

JANUARY 2009

House Beautiful

A CLEAN SLATE

TOP 10
DECORATING
MISTAKES
TOTALLY
FIXABLE!

IT STARTS WITH
YOUR CLOSET...

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REDECORATING

THE WHITE HOUSE



THERE'S NO CLEANER SLATE THAN WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE WHITE HOUSE ON JANUARY 20TH. TOO BAD EVERY FOUR YEARS THIS SYMBOL OF AMERICA GETS REDECORATED BACK TO THE FRINGE-CHOKED PAST. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF DESIGN. IF THE NEW FIRST FAMILY REPRESENTS THE FUTURE, WE BELIEVE THEIR HOME SHOULD BE PART OF THE MESSAGE.

"PURCHASE NEW WHITE HOUSE CHINA FROM TARGET!"

ERIC COHLER, NEW YORK



"First, let's open up those storage rooms and reuse things from former presidencies in a clean, fresh, new way. Using what you have, or buying vintage, is a great way to lessen your carbon footprint. Then, let's make some green choices, beyond just lightbulbs, like environmentally friendly paints for Sasha and Malia's rooms, or buying wares from local artisans so we know the wood and materials are environmentally sound and locally harvested."

NATE BERKUS, CHICAGO

"I would look to the original American furniture that's there and reinvent it in a modern way. Edit through the formality with easy, warm, casual elegance. Like the people moving in."

THOMAS O'BRIEN, NEW YORK

"As a native Washingtonian, I am predisposed to the historic fabric of this city. As a modernist with a penchant for white rooms whose vocabulary predominantly consists of antiques covered in muted palettes, this would be a most intriguing undertaking."

DARRYL CARTER, WASHINGTON

“First off, I would repaint the entire place. A color like Farrow & Ball’s Pointing. A softer, more up-to-date white.... And no more tumbling hotel/casket flower arrangements. Instead, masses of garden roses, peonies, tulips, or hydrangeas, in simple containers.”

RANDY POWERS, HOUSTON

“I would replace frou-frou damasks and silks with environmentally sustainable casual linens in an earthy brown palette, with accents in optimistic colors, like verdant green, lemon yellow, and tangerine.... Most important, I would create an amazing, relaxed, colorful multi-purpose space where they can really be a family and escape the demands of the world. Their love and commitment to one another will no doubt be his inspiration for all that he is embarking on.”

WINDSOR SMITH, LOS ANGELES

“I WOULD START WITH THE CARPETS.”

DAVID NETTO, NEW YORK

“Burn plenty of sage to get rid of all the negativity of the past eight years. Use a feng shui master to cleanse old energy and bring in fresh peace and balance. Work with an environmental auditor to ensure the health of the building and its green message. Install a home spa. The message of a healthy America begins at the top.”

CLODAGH, NEW YORK



1. 1961 KENNEDY
Red Room
2. 1960 EISENHOWER
Queen's Sitting Room
3. 1962 KENNEDY
Blue Room
4. 1968 JOHNSON
Green Room
5. 1979 CARTER
Treaty Room
6. 1991 BUSH
Blue Room
7. 1987 REAGAN
Red Room
8. 1994 CLINTON
Lincoln Sitting Room
9. 2005 BUSH
Lincoln Bedroom

THE WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (7); GETTY IMAGES (2); OBERTO GILI (8)

“The Obamas are the perfect imaginary clients. They have the confidence to mix it up and make it their own, but have a reverence for history. Let’s evict the Aubussons and put in something more clean and natural, replace the wood-framed settees with down-filled sofas, lose the passementerie and work with bolder geometrics and graphic tape trims.”

CELERIE KEMBLE, NEW YORK

“While our President-elect has come to represent a modern symbol of our country, I don’t think updating the White House necessarily means incorporating a Ron Arad aluminum lounge chair or a Donald Judd table in the Oval Office. The most elegant approach would be to introduce contemporary furniture (perhaps a Sam Maloof rocking chair) and artwork (a Jasper Johns American flag) while still maintaining a gracious and timeless sensibility. To me, that’s the essence of great American design.”

MADLINE STUART, LOS ANGELES

“I would start with a sustainable hemp print such as Carolina Irving’s Andaluz in the color Delft. It has the feeling of an old quilt with a modern twist. This fabric to me represents the approachable, easy charm that this young family radiates.”

PHOEBE HOWARD, ATLANTA