



# Room for your little princess

There is so much more to a girl's room than pink paint. Suja Natarajan suggests ways to make the best of any space to match your daughter's tastes.



**CALCULATED CHOICE** Choose colours that reflect your child's personality.

A little girl's bedroom is not just a place where she sleeps. It's a space where she spends most of her time at home. It's a place to study, play games, invite her friends over, read, keep her treasures... Such a space needs to be playful and comfortable - something that will reflect her spirit and individuality.

Decorating your little girl's room can be fun and if you're looking for inspiration to setup your princess's room, allow us to inspire you:

#### Have a plan

Before you buy furniture or choose a colour theme, the foremost thing to do is create a plan. "The idea would be to invest in a room where your child can stay for at least through college, although few things like personal paraphernalia is very individualistic and can change down the years. It's always better to have a basic plan for a bed, study and storage before you start choosing," says Neelu Jain Prasanna, director of Child Space, a studio that specialises in children's furniture. Measure the dimensions of the room and keep your child's age, interests and hobbies in mind before you zero in on a theme. It's a good idea to involve your child in the whole process.

#### Choose pivotal points

What catches your eye when you walk into

a room? This element is the room's focal point, which makes the room inviting. Use visual elements to make the room cosy and attractive.

You can draw focus to a room by using bold patterns over the headboard, colours, accessories or even furniture. A large mirror, photo collage, a rug and posters emphasise and create natural focal points in the room. Make sure the elements that you choose are in harmony with the room's theme, colour and furniture.

#### Bring on the hues

Choose colours that reflect your child's personality. Take the time to choose the right colour since it affects the mood of the child and has the power to uplift the look and feel of the space.

"One of the healthy trends that I have seen in the last few years is moving out of the pure colour fixation of pink and its family. Don't be stuck with the monotony of brown and cream, as it will be part of your child's life when she starts growing older. There are a host of other colours, which are unexplored - like the yellows, blues and oranges that make a room warm and attractive. Don't be afraid to choose multiple colours like light green and a hint of orange. You can have pink or lilac colours

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but with a lot of white to make it more appealing," says Neelu.

#### Utility factor

"Your plan for furniture depends on how much space you have. You should plan for a bed, keeping at least the next five years in mind. You could go for a twin-size or a queen-size bed, which would serve well for growing children as well as double up as a guest bed. Trundle beds are great space-savers. Storage plays an important part, especially in a girl's bedroom because of the various combinations of wardrobe that she may have. Look for a wardrobe that has ample shelf space and a good amount of space to hang clothes. Go for flexible study tables, or if there is a shortage of space, you could have corner units that work as a workstation-cum-study area," suggests Neelu.

#### Light it up

You have several creative options that you can choose from to light up your daughter's room. There are ceiling, pendant lights, wall, table and floor lamps and night-lights that offer excellent illumination and make the room visually interesting. Make sure you make a safe choice of lights and fixtures that are out of reach of your child.

"I would suggest having neutral white

light in the child's room because studying and playing are two main factors whether your child is eight or sixteen years old. White light brightens the setup. You could have a couple of decorative lights, if required, but multi-colours that have reds, blues or greens in the shades are not preferable. Too much of colour with less of white is also not appealing. Dress up the room with curtains and linen," says Neelu.

#### Personal touch

Make the room extra special for your little one by personalising it with creative and versatile décor. You have several options such as using decals that have fun prints and patterns, and they're easier to apply and remove. Mirrors, knick-knacks, rugs or runner for the floor, a photo collage and other unique pieces of art can make your child's room look one-of-a-kind.

Curtains give a sophisticated look to the room. Pick from a range of fun patterns and prints that are available in the market. You can also consider creating a small space to display your child's achievements and art projects.

#### Know your pocket

Setting up a room for your little princess needn't be overly expensive, but if you don't have a budget planned, it's easy to go

overboard. Plan a budget that you can afford before you set off for shopping.

