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How to Merge Your Partner's Taste With Yours BY [BONNIE VENGROW](#)

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My husband and I dated for years before we got married, so I figured I knew him like the back of my hand. Then I tried to decorate our first-ever apartment. Sure, I was aware of his preference for art (framed posters of Boston's skyline), accents (none), and favorite patterns and prints (ha!). And while I didn't *love* the way his place looked while we were dating, I figured once we got hitched he'd go along with whatever I wanted.

Yeah, not so much.

He didn't just have one opinion, he had a million of them. But our preferences were so far apart we could barely agree on a single item. So, for years we lived among half-done projects and mismatched pieces.

Sound familiar? Luckily, you and your beloved can strike a healthy home-decor balance *and* keep peace this Valentine's Day. Here, some top experts share their must-try tips:

[Get the Lay of the land](#)

Start by creating a floor plan. Yes, it's extra work, but it will help you both focus on the flow of the room, rather than how your tastes go together like oil and water, says architect Alla Kazovsky, founder of [allaDIYally.com](#). Map out the length and width of the room(s), width of windows, location and swing direction of the door, and any important features like fireplaces or columns. Also make scale drawings of your furniture so you can see how it would fit in your space (and if there's anything you should get rid of).

[Bring Your Ideas to the Table](#)

Pull together some pictures of colors, furniture or styles you love, and hold a no-bad-ideas brainstorming session, advises Diana Kennedy of [Diana Kennedy Interiors](#). You can clip photos out of magazines or create a shareable mood board on Pinterest or Houzz. "I do recommend that when they take this online approach partners only 'favorite' things they like, and not comment," she adds. "All discussions about ideas should be face to face."

Find at Least One Thing You Have in Common

This can be tough, especially if you have wildly divergent tastes. If you're butting heads on nearly everything else, see if you can at least agree on color. (It's an easy place to start.) "If the couple can work together to select coordinated [wall colors](#) that flow through the home—keeping the saturation level similar in adjacent rooms—this will help the house to feel more cohesive, even if different rooms have different flavors," explains Amy Bell, owner of [Red Chair Home Interiors](#).

Start Big

When faced with an overwhelming task, like revamping your home, experts advise you to break it down into smaller, bite-sized jobs. Not sure where to start? S.A. "Sam" Jernigan, IFDA, of [Renaissance Design Consultations](#) suggests tackling the focal wall, major furnishings, or the room's visual anchor (like a fireplace) first. "After you ping and pong your way through the process with one another (and remember to play nice!), by the time you get to accessories, the puzzle pieces should be snapping into place much more easily," she says.

Group Styles Together

An eclectic style may be all the rage, but pulling it off is no easy feat, especially for the beginning decorator. Take the pressure off by grouping similarly styled furniture, art, and accessories together by room, suggests Bell. For example, all your shabby chic whitewashed furniture can fill up the family room, while his sleek, contemporary pieces can be housed in the home office.

Fight Fair

The keep-or-toss debate is tricky terrain for couples, especially if he deems your beloved childhood desk an eyesore. It helps to set some ground rules before launching into the discussion. "Both parties need to agree upon a premise of what justifies keeping an object," suggests Allison Grimes, owner of [Chromatics Interior Decor](#). "If some pieces aren't desired by the other person but are being kept, a designated spot for them needs to be established within the home." A mini makeover—think new paint or hardware—can also help both parties accept the divisive piece.

Learn the Art of Compromise

One of the early lessons of sharing a space with the one you love? You won't always get what you want. Nowhere is that more apparent than when you start a redecoration project. But at the end of the day, remember that you fell in love with this person, not their taste in home decor, and (hopefully) this partnership will last much longer than the stuff you buy.

"Remember that the relationship matters more than whether or not you win," says Rebecca West of [Rebecca West Interiors](#). "Sometimes that means you'll choose to keep his ugly old recliner, because you love him more than you love a perfect room. Sometimes it means you'll put up with the maintenance of a bright white [sofa](#), because you love her more than the look of a comfy bachelor pad." And that's perfectly fine.

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