TRICKS OF THE TRADE

They can punch up a room with a dash of paint and play fearlessly with scale and proportion. The best of designers can rearrange a room in a snap and breathe new life into a tired-looking boudoir. While we rely on their knowing eye to pull fabrics, measure curtains and estimate what it will take to recover Grandmother's Knole sofa, some of our favorite decorators really excel at wonderfully quirky, inventive touches that give a space character and charisma. We asked a few of this city's best design minds to share a few *trucs* of their trade.

BY LAURANN CLARIDGE

Chandos Dodson

Principal designer,
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I always incorporate some Deco pieces into my modern and contemporary house projects. They tend to tone down a room when it feels too stark. The patina of those pieces can add depth to a room.

I like to play with doors, painting them with a high-lacquer finish. It can warm up a modern look or add interest to a contemporary setting. It gives a room a subtle change, too, without blowing the budget.

Try using texture such as mother-of-pearl wallpaper, a high-gloss lacquer paint or grasscloth to warm a cool contemporary interior. Texture is one of the most important elements of good design.

When designing a bathroom, tiling it floor to ceiling isn't only functional but can make the room feel larger. I prefer to use the same material on the floor and walls but change the pattern or direction in which it's laid.