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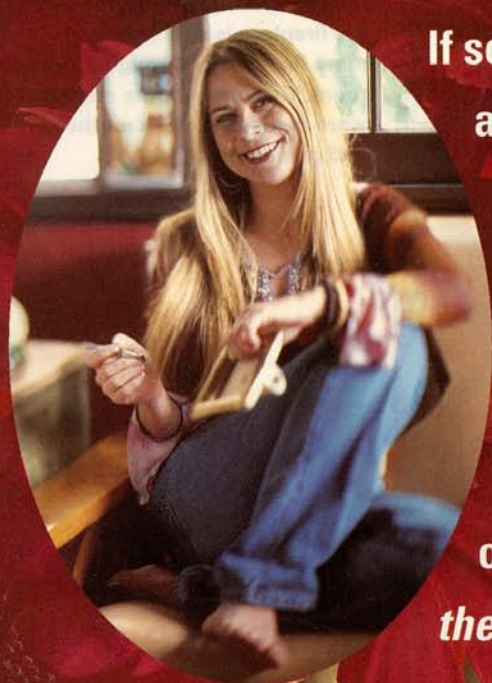
EXCLUSIVE Anita Rosenberg
Designer to the Stars **FREE PATTERN**



Good

Artist Anita Rosenberg's California home resonates with color and pattern.

Vibrations



If some of the furnishings in artist **Anita Rosenberg's** Hollywood, California, home look familiar, it might be because you have seen them on your favorite television shows. Her handpainted furniture and accessories have appeared on the sets of *Friends*, *The Practice*, and *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch*, among others.

Anita found her house, a turn-of-the-20th-century Spanish-style bungalow overlooking the famed Hollywood sign, through a newspaper ad. Once a guest or carriage house that was part of a larger estate, it had charming features and looked to be sound. "I found it right after the big earthquake (the Northridge quake of 1994)," she recalls. "I figured it was still standing, so I might as well move in."

When she moved in, so did her new business, Anita Rosenberg Studio. At first, her home doubled as living and work space. "The studio was in the basement, and the living room was my shipping/receiving area," she says. "I had no life!"

After she moved her business to a studio a few minutes away, she began focusing on making her house a home. With her land-

lord's permission, she repainted the pale-pink walls in vivacious colors, including bright orange, sunny yellow, regal purple and deep rose. "I wanted to give the rooms some personality," she says. She didn't stop at the walls, painting plain window shades with cabbage roses and fruit motifs and coating the once-white fireplace with gold metallic paint to highlight the details. Today, her home has become her sanctuary.

SHE OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES

An artist all her life, Anita holds a degree in welded metal sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute and one in film from New York University. After film school (where she was a classmate of acclaimed director Spike Lee), she wrote and directed two cult classics, *Modern Girls* and *Assault*



A table crafted by artist and friend Tony Mack serves as a nightstand on which Anita displays part of her collection of seashell-studded boxes and a lamp she designed and painted. The curtain fabric is actually part of an Indian sari.



To give the living room a more regal feel, Anita painted the walls a deep magenta and the fireplace mantel and trim gold. In feng shui, hanging a mirror over the fireplace is said to reflect more fire energy throughout the room. The vases on the mantel were made by Anita's mother and grandmother.

"I like to think of myself as the Ralph Lauren of the funky set."

of the *Killer Bimbos*, in the late 1980s.

That accomplished, she yearned to express herself in another medium, so she began making painted furniture. In 1994, a buyer for Universal Studios saw her work and hired her to create three-dimensional frames to tie in with the premiere of *The Flintstones*. She enjoyed mixing media to create the functional pieces and was hooked.

"I put everything on frames, starting with martini glasses and tiki figures, little kooky things," Anita says. A call from her sister, also an artist, turned her on to painting candlesticks, and she soon was creating a

range of painted home accessories, from occasional tables and lamps to mirrors and bowls.

Painted in richly layered colors, the pieces incorporate floral and animal motifs, dots and swirls, fruit and more, with collections designed to mix and match. Her inspiration ranges from graffiti art to fabric swatches. "I like to think of myself as the Ralph Lauren of the funky set," Anita says.

INSPIRATION NEAR AND FAR

Not one to skimp on color, Anita follows the same approach when it comes to acces-

sorizing her rooms and enjoys surrounding herself with meaningful objects. "I am definitely not a minimalist," she says. "It is a little cluttered, but it feels warm to have things around you that you love."

