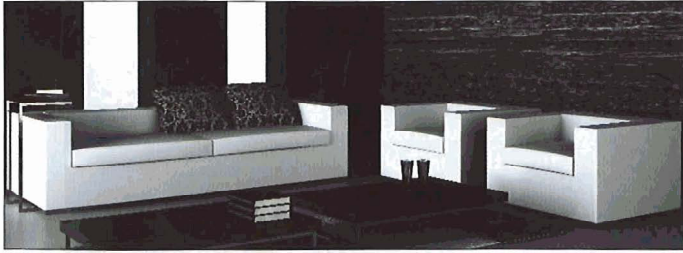


# IMPROVE your DESIGN IQ

By Brenda Weiss, M.S., ASID, IACC

Do you have a design dilemma? Is there a room in your home that needs to be changed or improved? You can now write to us at [info@floridahomeimprove.com](mailto:info@floridahomeimprove.com) for the answers. In each issue, we will be addressing your concerns, and giving you helpful hints to improve your space.



Is it ok to mix different styles of furniture? I have some antique tables from my grandparents, a contemporary couch, and a more traditional style coffee table. How can I pull them all together?

Nicole P. – Palm Beach Gardens

I often receive questions regarding many areas of interior design, including identifying furniture styles and how to work with items of different styles. Mixing furniture styles is a wonderful way to give variety to an interior space. However, one must use care in effectively combining styles, as too much of a mix can yield a room which is beautifully chaotic, rather than wonderfully eclectic. In my design practice, I like to follow my "80/20 Rule", which, stated briefly, is to stay with one particular style for 80% of a room's elements, such as furniture, fabrics, and window treatments, and have fun bringing in other styles or even one style for the remaining 20%. If your style



preference is traditional, for the most part, then use traditional furnishings for the majority of the space. These would include furniture, fabrics, accessories, and window treatments. However, you could then bring to the space more contemporary pieces, such as classic modern side chairs, artwork, and more contemporary art. Since you have a contemporary sofa and several traditional or antique tables, you have a couple options. One would be to stay true to the contemporary style for most of the elements in the room, and reference the traditional tables with perhaps some traditional artwork and accessories. Artwork is a wonderful way to combine styles. Above the sofa, use a large contemporary image and then smaller traditional images in other areas of the room. An alternative would be, if you prefer traditional styling, than allow your contemporary sofa to be one of a just a few contemporary pieces in the room, including artwork and accessories. Then stay true to the traditional style for the majority of the room's elements. The room will have interest and complexity, while feeling unified and well balanced.



How do we choose artwork for our home? My husband and I have very different tastes. I love things like Monet and landscapes and he likes a more modern feel.

Susan B. – Boca Raton

Artwork is one aspect of interior design where there is great latitude within a space and can easily satisfy varying tastes. Your husband's preference for more modern art and yours for more impressionistic imagery can be beautifully and "artistically" worked into the overall look of your interior. Where these pieces are located and their adjacencies to one another is most important. While it is certainly appropriate to mix modern art with the traditional pieces within one room, one suggestion would be to select feature spaces or walls, for one particular style. For instance, in your foyer, you might want to "feature" the modern works, and then place the traditional pieces in another room, such as the living room. Then go ahead and do a blend of the two styles in an adjacent space, such as the dining room. This method of working with two different styles is a way to bring both unity and complexity to an environment, and make both of you happy. Another suggestion would be to choose one style of art, let's say the traditional, as the dominant style. This typically would be within the dominant style of the room, which would also be traditional. Then you could select a smaller number of pieces in your husband's preferred style, the contemporary. In another



area of the house, such as the master bedroom, why not switch it, and allow the contemporary style to dominant, with your preference for traditional styling to have a subordinate role. In all areas, both of your tastes would still be represented. Finally, a transitional style may be your best bet in the long run. Transitional styling is a marriage of both modern and traditional. It is sleeker and less ornate than traditional furniture, yet is not as simple and clean as is contemporary or modern furniture. Depending on the other elements in the room, such as artwork and accessories, one is then able to move a room style more towards the traditional or the contemporary. Mixing both styles of artwork can be then accomplished with great success.

Brenda Weiss holds a Masters Degree in Counseling from Boston University, as well as three Bachelor Degrees in Education, Psychology and Interior Design. She has owned her own interior design firm since 1994.