



LOCAL LIVING

Spring's
essential
herbs

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Interior designer Mona Hajj on thinking global, decorating local



Mona Hajj

Interior designer Mona Hajj joined Jura Koncius this week on the Home Front chat. Below is an edited excerpt.

Q: What's your starting point when designing a room? Furniture, rugs, personal antiques or items?

A: I always start with a rug. It sets up the mood you're trying to achieve. Next, I put in furniture for scale. As for antiques, it all depends. If it's furniture, you work it in with the rest of the furniture. Accessories and personal antiques go last.

Q: What are you into right now for upholstery and window treatments? Has that changed or do you have go-to favorites?

A: For me, it's about how things work, not what's in now. I find antique fabrics and textiles from all over the world so beautiful with their textures and their authentic natural colors, and I integrate them into curtains, bed covers, tablecloths and upholstered pieces. My favorite is the intricacy found in Turkish and Syrian textiles. Sometimes I mix them with beautiful Italian hangings as well.

Q: Is there a trick to florals when creating a worldly room? Should they be exotic or local?

A: The simpler, the better. I hardly ever mix different flowers. I go for what's in season. Stick to one color palette, maybe with some greens. The vase can be the simplest glass or pretty porcelain. You want the flowers to be the



WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ

When designing a room, interior designer Mona Hajj always starts with the rug and then adds furniture for scale. The rug sets the tone for the entire space in this Chevy Chase dining room.

main event.

Q: I love your design aesthetic, but I have young children and am afraid to decorate in the way I would like because of safety reasons/costs of nice decor. How can I get the feel I want without having to worry about my kids?

A: In reality, nothing is childproof. These kids want to live! I suggest going with darker colors or medium textures and treating some of the fabrics.

Q: Please share some paint colors that will go well with a colorful Oriental rug — something bold,

please.

A: Try Vermont Slate from Benjamin Moore for a dark navy blue look. Remember: Glazing always helps bring a richer pigment to the paint. Benjamin Moore's Mink is also quite nice; it's a rich brown that gives off a beautiful overall effect. I also love

Deep Jungle by Pratt & Lambert. It's perfect for lovers of green!

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Read the rest of this transcript and submit questions to the next chat, Thursday at 11 a.m. at live.washingtonpost.com