

Inside Pandora's Box

For this collector, a luxurious bed and lavish bath is all in the textiles

BY JICKIE TORRES

Pandora searches the world over for antique textiles and believes in using fine bedding and trousseau linens atop her bed everyday.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE PERFECT BEDROOM. HOWEVER, what defines perfect is not only quite personal, but according to Pandora de Balthazar, owner of Antique European Linens, quite often overlooked.

Balthazar's home is a decadent and multilayered retreat. What she considers most important in the home—the bedroom and bath—never skimps on the textural indulgences of richly swathed pillow tops, finely draped windows and most importantly, comfortable spots for sleep and rest.

With a philosophy that declares the bed should be “a haven welcoming you with open arms” and a lifestyle of comfort that she says everyone deserves, Pandora shares her tips, ideas and inspirations.



Pandora loves the look and feel of fine antique linens.

RH: What is your philosophy/inspiration when it comes to creating a rich and luxurious haven in the bed and bathrooms?

Pandora: Personal comfort is the most important to me. I view the bedroom from the interior of my bed, and I view the bathroom from the Jacuzzi and from the shower. Then, I imagine feeling luxurious, cherished and protected. From this vantage point, I begin the planning process. For me, personal luxury is a necessity.

RH: How do you accomplish your room's transformation?

Pandora: Color choices, along with my furniture or accessories and art; I

begin with those which I simply cannot live without. I discount everything else until I decide what single thing, color, treasure or feeling I want to convey for myself, and from this platform I can view the bedroom and the bathroom and know what I need.

RH: Do you have tips for creating that decadent retreat?

Pandora: My first recommendation is to get into your bed, find the most comfortable spot, and dream. Close your eyes and imagine awakening to the room you would be overjoyed to see each morning. How do your sheets feel? If they don't feel wonderful, buy new ones. You spend a third

of your life in bed, so put your money where your body lies.

Once those details are taken care of, lie back and enjoy the view: Is it soft, clean, simple, elaborate, dark or light? Is it friendly and relaxed or picture perfect? What is the last thing you see at night, and the first thing you see when you awaken? How does that make you feel?

RH: What are your top five ways to use textiles to enhance the luxury of a bed and bath?

Pandora: Textiles can provide visual beauty, texture, depth and privacy, and create interest in rooms that often are full of fixtures that seem to take priority.



pillows and throws than on the items that support and comfort.

RH: There is a certain decadence to fine linens and textiles that makes decorating with them so satisfying. For someone on a budget or just getting brave enough to splurge, where are the best places to begin?

Pandora: As my mother always said, if you can only have one dress, make it the best one you can buy.

In the order of importance:

Down-mattress pad and sleeping system, topped with a light duvet to control temperature.

Cover with two fitted sheets of the highest thread count.

A top sheet...preferably 1,000 thread count but anything 600 and better is good by me. It should make you feel caressed. Nothing else is worth your money.

Then, top with a voile or batiste coverlet, or a lace, cutwork or openwork blanket cover that allows it to breathe. Fresh linen, fresh air and sunshine at least twice a week take a tiny budget a very long way.

Then, pick either your window or your bed, and add some lace—its depth and beauty is incredible sparkling in the light.

Most of all create a budget and seek a professional who truly knows bed-

(Left) Pandora uses lace linens as throws for a soft touch in the bathroom.

(Below) Pandora's new line of lavender products add to the luxury of the bath.



Café curtains create a soft realm of privacy, yet bring light into a room.

To keep my body cool and keep my sleep uninterrupted, bedding has to be light, yet warm; soft, yet cool. My all-down mattress pad makes the bed sleep (and look) like a million dollars.

I use only a top sheet and an [uncovered] duvet. So, for show, I take my most beautiful, but lightweight textile to use as a daytime blanket cover.

I drape my most important pieces where I see them when I awaken.

I take gently used textiles and make bed skirts, café curtains, pillow shams, or sheet shams to continue their lifeline.

I cover upholstered beds with textiles, easily changing a room from contemporary to ethnic, light to dark, summer to winter, or neutral to colorful.

RH: When creating this rich and textured atmosphere, what is most often overlooked?

Pandora: For me, the most often overlooked part of the bedroom is the inside of the bed—the infrastructure! Most people spend more money on the decorative



A lightweight textile acts as a daytime blanket cover.



Café curtains are *de rigueur* in my home. Plus, I can recycle those for use in the bedrooms and as door treatments when necessary.

I make shower curtains or drapes from antique sheets or bedcovers that are too small for today's large beds. It's a beautiful and simple look.

RH: Are there any other elements or inspirations that you may have?

Pandora: There aren't any 'wrongs' when it comes to making your own home beautiful, but it is terribly wrong in my opinion to neglect the comfort and rejuvenation the body needs. Textiles provide texture, color, beauty, art and can absorb noise, create comfortable surfaces, and provide tactile beauty that a rested body can enjoy. Make sure the beauty within matches the beauty on the outside.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL BOLIN

(Left) Pandora uses an open-work blanket cover to allow antique linens to breathe.

(Below) A bathroom, designed by Charlotte Commer, integrates delicate ribbon in a unique way.

ding, textiles and will learn who you are and what your tactile values are. They can assist in selecting pieces that will fit your lifestyle, your pocketbook and most of all, the enjoyment your body and mind deserve.

RH: What are some of your favorite unexpected ways to decorate with textiles?

Pandora: I love to create a white background and apply textiles of color to recreate my favorite moods or seasons. Another is to take antique shams and make slipcovers— instant gratification! Napkins make wonderful TV-tray covers. I use hand towels to make slipcovers, bed skirts, window treatments, and as floor cloths next to my bed and as hand towels. That's recycling.

RH: In the bathroom, where people often don't think of textiles and linens, what are some of your favorite ways to use fabric?

Pandora: Hand towels are in residence daily. They are softer [than paper towels], have many uses and are much more genteel.



Generous use of linens like the billowing panels here add a decadent ambience to the room.