october inspiration... orange born again!

The color orange has gotten a bad rap. Think of the color orange of the 60's...the orange on the Twister Board...clean, vibrant and swinging. Then came the 70's, and like most other design in that decade, it went to hell in a hand basket (If you don't believe me, walk on any college campus and look at the buildings that were constructed during the seventies. That pretty much sums up the design aesthetic of the time. It was pretty grim). When they started manufacturing appliances in colors such as Harvest Gold, Avocado, and Burnt Orange, there wasn't a chance. Color had taken a nose dive.

Once the hippie culture moved in and orange became the equivalent of a psychedelic color, it officially became the *Bad Boy* of color. Now it symbolized not only bad looking appliances and bad shag carpet, but it also became associated with LSD and bad acid trips (remember Peter Max?). Orange was doomed.

I have a personal interest in the color orange as it played a large part in my past. As I have mentioned before, I am the oldest of five daughters. As only tween girls will do, we pressed our father to come up with his favorite color. Of course, he really didn't have one, but did we believe that? *NO!* In our young, female minds, everyone had a favorite color, who wouldn't? After tag team torture, and in a very weak moment, he finally gave in and said, "Well...I like orange". That said, going forward, like the Dutch, orange became the official color of my Dad. From that moment on, any gift he was given by any of us, was purchased in the color orange. Orange as in peach, coral, pumpkin, apricot, melon, cantaloupe, tangerine, and salmon. My mother even surprised my Dad and had their Master Bedroom painted peach! It was really too much, but dear old Dad, sucked it up and never complained. He took it like a man!
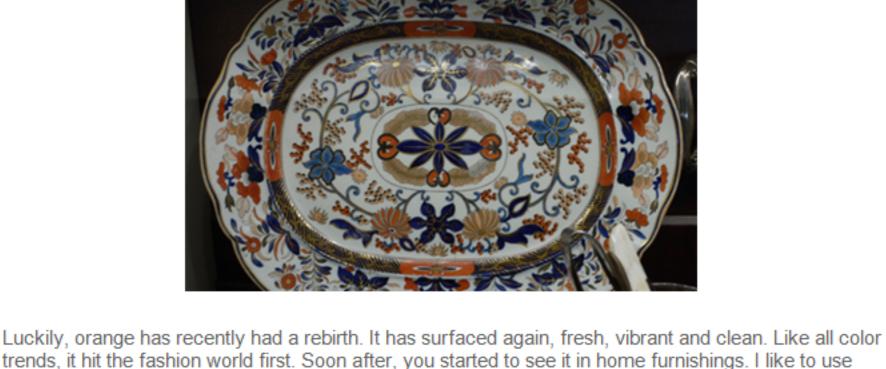
In fairness to my Dad, he identified with the true orange of the Twister game (being a pro at the Twist), but his daughters kept that love alive for two decades, and because of that, he had to endure a lot of Pumpkin and Terracotta cords and sweaters. Twenty years later, he fessed up and admitted that he really didn't like orange *that* much, but since we all seemed so "committed to it", he didn't want to disappoint. By that time, giving up orange as his favorite color would have seemed the equivalent of spitting on the family crest.

After the 70's, orange took a snooze and other than my Dad, you didn't see much of it. It needed a long dose of rehab before it was ready to take a step out into the world again, which it did, but not until a few years ago. There is a scene in the movie *The Blind Side* where Sandra Bullock (who plays a decorator), after being told by her adopted son he was considering the University of Tennessee as a college option, said, "Ok, but I will never wear anything with those colors. *Orange is NOT on my color wheel.*" For many years, a lot of designers felt the same.

On my bucket list, I had long wanted to design a room in orange and grey...I was inspired years ago vising Paris in the summer. If you have ever been on the Right Bank in the summer months, you might remember noticing the warm limestone greys of the Beaux-Arts Architecture, accented with deep red-orange awnings...*so very chic.*

Recently, my dream came true. We designed a dining room with lacquered walls in a shade of deep, dark persimmon, using a warm medium grey and a very deep chocolate brown as the supporting colors. Our clients owned three large scaled Chinese Ancestor prints and we hung them in the dining room. They added strong colors of peacock blue, gold and black against the wall color. At night, when the lights are turned down low, candles flickering, and the table is set with a tabletop of navy, orange and gold Mason ware, it is *magnificent*! It takes a client who is willing to throw a little caution to the wind and trust their designer to agree to paint their walls dark high gloss orange. (Thank you, T&T, for taking that leap with me!).

Luckily, orange has recently had a rebirth. It has surfaced again, fresh, vibrant and clean. Like all color trends, it hit the fashion world first. Soon after, you started to see it in home furnishings. I like to use orange, as I do black, for an accent color. It makes most other colors "pop". Thrown into a room of neutrals or against a background of deep, dark shades, it is a wonderful twist (no pun intended). It has proudly reclaimed its place as a secondary color on the official color wheel. *Orange really is the new black!*

Happy Halloween!

President

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