"There's no end to the amount of things that you want in a child's room. It's certainly doable if you have a plan in place. Look at setting up the basics such as a bed, study table, and a wardrobe before you consider accessories like a bookshelf, side table or a dressing table," advises Neelu.

Turn a room into a unique haven for your child where she has a free reign in nurturing her hopes and dreams. Work with your child to decorate her space that will be worth the effort and time for years to come.

#### Keep in mind

- Create more room space by laying the bed, study table and wardrobe towards the wall side as opposed to centralising it.

- Ensure the furniture has rounded corners and is easily accessible to the child.

- Have enough natural light and plants that will create a positive environment.

- Always look for products that restrict the presence of germs and bacteria - things that are safe and less toxic for the child and the environment. For example, cotton durries, chemical-free paint, lightweight curtains.

# When profits can become sawdust

The key to profitable furniture is replication. Scott McGlasson has learnt this lesson over time, even as he tries to carve some exquisite chairs, learns Michael Tortorello

What is the value of a dining-room chair? You can't eat it. And you can sit on the floor free, as millions of people do. A chair is a luxury. But then what would be the right term to describe the real worth of a dining chair that sells for \$1,600? An extravagance? An obscenity? How about a pretty good deal?

Furniture maker Scott McGlasson, 48, professed a couple of goals last week when he set out to design a new chair in his shop, called Woodsport. He wanted a prototype that he could display in his booth at the Architectural Digest Home Design Show, which runs March 19 to 22 in Manhattan. And he wanted to create a piece that could match his easy chair (\$3,200) and chaise longue (\$8,900). He calls this furniture line "RB," for the running bond of two-inch-wide wood tiles that cover the seats like brickwork.

At the moment, the black walnut tiles were all Scott had - that and a pencil sketch on a piece of quarter-inch hardboard. A few days ago, he was laying out his high-tech design kit: a free pencil from Youngblood Lumber, a four-foot-long straight edge, a Starrett square, a bevel, a punched metal disc and a Pink Pearl eraser. The eraser was getting the heaviest use. He hadn't liked the hardboard template when he first drew it four months ago. And it hadn't improved through desuetude.

Ideally, when the chair was completed, it would be well proportioned, impeccably finished and sustainably sourced. It would express Scott's personal vision as a craftsman. Practically, the piece needed to be something he could build with about \$200 to \$300 worth of materials. And while the test model could take 40 hours to assemble, he would budget just half that time for the production version. (The chaise longue, by comparison, consumed 120 hours.)

Scott also obeyed an overarching imperative: The chair needed to make a profit, and a decent one at that. "I get hassled on price sometimes," he said. "Some people will say, 'Really, isn't that a little much?' And I'm like, 'What do you make?' I'm sure my hourly rate is a lot lower than theirs." Scott estimates that his hourly rate is \$85. But Woodsport is a one-man studio (at least until he hires a new assistant). This means that he spends hours of every workday answering sales inquiries, shipping finished work and posting promotional images on Instagram. In a sense, his hourly rate for this work is zero. "The only time I'm actually making money is when I'm standing at the lathe," Scott said.

This is the perverse economy of furniture making. A completed set of six chairs could run \$10,800. The federal poverty guideline for a one-person household is only \$1,000 more. "That kind of money is kind of insane," Scott said. "People say that to me all the time: 'I love your stuff. I wish I could afford it.' And I say, 'I wish I could, too.'"

Scott sometimes characterises his style, with its unfussy geometry and clean appearance, as "rustic modern." It's furniture he wants to make and furniture he can sell. And these two priorities are not necessarily in competition. For example, he likes to use logs that he collects with a local sawyer, a weathered maverick named Vince Von Vett - "Triple V" for short.

These are blowdowns from the lake country suburbs. It's environmentally sustainable, which makes a good story for the Woodsport website. And the harvesting gets him outside during the summer, which is where he wants to be. These are also the cheapest boards you can find. At the lumberyard, select-and-better-grade walnut costs \$6 to \$8 a board-foot. Triple V mills the trees for a



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quarter of that price. (Scott's own backbreaking labour is free.)

