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Passion for red

The color of fire, lipstick and roses can be the spark that ignites a great room

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Designer Alessandra Branca, famous for her use of red in interiors, gives her ideas for using different shades of red to decorate your home. (Josh McHugh photo / February 15, 2012)

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A touch of red

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By [Cindy Dampier](#), Tribune Newspapers
February 15, 2012

Alessandra Branca knows from red. The designer has famously put her stamp on beautiful rooms from Chicago and New York to Rome, many of them tempered with the color that has become her signature. "Red, in all its versions, is my favorite color," she says, "because it seems to signify life. It exudes tremendous energy and passion."

Which is why, if you're longing to add a little red to your home, Branca's just the designer to offer ideas.

Place you would avoid using red:

I would say a kitchen would not be the right place as they say that red will encourage an appetite and that is one thing I need no more encouragement with!

Favorite red for any space:

A coral/Pompeian red seems to be my go-to color. It looks great everywhere and seems to please most anyone.

How would you use ...

A bright coral red?

As an accent against taupe and dark gray or pale blue and white. In each case it gives life to the other colors, and is very chic for a bedroom or living room. I am inclined to use red as an accent in both these cases. Using it on a pair of occasional chairs, an ottoman or just pillows ... just like a great spice, a little goes a long way.

A true lipstick red, with blue undertones?

With black and white, it's a classic combo. For a bar or lounge-y space, I might do the millwork in black lacquer and then using the red to accentuate the depth. Playing with graphic patterns of black and white and touches of red, again in good measure.

A deep, plummy, wine red?

With a mossy green and camel in a library with dark walnut. Maybe as a paisley on the sofa. There are many great paisleys that combine these colors.

A brownish, earth-toned red?

With chocolate brown in a library or living room. I have loved mixing terra cotta with chocolate brown, it's always something unexpected but very soothing. I recently designed a dining room in these colors and it is great. Very clean, warm and chic.

Any other favorite red color combos?

The other red combo I do love is every combination of red, blue and white with touches of black. A very successful and iconic combination you can use almost anywhere.

Best way to sneak in some red, if your partner doesn't love it:

I would do porcelains, or lampshades and possibly find artwork that has some red. It never hurts to also simply buy a mass of red roses at Costco and throw them in a simple vase to create a moment of special drama.

If all else fails, three best ways to wear red:

I rarely wear all red but do wear red lipstick, red scarves and of course red toe polish! I think that you can always incorporate red into your wardrobe, any time of the year. It adds the zip that gives everyone looks for. You can adjust the tone of red based on the season and go warmer reds to corals in summer and bluer reds in winter.

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