Among her treasures are many pieces crafted by friends and family members, including vases made by her mother and grandmother, and a rooster woodcut made by an uncle. She also enjoys traveling and makes sure to pick up a special souvenir of each trip. "It doesn't have to be expensive," she says. "I like to collect mementos that mean something to me."



The rooster and hen on the shelf of the vintage stove are part of Anita Rosenberg Studio's Black and White Toile collection, perhaps inspired by the rooster woodcut made by her Uncle Dave (she built the frame). The stove, which was there when Anita moved in, fits well with her collection of kitschy salt and pepper shakers.

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In one case, a vacation inspired the decor of an entire room—her "Indonesian princess" bedroom. The centerpiece of the room, a Balinese bed swathed in mosquito netting, pops out against a background of orange walls. Silk pillow covers she picked up on her trip punctuate the white bedding with color, as do the Vietnamese paper lanterns dangling from the bedpost. For curtains, Anita purchased colorful silk saris from an Indian market in Los Angeles. "Hot colors in Bali were orange, green and white," she says. "This room reminds me of my trip, and it's so cozy to be in there."

She also heads to local swap meets and flea markets to hunt for the unusual. "I'm a big collector," says Anita, who gathers everything from inexpensive refrigerator magnets to highly sought "outsider" art from the South. "I don't care if I'm early (when arriving at the market)," she says. "The stuff I like, no one else wants. I look for things that are really kitschy." Some finds grace her home; others are used in her artwork. When she found an old three-dimensional fruit plaque, she painted it and added a funky frame. The piece now hangs in her kitchen.



According to a feng shui practitioner Anita consulted, her laundry room is located in the "love area" of her home. So, she painted it bright pink and added painted roses to the window shades. Dangling from a flamingo that once adorned her grandma's lawn is a crystal, which is said to activate positive energy.

happy MISTAKES

When it comes to painting furniture and accessories, Anita insists there are no rules. "If there are, you should break them," she says. "Sometimes the best things you do are happy mistakes." She has a book coming out in the spring of 2002, *The Art of Painted Furniture* (Sterling/Chapelle), but here Anita reveals a few tips to get you started:

- **USE WHAT YOU HAVE.** Start with a piece in your home that you don't like or even rescue something from the trash. Just play with it, painting and repainting, if need be, until you have something you love.
- **PAINT WITH LAYERS.** It gives extra texture and depth. Anita often uses a darker color as the base coat, then, with a very soft brush, adds a lighter top color, putting it on in a wispy manner. This technique makes pieces look worn and weathered, like a pair of old jeans.
- **USE METALLICS.** Apply them over a base coat of black to counter their translucence or apply them in layers, such as silver over pewter or bronze over gold, for a rich look. Anita recommends premixed acrylics for their ease of use and wide range of color.
- **MIX ELEMENTS.** Find different motifs and put them together. Some florals, like roses, are very feminine. To make a piece more gender neutral, use dashes, dots and leaves. Mix in animal prints. Organic things work well together. Look through home magazines and mail-order catalogs for ideas, and even study fashion magazines to get inspired by fabrics.



In the corner of the dining room, Anita hung a funky dimensional wooden box she made to house her expanding collection of tiki statues.

"I put everything on frames, starting with martini glasses and tiki figures, little kooky things."

A BUNDLE OF ENERGY

This openness to reinterpretation also allowed her to explore a new decorating avenue. After taking a class in feng shui, she hired an expert to arrange her home and studio according to the principles of the ancient Chinese art of adapting your surroundings to promote success in life.

She decided to pick and choose which tenets to follow, sometimes making big changes, such as painting the laundry room bright pink to activate the "love area" in the home, or little ones, such as hanging purple towels in the bathroom to activate the "fame area" or moving a bench to a more favorable location. "The most important thing (in

feng shui) is that there is a physical flow through the house," Anita says. "It should feel comfortable to you."

The combination of modern art, off-the-wall collectibles and ancient philosophy is effective, for Anita as well as her guests. "When people walk into my house, they just feel the energy," she says. "It's warm and inviting, colorful, fun and playful, and I like to think that I am those things also." ♦

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FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 68.



For patterns of Anita's famous Rustic Rose, see page 67.

