

AT HOME

INTERIORS

The boudoir is a sophisticated woman's she-cave

A private sitting room can be overtly feminine, reflect inner girlie girl

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
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Television homebuyer shows spent 2010 talking about the trendy, testosterone-laden "man cave" for the guys of the house, so it's only fair to give some attention in the waning days of the year to the complete antithesis, the oh-so-much-more elegant and sophisticated boudoir.

It's her personal space; where a woman goes to be alone. A private sitting room or dressing area, the boudoir reflects a woman's innermost thoughts and contains her most intimate possessions.

"It's where a woman keeps all her lotions and potions. She enters as a caterpillar and emerges as a magnificent butterfly," said Claudia L. Powell, an Alexandria-based interior designer and owner of Claudia L. Powell Interior Design Inc. "It's where you prepare yourself for the world."

Derived from the French verb, which means "to pout" or "to sulk," historically the boudoir was the room a woman retreated to when feeling sulky. Later she would reappear, refreshed.

Thus a boudoir's interior reflects the essence of a woman. Elegant, inspiring and overtly feminine, it's the place to express that inner girlie girl. It's similar to the man-cave but, unlike that space, which is frequently open to buddies and located on the lower level in a house, the boudoir is usually located near or connected to the bedroom. And guests are permitted by invitation only.

"The man is not allowed," Powell said.

Powell recently turned a master bath into a boudoir for a client by adding upholstered seating, a crystal chandelier and floral printed draperies. She suggested accessorizing a boudoir with a beautiful dresser or table to display jewelry and perfumes, especially decorative perfume bottles. Choose dainty fabrics, such as damasks, velvets and silks, Powell said.

"They should be beautifully detailed and unashamedly girlie," she added, and recommended using jewel tones, soft pastels, pinks and powder blues for walls and linens.

Set the mood by appealing to all the senses. Add a crystal chandelier for the eyes. Toss a cashmere throw over a chaise lounge for a cozy feeling. Keep a crystal carafe of cucumber- or lemon-infused



COURTESY CLAUDIA L. POWELL DESIGN INC.

A boudoir's interior reflects the essence of a woman and has a no-men-allowed rule. Elegant, inspiring and ladylike, it's the place women can be themselves.

water to quench thirst. Play light classical or jazz and don't forget fragrance.

"I love a candle burning in the bedroom or the scent of linen water spray on the bed, like a Lemon Verbena," said Troy Englert, designer and co-owner of Patrick's Fine Linens & Home Decor in Old Town Alexandria. Surrounded by historic homes, Patrick's offers design services and Englert said they frequently get requests to decorate boudoirs.

Englert suggested furnishing the room with luxurious pieces such as Barbara Barry's Lady's Desk, a glamorous ivory-enameled writing desk that retails for \$4,271.

"It's the most beautiful vanity I've ever seen," Englert said. If the boudoir serves as a bedroom, Englert said the bed should be dressed in lush linens. "I personally like jacquards because of the way the thread is woven."

Even today's modern technology



PHOTO COURTESY GORDON BEALL

The boudoir can be accessorized with a beautiful dresser or table to display jewelry and perfumes, especially decorative perfume bottles.

can be incorporated into a boudoir. "Just hide it," said Englert, who noted the new magic mirror technology can transform into a liquid

crystal display computer screen or television. "These days, women lead busy lives and they still may want to hear the latest news."

Resources

- » patricksdesigns.com
- » hiddentelevision.com
- » claudialpowell.com

