

Decor Score: Blinds are a classic, stylish presence on any window

by *Rose_Bennett_Gilbert*

Q: We have French doors leading to the patio just off our master bedroom. I don't know what to put on them. Sheer curtains would be pretty but you can see through them. Anything else I can think of blocks the light. Suggestions, please!

A: Consider blinds - vertical or horizontal, metal or real or faux wood - it's your choice, as long as the blinds open and close to let in the light when you want it and block outsiders' view when you need to.

BLIND FAITH - Going to any length for good looks, wooden window blinds work on doors, too. CNS Photo courtesy of Levolor. In the bedroom we show here, traditional 1-inch wooden Venetian blinds guard the glass doors. They open to the light or close to sight-lines at a twist of a wand (or touch of a finger - these, from Levolor, www.Levolor.com, can be motorized to operate by remote control).

You also have a choice of slat widths, decorative tapes, and wood finishes and colors, so you can easily work them into your bedroom ensemble. Here, the designer has picked colors to complement the area rugs and mounted the blinds directly on the doors. Then for more softness, as befits a bedroom, she tops the whole affair with graceful tie-back curtains that can be closed for extra insulation and/or privacy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME DECORATING

How important is it? Ask designer Terry Grahl and she'll tell you that interior decorating is not just about what's pretty and posh and pampering for those who can indulge themselves.

Terry recently donated six months of her time and talent, making over the communal bedroom in a homeless shelter where 30 battered women and their children can live for a year while they are being counseled, educated, and trained for a new career.

As she tells it now, Terry "knew when I walked into Grace Center of Hope, I was not just here to decorate, I was here to heal broken spirits."

The bedroom cried out, "Save me!" Terry says. The dreary color and the worn, stained bed clothes "reminded me of how (the women's) souls must feel," she recalls.

With some \$200,000 in donated funds and furnishings from the community, Terry changed out the old "prison-like" beds and used nursing home bedspreads and pillows, added night stands and lights so the women could read in bed, and transformed the space into a bedroom which would remind each woman every day that "I am precious. I am worthy. I am not a victim. I have the power to stop the torch of abuse from being passed on to my children."

The designer's efforts inspired a story in the local newspaper, which, in turn, inspired an artist (Gred Bugala, www.Gregg-Art.com) to translate Terry's vision of hope and promise into a colorful wall-to-wall mural. Not coincidentally, it also inspired donations of hard-goods necessities, like air conditioners, washers and dryers, and baby cribs.

Says the designer, "The women's reactions were priceless - they told me that (the new decor) made them feel worthy and proud." (See more at www.terrysenchantedcottage.com.) It was, she says, the "transformation of not just a room, but the lives of many women."

Bottom line: the beauty of good design is obviously much more than surface deep.

Rose Bennett Gilbert is the co-author of "Hampton Style" and associate editor of Country Decorating Ideas.

Please send your questions to her at P.O. Box 120190, San Diego, CA 92112-0190..

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