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# FAMILY harmony

• The bedrooms in this  
• weekend home are  
• thoroughly INDIVIDUAL—  
• yet share a common  
• charm and STYLE.



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## UNITY in variety

If you want to bridge the looks of several rooms, here are suggestions from designer Arlene Critzos, who is known for bringing subtle detail to fabric treatments and furnishings.

- Take decorating cues from the architecture and style of the house.
- Think of several bedrooms as forming a continuum. Decorate them at the same time rather than one now and another later.
- Listen to what each family member likes—in terms of color, comfort, and convenience. (And remember that children grow fast!)
- Early on, spread out fabric and wall choices for several rooms and consider them together. This is particularly important if you can see into the rooms from one vantage point, such as an upstairs hall.
- To harmonize rooms of different colors, keep about 70 percent of each in neutrals. This also keeps prints and colors from feeling overdone.
- Once you have a subtle visual flow between rooms, make each one distinct and special. For instance, all of the Nassetas' bedrooms are decorated in soft, subtle colors, but each space is individually tailored to the girls occupying it.
- Use fabrics you almost chose for a main role on decorative pillows, which are more interesting if they don't match.
- Choose plain rugs, such as sisal, to throw the emphasis elsewhere (such as walls and window treatments).
- Don't worry about whether a piece is antique, reproduction, or new, so long as it suits the room.





This photo: The painted twin beds in this room were created from recycled wood and lined with cane panels. Opposite top: The nature-inspired wallpaper brings the room together with a whimsical touch. Pinch-pleat curtain panels are quiet, but a valance in a brighter shade complements the peach. Opposite bottom: Two young girls use this room when guests are not in residence, so the decor has a fresh, young feeling. A dropped ceiling light stands in for a lamp between the beds, and the striped coverlet fabric is used as ruffle trim on the white shams.





This photo: Asymmetrical windows are united and softened with a swag valance and long sheer curtain in this guest room. Opposite top: The mixture of fabrics—muted blue toile drapes, a buttery stripe blanket, and gold rug—adds visual interest. Opposite bottom: Dainty feminine details abound in every guest room, reflecting the homeowners' six daughters.







# S

Since Chris and Page Nassetta acquired their getaway house on the western shore of Chesapeake Bay eight years ago, their family has grown by leaps and giggles. Now, as if weekends and holidays here with six daughters ranging from 1 to 11 years old weren't active enough, friends and close colleagues of this sociable couple fill the house as well. "We have a guest cottage but needed more accommodations for houseguests in the main house," Page says. So a year ago their rambling 1941 house became even more rambling, with the addition of a large wing with two extra guest rooms. It also seemed the right time to redecorate a whole group of bedrooms.

There was no question what decorator to consult: Arlene Critzos of Annapolis, Maryland, has been both guru and partner in creating the Nassetts' warm, European-influenced home. "Many of the fabrics we chose for separate bedrooms actually worked together," Critzos says. "I wanted a certain flow among and between the rooms, even though three are downstairs and one is upstairs."

One day she and Page laid swatches of possible fabrics for each room on a single table. Critzos was well acquainted with her clients' preference for floral prints and cheerful colors—blues, greens, peaches, creams—all of which suit a house surrounded by gardens, water, and trees. Some fabrics they chose were strong, such as the dense





“We wanted a **BALANCE** between formal and relaxed—as much a **FEELING** as a look.”

—HOMEOWNER PAGE NASSETTA

blue-green print for a double-bed guest room with a lively floral rug. Some were more delicate, such as the lightly striped fabric that tops twin beds in pale peach-hued room. But they would clearly all get along as a family.

Further uniting and calming the style, walls of buttercream predominate throughout the house, and most of the bedrooms have simple sisal rugs. (“The older children like them because babies won’t crawl on them,” Critzos says with a grin.) Although all four redecorated bedrooms have good light, the peach upstairs room, with great views of the water, is the brightest. “The light here is so strong, the walls wanted some soft pattern,” Page says. The choice was a gentle wallpaper of peach-hued creatures on white. With its pretty white wood-and-cane beds, it’s a feminine retreat. “Two of our girls share it, except when it’s needed for company,” Page says.

Coordinating the redecorated bedrooms with the general mood of the house was an important goal. Perched on a 10-acre point, the slate-roof house of stone and cedar shakes has an old-world quality, enhanced by wood, stone, and wrought-iron embellishments. “It’s a very relaxed, natural environment,” Page says. In the bedrooms, a crisp coastal look blends with European elements such as iron beds and French-influenced painted furniture. Yet Critzos made sure each bedroom had its own soul, unpredictable and unique.





This photo: Intensely colorful, this bedroom is wrapped with botanical prints in deep blue. Opposite top: To balance the amount of pattern in the room, the coverlet and bed skirt match, and walls and furnishings are neutral. Opposite bottom: Each of the painted, marble-topped bedside stands holds a toile-covered lamp to coordinate with the bedcovering.





This photo: The master bedroom, separate from the guest rooms, was the least changed by redecoration. Structural repairs gave it a new ceiling and floors but left the old wood beams, which the homeowners liked for their brawn. Opposite top: Frilly and tasseled pillows are covered in a mix of rich brown and earthy gold to appeal to both feminine and masculine sensibilities. Opposite bottom: The whole master suite follows a European mentality with a pretty French country-style *armoire* and reproduction antique furniture.







“We wanted CRISP, pretty, orderly rooms—we’re ORDERLY people.” —PAGE NASSETTA



She achieved this, she says, “not by matching but by complex coordinating.” One of her hallmarks is “blending the new, the old, the frivolous, and the serious—for variety.” For example, a downstairs twin guest room with blue toile curtains has reproduction iron beds, antique nightstands, and a new, built-in dresser of dark walnut. Given the traditional touches, one might expect only framed art on the walls—but not here. The designer chose other eye-catchers, such as two wall-mounted, blue-and-white ceramic vases flanking a large window, each set under a stone plaque of cherubs. The vases contribute to an overall sense of order because they pick up on the room’s blue-and-white fabrics, and the plaques coordinate with its beige bedcovers. “Porcelain, plates, old mirrors, ironwork, these are all wonderful on walls,” Critzos says.

“Arlene really listened to what we wanted,” Page says. “And she perfectly captured the serene spirit of the place. When people arrive and plop down their weekend bags, they don’t think, *Wow, look at that knockout bed, or chair ...* or whatever. Instead they think, *Oh, what a comfortable, warm room.* It’s only later that the subtle details impress. And that’s exactly the feeling we wanted.”


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B:





Complex  
COORDINATING  
is far more  
interesting than  
straightforward  
matching.”

DESIGNER ARLENE CRIZOS

This photo: A delightful window seat provides a spot for the couple to perch and has an added benefit: stylish storage below. Opposite: Painted master bath cabinets continue the European-style treatment of the master bedroom into the bathroom.