

DECORATING | THE DETAILS

Made With the Shade

A shade can change the entire look and feel of a lamp. But, like choosing a mate, selecting the right one can be tricky. Lighting expert **Stephanie Edgar Reeves** gives us some guidelines for a match made in heaven



WHETHER YOU ARE PURCHASING NEW LAMPS or just want to freshen the look of the ones you have, the right shade makes all the difference. “For some of us, nothing makes a greater impact in a room than a properly chosen lampshade,” says Stephanie Edgar Reeves, owner of Edgar-Reeves Lighting & Antiques in Atlanta. “Scale, shape, fabric, trim, and lining all need to be carefully considered. It is a subtle but important element of a well-put-together room—almost as important as the lamp itself. The entire mood of a room can be altered by the addition of the right lampshade, the right light, and the right amount of it.”

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PAIRING LAMPS WITH SHADES

Urn Lamp

This shape goes back to the time of the Greeks. The glass base makes it versatile. It could work in a living room or library with a silk shade, on a porch with a card (paper) shade, or as a focal point in a kitchen. Because of its strong color, it could give punch to a room by itself or complement an overall design as a pair.



Oval knife-pleat shade in silk. The cream silk provides warm, beautiful light. If you want a little more pizzazz, put a trim on the shade.



Knife-pleat shade with cut corners in silk. This combination would be found in a formal room or in a spot where a really special lamp is needed.



Rectangular hard-back shade in silk. The straight lines of the shade complement the clean lines of the lamp. This combination looks sharp and chic.

Candlestick Lamp

Candlestick lamps are most effective in pairs. They can either be used on the same surface, such as a chest or tabletop, or separately on two surfaces that are smaller and somewhat close together.



Rectangular shade with cut corners in linen. Strong, clean lines present a traditional face. A contemporary fabric would make it look more current.



Square shade in sheer silk. The compact size with accentuated height balances well with the shape and gives an update to an antique style.



Knife-pleat shade in silk with collar. This feminine detailing goes well in a bedroom or dressing room. The round shape reflects the round base.

Vintage Tin Lamp

We find it more interesting to pair round and square than to put a square shade on a square base. Notice how the shade hits above the cap and does not rest on the top of the base.



Oval knife-pleat shade in cream silk. This makes the lamp look a little larger and gives it a slightly edgy look.



Knife-pleat drum shade in cream silk. We like the silhouette: straight lines that are well-proportioned.



Box-pleat shade in ecru silk. This shade is narrower than the first, giving the lamp a more traditional feel.

Chinese Bottle Vase Lamp

This form appeals to those looking for a spot of color or to those who appreciate the clean lines of Asian ceramics. The strong turquoise hue in this 1940s Asian ceramic vase makes a bold statement.



Bone shade overlaid with gauzy linen with bow. Also known as a skirted shade, it adds an air of whimsy to a classically shaped base.



Box-pleat bouillotte shade in sand-colored silk. This shade allows the lamp to work in a more compact space yet have an elegant silhouette.



Pagoda shade in cream silk. The shade's elegant lines highlight the simplicity of the base. The pagoda shape continues the Asian theme.

Stacked Spheres Lamp

Stacked spheres give the overall appearance of a column-shaped lamp. This one is made from wood, gesso, and silver gilt.



Hard-back drum shade in natural linen. This shade gives the lamp a cool, clean, sophisticated feel and could work in a variety of spaces.



Hard-back half-shade in kraft paper with black trim. This architectural shade is great for reading, with light thrown from the top, bottom, and back.



Shirred shade with flat cut corners in sheer silk. The room where this lamp lives has a great sense of style. Nothing has been left to chance.

DECORATING

Shade Selection

Stephanie Edgar Reeves of Edgar-Reeves Lighting & Antiques offers these guidelines for shades.

Proportions: The height of a shade should not surpass that of the lamp. The base of the shade should be wider than the base of the lamp.

Placement: You should not see the saddle or socket of the lamp, but it is often nice to show a little of the neck. This separation shows off the lamp and the shade to their fullest.

Materials: Opaque shades, whether paper, metal, wood, or leather, give out much less light. If a lamp is to be used for reading, concentrate on the amount of light it gives.

Lining: When creating a custom shade, don't stop with the outside. Consider the lining. It should be synthetic fabric for longer life (silk can't take the direct heat). The color of the lining matters: Too white, and that's all you see in the room; too dark, and you block the light. When selecting lining, consider carefully. Hold the lining up, layered with your outside fabric, against the light.

Finials: Sometimes less is more. If you don't have a great finial, use something small and unobtrusive to do the job. Always use a washer on top of the shade and under the finial. It keeps the shade from tilting.

Brightness: Different wattages make fabrics appear darker or lighter. If you have a pair of identical shades, but they appear different, check the wattage of your bulbs.

Trim: One thing that can make the biggest difference with the least amount of effort is trim. It needs to be thin. Even $\frac{1}{16}$ inch can make a huge difference. Put it only on the bottom, or on both the top and the bottom. Use it on both hard- and soft-backed shades.

When all is said and done, throw out the rules. If you like it, it pleases you in the room, and you can see what you need to see, then it is right for you. ♦

*Edgar-Reeves Lighting & Antiques,
404/237-1137, www.edgar-reeves.com.*