the finest pipe tobacco."

Woodman painted his own foyer with wide horizontal stripes of Duron's Spicnut (No. 8755A), interspersing them with parallel slivers of Jeffrey Blue (No. 8012W). "It made the space feel welcoming," he says, "like someone had wrapped their arms around you."

Architectural Digest's no-nonsense editor-in-chief, Paige Rense, sounds a cautionary note about overdoing the color: "Page after page of brown furniture and walls and our readers will nod off in a brown-induced coma." Brown "can be chic in small doses," she says, "but it doesn't change your life. ... Many brown rooms in New York apartments are seen only at night. Brown and aubergine can be depressing in the daylight. As a designer, you have to think of the emotional well-being of your client. I think people are hungry for Matisse colors."

"Brown has punch," says Washington designer Whitney Stewart. "You can't go wrong with beige, and you can't go wrong with dark brown. But you're upping the ante when you use chocolate as a background color. It's nervier than beige." She likes Donald Kaufman's DKC50 wall paint, "a delicious, velvety matte chocolate for the walls with splashes of icy blue or lime green fabric" ([www.donaldkaufmancolor.com](http://www.donaldkaufmancolor.com); 201-568-2226).

Decorative painter Malcolm Robson of Robson Worldwide Graining in Lorton, whose international clientele includes Buckingham Palace and Oscar and Annette de la Renta, says if not used carefully, the color can swallow other elements in a room. "Brown furniture — even wonderful mahogany and walnut — completely disappears against brown walls."

The pros are divided on which paint finishes — matte or shiny — show brown to best advantage. Woodman, Stewart and New York interior designer Richard Keith Langham vote for matte's subtle sueded-like look; Hagan prefers a little gloss. Otherwise, she says, "brown can look a little dead." She lacquered her own New York foyer with Sherwin-Williams' espresso-dark Black Bean (No. 6006), paired with Pratt & Lambert's Ancestral White trim (No. 1426 FB) and a soft khaki for the ceiling. She says, "You need a little cream with the coffee."

A few other tips from design pros:

- Langham likes the surprise factor of a matte brown ceiling and crimson walls. In his New York showroom, a coral sofa and a Bessarabian rug with stylized pink roses and acid green foliage on a brown background are brought down to earth by cocoa walls (Pratt & Lambert's Congo Brown No. 2065).

- Chevy Chase designer Sue Burgess suggests pairing periwinkle blue walls with brown and white toile upholstery and a chocolate rug. "A vibrant wall color can take your breath away, so earth tones make a wonderful counterpoint."

- "I love seashell pink with brown," says Washington designer Joseph Paul Davis. "In a summer house or in Palm Beach, pale pink walls and furniture with brown slipcovers piped in white would be dynamite." A favorite wall paint is Duron's Mission Brown (No. AC140N).

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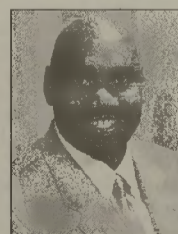
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