

DESIGN & DECORATING

ANATOMY LESSON

Sleep Uniquely

In the bedroom of an architecturally lackluster 1960s ranch, an interior designer conjures an anti-generic sanctuary

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS

THE CHALLENGE FOR homeowners not lucky enough to score a finely detailed brownstone or an A-plus midcentury abode: escaping the doldrums of an architecturally featureless room. Los Angeles interior designer Amber Lewis faced such a tabula rasa in a client's vacation getaway, a 1960s ranch house in Ojai, Calif. "We'd gutted the whole thing, and the homeowner didn't want it to feel new and shiny, like a spec house," she said.

Ms. Lewis infused the bedroom with personality by introducing her take on what she calls California eclectic. She imported various textures,

starting with olive grass-cloth walls. "Any kind of wall treatment and rug that can absorb sound and make a space feel warm and cozy is how I design inherently," said Ms. Lewis. She avoided standard-issue elements, gravitating toward collected, offbeat pieces: After spotting a pile of the upholstery webbing usually hidden within sofas and chairs at one of her warehouses, she decided to sheath the custom-made headboard in it. Antique throw pillows and tanswern side tables enliven the room's no-nonsense.

"I like spaces with personalities and stories," Lewis said. "A space should convey who you are." Here, how she created a narrative.



Top With Brass

"The headboard was such a statement, I wanted something visually interesting so your eye didn't go just there," Ms. Lewis said of her sconce pick, which pops proudly against the wall. The brass back-plate of the version, tinged by vintage pharmacy lights, livens up the dark metal arm. Flynn Single Wall Sconce, \$185, www.sandyl.com



Dresser in History

A 1950s dresser adds the flavor of a different era and supplies storage. "Midcentury stuff was smaller," Ms. Lewis said. "Their dressers are the size of a side table today." A similar model: Peter Hickl Tab Box Dresser, \$1,500 for two, table.com



Nod to Knave

Duvet covers with kerchiefs crocheted edges add a note of tradition—and a bit of loveliness every time you crawl into bed. "It's a little Old World-y," said Ms. Lewis. "I felt a plain duvet in linen would go flat." For a similar dose of dolly chic, try this cotton Impari Crochet. Tom Davet Cover, \$59 for Queen, urbanoutfitters.com



Pull Up Some Floor

The bench, upholstered in carpet that's slightly more vibrant in color and pattern than the oshank rug, adds depth. "It's all about layering," said Ms. Lewis, who customizes these benches from vintage carpets (often maharaj) and makes their brass bases. The Chautauqua Ottoman, \$1,295, shoppe.artinteriorsdesign.com



Fiber a Fade

Muted hues help soften a rectangular rug's geometry, ideal for a bedroom. "Vintage rugs have beautiful tones with undertones you can pull out for drapey and vivid," noted Ms. Lewis. Try this washed-out wool version, less than hand-knotted rug, Finn Hand Knotted Rug, from \$499, pottent.com

Let Your Walls Talk

And let them say nice, hospitable things. "Grass cloth is naturally beautiful and warm," Ms. Lewis said of the wall covering she hung, adding that it also brought the lofty ceiling—which she'd painted a warm white for coziness—down to earth. Finn and Foster's black and green grass-cloth wallpaper will similarly soothe. Lapska Dark Green, \$40 per roll, fthome.com



Master the Mix

Piles of vintage textiles make a spot feel lived-in and comfortable, said Ms. Lewis, who often pairs a striped pattern with a floral in the same color family. Of these throw pillows, she said, "the patterns aren't overwhelming, and they pull in the colors of the rug and blanket." These from Hillywood at Home approximate the larger middle pillow at left. \$600 each, 310-273-6200



Benefit from Fringe

For a distinctive look, Ms. Lewis topped the bed in unconventional layers, including a handmade patterned cotton blanket she'd purchased in Mexico. Its tasseled edges subtly separate the blanket from the similarly fringed bedliner. This look-alike, also Casca-made, rugs woven on a loom from Oaxacan Tassled Blanket, \$200 for a Twin, artisanweave.net



THE DEAL

WHICH BUD'S FOR YOU?

Two books of floral art—one \$70, one \$60,000—vie for your bibliographical budget

IF YOU'RE ANOIGOUS for spring, and the du-floidi nubs poking through the soil don't satisfy, you might be in the market for a nature fix from 19th-century botanical art. This month offers two notable books at either end of the monetary spectrum: a bound folio of original British watercolors dating from 1864, priced at \$60,000, or Taschen's collection of reproductions of copper prints by French artist Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1794-1840), a mere \$70. Both have their virtues.



The former, "Flowers of the Bormby Presidency," can be viewed at the New York International Antiquarian Book Fair, booth E20, through March 11. Its creators, May and William Butt (she drew, he painted) recorded the 202 pages of flora while living in British India.

New York artist-retailer John Deane, who has built a small empire by transforming 19th-century ephemera into home goods, said of the renderings, "They are beautiful, authentic, naive and historical, like [the work of]

explorers documenting their finds." Though he, like the seller's representative, Alessandro Biondi, hopes a collector or institution buys the book and keeps it intact, Mr. Deane said he would buy any one of the renderings without a thought if they were individually priced at \$300.

A far more accessible tome, "Pierre-Joseph Redouté: The Book of Flowers" offers readers more than 500 reprints of illustrations by a man who painted, printed and cataloged

the flowers of Paris's royal and aristocratic gardens. Napoleon reportedly used one of Redouté's publications as a diplomatic gift of state.

Mr. Deane refers to Redouté as a god of botanical artistry. Still, he incorrectly recommends, as he did with 2016's "John Deane Picture Book," that buyers disassemble the volume and frame the prints. Even more inexact: "Wallpapering a foyer or hallway with these would be really fun!"

—Catherine Romano

"The Book of Flowers" (Taschen) includes more than 500 reproductions of Pierre-Joseph Redouté's copper prints.

THE REAL



Pages from "Flowers of the Bormby Presidency" a bound collection of original 19th-century watercolors on display at this weekend's New York International Antiquarian Book Fair.

