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# LA VIE EN ROSE



Just how happy can one home be? Designer Suellen Gregory finds out by cranking up the pink—and the pretty—in a Virginia townhouse that's as buoyant and mood-boosting as a glass of rosé Champagne.

The center parlor of a Richmond, Virginia, home decorated by Suellen Gregory is painted in a custom high-gloss pink from Fine Paints of Europe. The sofa in Kravet's Stone Harbor linen heightens the lively mood. **OPPOSITE:** "I obviously don't take myself very seriously!" says homeowner Katie Ukrop about the children's art and framed Fisher-Price toy showcased on the glossy pink shelves.





A Montferrat chandelier by Vaughan and vintage chairs in Chivasso's Fancy Flower frame the view to the living room. Lamp, Shades of Light. **OPPOSITE:** In the living room, CB2 sofas in Kravet's Bacio and curtains in a Dedar fabric ground delicate pink accents like a Kate Spade New York table lamp from Visual Comfort.

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Katie Ukrop thought she had her passion for pink in check. Then she met the interior designer Suellen Gregory. And before her family knew what hit them, the deep gray walls of their 19th-century townhouse in Richmond, Virginia, had turned a gleaming pastel pink.

It seemed only fitting. Gregory explains her client's rosy outlook this way: "If Katie has a sweater over her shoulders, it's pink. If she buys a handbag, it's going to be pink." It was obvious that her home should be awash in stunning blush tones as well.

Ukrop has always been known for her sense of flair. She owns a well-regarded local art gallery and is the

creative force behind Richmond's funky Quirk Hotel. "She is tall, blonde, and gorgeous, with wonderful, effortless style," Gregory says.

But at home, Ukrop had long surrounded herself with neutrals (mostly black, white, and gray), which she felt provided the best backdrop for the contemporary art she loves to collect. Gregory believed her vivacious client needed a home more in keeping with her effervescent personality.

As a start, she nudged Ukrop into choosing a dramatic, overscale botanical fabric—Schumacher's Pyne Hollyhock Print—for the windows in the dining room. Seeing the fabric cascade 12 feet from ceiling to floor, the client had a sudden change of heart. "Those curtains were my aha! moment," Ukrop says. In fact, she was so delighted

with them that she invited the whole neighborhood over to celebrate the curtain raising.

Soon after, she and her husband, Ted, undertook a renovation of their home. They added a master bedroom upstairs, painted the floors gray, and created a sunroom where their teen daughters, Emma and Flora, could relax and hang out with their friends.

Gregory saw her opening and convinced her clients to embark upon an extensive and exuberant decorating reboot. She began by wrapping the walls of the sunroom with a pale rose wallpaper emblazoned with a lavish pattern of foliage and flowers, slipcovering a bright pink sofa, and reupholstering modern armchairs in a pattern straight out of an English garden. At the same time, the center parlor between the



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living and dining rooms—once subdued in gray walls—was transformed into the high-gloss, geranium-pink heart of the house. "David Hicks was my inspiration," says Gregory, referencing the late British designer. "He made pink look important and deliberate. For him, pink was anything but sweet."

Contrary to her concerns that colorful decor would clash with artwork, Ukrop discovered that her home's new palette actually enhanced her paintings and photography. In the living room, for instance, the floral bolsters on the silver love seats perfectly balance the liveliest hues in the large abstract painting by Peter Fowler. And if her family was bemused by their home's makeover—"Flora at first said, 'Oh, Mom, really?'" Ukrop admits—by the end even the teenagers were impressed.

Gregory's favorite memory of the project is watching the painters leave each night splashed and speckled in Ukrop's favorite shade. "It's so funny to see them now on other jobs wearing their pink-stained work boots," she says.

And today, the pink room—as the family has dubbed it—has been deemed

a huge success. "We always seem to end up there," says Ukrop. Even Jane, the family's Cavalier King Charles spaniel, can usually be found there, snoozing on a chair next to Ted as he reads the morning paper. Ted does confess to having set up a man cave in the garage but insists it's only because his TV got banished from the parlor. "I live in a girls' world," he says with a smile.

The Ukrops recently threw a graduation party for Emma, who will soon be heading off to college. To Gregory, the easygoing atmosphere in the house that day epitomized the family's joie de vivre. "Their home exuded happiness, and everyone there could feel it," she says. "I think Katie has come to trust both her taste and my advice. These days, if I'm over there, the family knows there may be trouble brewing!"

The dining room's vintage chairs are painted a high-gloss white to contrast with seats covered in Designers Guild's Cheviot. Floors here and throughout the house are painted in Gray Owl by Benjamin Moore mixed with clear stain. **OPPOSITE:** Dining room curtains in Schumacher's Pyne Hollyhock Print sparked the home's ebullient new decor. A French bench is covered in Fabricut's Provost. Walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Brilliant White.





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
The 1892 townhouse is surrounded by homes of a similar age in a Richmond neighborhood called the Fan District. The master bedroom's walls and ceiling are covered in Colefax and Fowler's Bowwood wallpaper; Thomas O'Brien's Paolo sconce is topped with a pink shade. Katie and Ted Ukrop in the garden with their daughters, Emma and Flora, and their dog, Jane. Nina Campbell's Ornella wallpaper contrasts with the powder room's bright pink curtain.



Shelves filled with Ukrop's collection of ironstone china decorate the new mudroom, which doubles as a place to arrange flowers. Her favorite pale pink geraniums inspired some of the hues in the house. A Kohler sink and faucet and Carrara marble countertop match the vintage look of the space.



The teen-friendly sun-room looks like an indoor garden, with Meadow wallpaper by Peter Fasano on a custom pink ground. Soft pillows in Kathryn M. Ireland's Greta linen add verve to the CB2 charcoal sofa. The mirror is from Mirror Image Home. Visual Comfort's Pimlico swing-arm sconce provides ample light for evening homework assignments. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



# SUE GREGORY

on color



**Oddest thing you've color-matched:** Pink honeysuckle. When the blooms open, you see this fabulous mango yellow inside the petals.

**Colorful accessory you always wear:** My uniform is usually black pants with a white shirt, so I bring the color with shoes. Right now, I'm into green patent-leather Belgian loafers.

**How do you paint-test?** I make poster-board samples and view them in daylight, at night, and even on a cloudy day before making the final call.

**Colored lightbulbs in low wattages: yea or nay?** Never tried them. But I scour flea markets for pink handkerchiefs to drape over white lampshades for a rosy glow.

**Your color philosophy in three words:** Gotta love it!

**Color that sparks a memory:** It's not a color, it's a print. I've saved scraps of every pattern I've ever lived with. They chronicle my life.

**A talk-of-the-block front-door color:** I like Benjamin Moore's Geranium with the glossiness of Fine Paints of Europe's Hollandlac Brilliant. So pretty.

**Can't live without lipstick:** I stockpile a Chanel color called Light Rose. It's perfection!

**Your sheets are:** Crisp white, with antique embroidered pillowcases and monogrammed Leontine Linens Euro shams in front. I love a bed with lots of pillows.



A few of Gregory's colorful go-to's. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Travelettes loafers in crocodile-embossed patent leather, in Green with Black Trim, from Belgian Shoes. Chanel's Rouge Double Intensité lip color in Light Rose. Pink honeysuckle. A monogrammed sham from Leontine Linens. Benjamin Moore's Geranium. Bailey Rose cotton by Cowtan & Tout, one of Gregory's longtime favorite prints. Anemones, another flower of choice.

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