

Top interior designer shares vision of 'perfect room'

By **JEFF WEBER**
Staff Writer

Sally Morse, creative director for Hunter Douglas — the nation's largest manufacturer of window treatments — has a lot of ideas on creating the "perfect room."

She wouldn't have won the "Stylish" Fashion Industry award at the 2008 International Window Coverings Expo if she didn't have a trunkful of treatments, fabrics and other unique innovations.

So it's that experience and expertise that brought her to Metropolitan Window Fashions in North Plainfield on April 16 as part of the store's yearlong 75th anniversary celebration. And right from the start, she had the many in attendance on the edge of their seats with her no-nonsense approach to decorating.

"You don't start a road trip without a map," said Morse, who has been featured in magazines such as *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Windows and Walls* and *Real Simple*, "so how can you begin your decorating journey — which can be long and winding — without a starting point?"

Morse then laid out what it



Metropolitan Window Fashions decorators Sue Clemens, left, and Susan Beth Springer, center, get information on new styles from Sally Morse, creative director for Hunter Douglas, at the "10 Steps to Decorating the Perfect Room" seminar April 16 at Metropolitan Window Fashions in North Plainfield.

takes to decorate promptly and properly with her lecture, "10 Steps to Decorating the Perfect Room." From color to an infusion of personality, she made it clear that decorating shouldn't be done on a whim. Here is what she had to say, step by step.

1. COLOR: "Color is where you start. Find a print that you love — whether it's wallpaper, fabric, a patterned carpet or artwork," she said. "You've got to feel happy and comfortable with your 'starting color' because you're going to be living with it

for a long time."

The most beautiful rooms, she said, look best when three or four complementary colors are used together.

"I just find the color beige to be too boring," said Morse, who has taken her ideas to more than 10 countries. "There are so many gorgeous colors in the rainbow — so why decorate your home with bland shades when you can add so much style with color?"

Morse showed the audience how to combine several different color-coordinated fabrics in a room to create a harmonious "blend" throughout the space.

2. CASE GOODS: "Determine what type of tables, cabinets, counter tops, dressers, headboards, sofas, chairs and flooring you really like, and make sure they are correctly sized for the dimensions and layout of the room," she said. "Don't be too 'matchy-matchy' with furnishings. Mother Nature doesn't match wild flowers in a meadow — why do you need to match?"

3. PLACEMENT: Furniture placement is a key element in the overall look of your room, and Morse recommends three

different layouts for living room furniture based on the alphabet.

"I love an 'L-shaped' setup for the sofa and chairs, but a 'U' or 'X' layout can work beautifully as well," said Morse, who added that the most important factor in arranging furniture is the shape and size of the room.

4. LIGHTING: "I love decorating with chandeliers and wall sconces," she said, "because they add drama and style to any room. Small, interesting lamps on bathroom vanities, kitchen counters and on dining room buffet tables always add a beautiful touch."

5. WINDOWS: "Now, more than ever, window treatments are called upon to be both fashionable and functional by bringing privacy, light control, energy efficiency and beauty to every room of the home," she said. "With a huge selection of shades, blinds, shutters, draperies and top treatments, the homeowner can add the finishing touch to any room by getting help from a professional who knows the window coverings market."

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Treatments

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6. FLOORING: "From stone, vinyl and tile to area rugs or wall-to-wall carpeting, selecting a beautiful flooring material can complement any room," said Morse, who favors wool area rugs the most. "Sheep don't shrink in the rain, so don't be afraid to get wool carpeting wet. It's the most versatile and cleans the best as well."

7. WALLS: This kind of decorating includes paint and wallpaper. "Pearlized paints in a variety of beautiful colors look great by adding a lovely sheen," said Morse, who used this part of the seminar to make those in attendance promise they would not paint their walls beige or white. "I also love the new flocked wall coverings and interesting grasscloth textures."

8. HARD ACCESSORIES: The next step involves what Morse called "hard accessories," such as paintings, photos, mirrors, pottery, glass and other decorative pieces. "When hanging pictures over the sofa, make sure to fill 1/3 of the space starting at 4 to 9 inches above the sofa," she said. "And when grouping photos, place smaller ones above the large ones to avoid a 'top-heavy' look."

9. SOFT ACCESSORIES: These would include items such as pillows, tablecloths, curtains, silk flowers and plants soften lines and create warmth. "Try to combine an equal number of hard and soft accessories in one room to achieve balance," she said. "These details are what really gives your room style."

10. PERSONAL TOUCH: "We need to



Pertis Orton of Millstone, left, won a \$500 gift certificate for participating in Sally Morse's "10 Steps to Decorating the Perfect Room" seminar on April 16 at Metropolitan Window Fashions in North Plainfield.

make our homes less 'cookie-cutter' by adding our own personalities to our space," said Morse, who concluded her program by drawing a raffle ticket worth \$500 toward custom window treatments at Metropolitan Window Fashions. The winner was Pertis Orton of Millstone. "Show off your interests and hobbies in a creative way — add a sense of humor and don't be so serious."

More information about Morse, as well as fashion tips, is available by visiting www.hunterdouglas.com. More information about Metropolitan Window Fashions or Fabricland is available by calling 908-755-4700 or by visiting www.windowfashions.com.

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