



Bringing Up Baby in Style

A designer creates a chic “green” nursery (no themes allowed!) for her first child.



MEGAN SWOYER | Posted on Dec. 13, 2010

When interior designer Sally Matak found out she was going to have a baby, a question instantly popped into her head: “How will I design his bedroom?” The Bloomfield Township, Mich.–based designer quickly went to work on her plan for the yet-to-be-born baby Theo.

“I wanted clean lines, because that’s the aesthetic we like,” recalls Matak, who owns [MATAKdesign](#). “No teddy bear, cowboy or frog themes for us.”

That’s a far cry from the bedroom Matak had as a little girl growing up in Ontario, Canada. “As a kid,” she says, “I had this wallpaper that was primarily green with a woodland theme . . . cute little animals like squirrels and beavers — really!”

“Once we knew about Theo, there was no question but that we were going green,” she says. That commitment enhances her home’s overall vibe. “We like to use natural materials throughout the house, like wood and stone,” she notes. Natural fiber rugs and drapes also add to the mix.

For Theo’s room, Matak set her sights on a cheerful, graphic appeal, including jaunty stripes, fresh polka dots and bright colors. “A happy look was key,” she says, “since we have some gloomy days here in Michigan, in the way of long winters and lots of snow.”

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When it came to wall colors, Matak gave the crib wall a vibrant blue-striped motif, while a “quieter” blue was selected for the remaining walls. “That way, the window treatments, artwork and accent wall could really pop.” Both blues are reminiscent of the Caribbean Sea. For sheen, she used eggshell. “For kids’ rooms, an eggshell finish is a must,” she notes. “There’s a slight hint of a shine, and it holds up better for cleaning.”

The blue wall colors enabled Matak to harmonize the scheme with decorative punches of orange and lime green offset by whites. Espresso wood floors and window trim provide a rich, warm tone and run throughout the home. “I love the contrast, but the man who worked on our floors wasn’t too happy when I asked him to dye the floors this dark color. After all, the darker the stain, the harder the work,” recalls Matak.

The Details

As for wall art, Matak and her husband, Bill Ladouceur, wanted their baby to see happy photos as soon as he wakes up. Matak recommends that picture frames within a room be the same style. “White frames are fresh,” she says, “and black-and-white images don’t fight with the other colors in the room.”



One of Theo’s most treasured pastimes is sitting on Mom’s lap in the rocker, which once was a 1970s brown-beige, golden-oak “beauty.” “The chair was Bill’s grandma’s chair and had these strange arm covers and a horrible tweed seat that was prickly to sit in,” says Matak. During the design process, Ladouceur mentioned that he’d like the rocker to adorn the nursery. “He doesn’t ask for much,” Matak says, “so I thought, why not?”



Matak gave it a design face-lift, and today the chair takes center stage with a heavy-duty cotton viscose blend that’s a combination of cut-pile and woven materials.

Photos ©2009 Gene Meadows

Beyond refurbishing pieces, Matak tried to order many of the room's adornments from companies based in Michigan. "That keeps the travel distance to a minimum, conserving fuel and energy, and helps support my home state."

The Michigan-made, French-style closet doors by [Milliken Millwork, Inc.](#), feature glass inserts. A pendant-style light from [Stonegate Designs](#) in St. Joseph, Mich., adds a warm glow.

Most of the furniture (crib, changing table and dresser) is from [DaVinci](#), which uses a sustainable pine and wood composite and non-toxic finishes that are lead- and phthalate-free. Matak found shelving that was just right for the room's design from [The Container Store](#) for a very reasonable price.

The striped rug, from [The Land Of Nod](#), is made of natural materials, including a high-quality blend of Indian and New Zealand wool.

Today, little Theo basks in a nursery that's all about hip-meets-practical. As he grows, Matak and her husband will have to make only a few adjustments, such as turning Theo's crib into a toddler bed. "We bought that particular crib because it's transformable," Matak says.

As Theo's theme is "no-theme," Matak is sure she'll get a long life out of her design selections. "I think the paint colors are something he may want to keep until he goes to college."

Eco-Chic Ideas and Products for the Home

- Before choosing interior paints, review their VOC (volatile organic compounds) ratings and choose those that are low- or zero-VOC, such as Harmony®, Duration Home® and ProGreen™ 200.
- Consider wool when choosing textiles. It's a natural, fire-retardant fabric that wears well and is easy to clean. Sisal and jute area rugs are also great ways to bring natural products into the home. Plus, they're very durable.
- Matak uses one in the hallway that leads to her dog run. It cleans up easily, hides dirt and retains its beauty.
- Look for linens made from bamboo and organic cotton — the feel is luxuriously soft.
- Try to buy from local manufacturers that use sustainable fabrication processes and recycle their waste.
- Replace traditional wax candles with soy candles. Not only do they burn better, but they don't pollute indoor air.

Caribbean Blues

To create this seashore look using Sherwin-Williams hues, Matak recommends:

- Soar SW 6799
- Quench Blue SW 6785
- Pool Blue SW 6944
- Briny SW 6755
- Oceanside SW 6496

Gene Meadows, architectural and fine art photographer, creates "Images that Inspire" for magazines, architects, interior designers and custom commissions across the U.S. and internationally.

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