

11 Daring Interior-Design Moves

Edwardian wall treatments? Earth-packed floors? An all-cork library? Decorators open up about their dream projects

By SARAH MEDFORD

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DRAPE EXPECTATIONS | Houghton Hall in Norfolk, England *François Halard/Trunk Archive*

DECORATORS HAVE RICH inner lives. They're forever entertaining fantasies about rooms they worship and yearn to recreate, materials they dream of using and techniques they ache to try. Sometimes these ideas tack a little wide of convention, but inspired thinking usually does. We polled pros on the riskiest, and most rewarding, moves they've made on the job—plus a few they haven't taken yet but absolutely would for the right client who's willing to take a chance. (Maybe that's you?) Here's a sampling.

"I long to copy the box-pleated damask wall curtains in the Yellow Drawing Room at Houghton Hall [shown here]."

— Todd Klein

"I want to do a library made entirely of carved cork—cornices, shelves, the entire room. I have a sample, but no one will take the leap!"

— Steven Gambrel

"Mirrored ceilings are associated with love hotels and casinos and can connote sleaziness—but they can also be wildly effective. I mirrored the ceiling of a dark, paneled library. The result was stunning."

— William Georgis

"People see wood and they think it's precious, but I don't care if Grinling Gibbons carved your chairs, I will suggest painting them chalky white. The carving will pop."

—Miles Redd

"I love to hang pictures on doors—they look like they've become part of the wall."

— Milly de Cabrol

"I'm a huge fan of the low dining table, about 26 inches high—the norm is 28 to 30 inches. It's an incredibly comfortable height."

— Shawn Henderson

"I've carpeted a complete bedroom. I ran it over the baseboard and a custom, round platform bed, up walls, over benches and side tables."

— Julie Hillman

"I've always wanted to cover doors with auto-body paint so they'd be indestructible and the lacquer would actually reflect your image. And I've done it."

— Richard Mishaan

"Years ago in Vogue I saw a padded leather dressing room—I'm stealing the idea for a powder room."

—Katie Ridder

"One day, I want to do a house with a packed dirt floor and concrete slab walls and wood window shutters...no glass. An open pavilion, filled with rugs and kilims—like the interior of a Bedouin tent."

—Roman Alonzo, Commune

"I have been trying to convince one client to make her small Jeff Koons dog sculpture into a lamp. Jeff Koons approved the idea, but she has not."

—Thomas Jayne

This article is part of the [Off Duty 50: Spring Adventures](#), a guide featuring 50 gutsy ways to shake up the season. [Click here](#) to see the full list.

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