The tiles for the new dining chair came from field trips with the sawyer. And the fetching curls and burls in the grain looked like prisms under bright light. Another way to put this thought is that if your aesthetic doesn't jibe with your pricing, you're not a furniture maker. You're a contractor, spending half your workweek installing kitchen cabinets and constructing office tables off someone else's blueprints. Or you're a hobbyist.

Scott practised both of those occupations. And before that he, too, was a hobbyist. At that time, in his 20s, he was training to be a teacher. A perk of the job: free classes in the district's adult vo-tech programme. "I had no idea how a door was made," he said. His tastes were simple from the start. "I liked Donald Judd," he said, referring to the conceptual artist known for his boxes. "When your skills aren't that great, it's easy to look at Donald Judd and say, 'I can do that.'"

He built a bedroom set for himself and his wife, and then a crib. "I was sort of burning out on working with kids," he said. "I was having kids of my own." Then he met a Minneapolis architect who began giving him jobs in custom millwork and fabrication. He assembled reception desks (ramparts for corporate headquarters) and built-ins for condo conversions.

Scott didn't quit this trade so much as the trade quit him. "When the economy went in the tank, it really made me stop doing things the way I was working, building whatever came along," he said. For \$25 a week, he set up a table at the



**TO NAME IT** Scott characterises his style as "rustic modern".

Mill City Farmer Market, above the Mississippi riverfront. And he started hawking his original bowls, benches and cutting boards. Today, some of these early designs fill a showroom in his new wood shop. This is a five-room suite in a hulking old can-spraying factory, which he splits with four other woodworkers.

#### Show me the money

The key to profitable furniture is replication. He has learned to turn down commissions for one-offs. "If someone called me up and said, 'Can you make a bathroom vanity?' I wouldn't do it."

This standard would guide the model chair, too. "Yesterday, I might have been mired in a little self-doubt," Scott said. "And today I thought, that's the chair. Why is there always this effort to change it, to make it something it's not?"

To make it something it's not? The back slats would come from walnut he'd milled down to 1/16th-inch veneers. The concept was to laminate them with a very slight curve. He glued these sheets together and clamped them to a solid wood form. Next, he placed the form in a five-by-five-foot vacuum-sealer: a sous-vide bag for a side of elephant steak. The device cost \$1,000.

"This is a ton of work for a stupid little detail," Scott said. "The piece of wood that comes out of this is a lot stronger than if it was solid wood. So it can be thinner. It's a detail I like." Scott had selected the walnut boards he would be using for the frame. He began to trace the template in three parts: a back leg and post; a seat rail; and a front leg. The plan was to cut them out, join them, then tape the rough outline to the jig and rout the edges.

A router is a violent machine, Scott

said. And it makes a mess. The wood shavings will go in a two-cubic-yard Dumpster, with a haulage cost of \$100 a month.

If the chair were to enter his furniture line, Scott could farm out these parts to a CNC shop, a computer-controlled router that makes quick, cheap, identical cuts. But then Scott held strong preferences about how the figure of the wood should lie. And he wanted to avoid the imperfections.

You can't pay a computer to care about knots. Scott relies on other mechanical shortcuts without apology. "Machines are golden and they're expensive," he said. He swears by his timesaver: a belt sander he bought for \$4,500.

And the lathe, he added, "took me from a dude in a shop making whatever came along to a designer who was producing original work that people sought out to purchase." This machine is where he turns his popular tables and lamps, whose voluptuous bases suggest the bust mannequins at Lane Bryant.

Scott runs across plenty of Studio Craft furniture at American Craft Council shows, where he sometimes rents a booth. He can appreciate the technical proficiency that goes into melding six types of wood into a single table. He calls it "extreme woodworking" or "woodworking for woodworkers."

The credenza is one of Scott's best-sellers: a four-panel rectangular box on a stark steel or bronze frame. The corner door-pulls follow the natural wane, or curve, of the tree. The credenzas cost \$4,000 to \$7,000. Finishing credenza doors with a timesaver, in other words, leads to the appearance of timelessness.

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