



In furniture is close to adren and con

seeing red

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The expansive red lacquer

coffee table in the living room of my childhood home was nothing less than a small domestic landmark. It came from Japan, where my family had lived for several years, but in our country farmhouse in New York State, it resided in a room alongside an old English Chesterfield covered in blue Thai silk and a couple of small pine side tables. Which is not out of its element. With a surface measuring six feet, the table was a veritable energy field, and we back to that room, I remember that table as a radiating its own warmth.

It makes sense that I recall this table as a friend. Red, after all, is a color of complexity, passion, heat, courage, valor. It is the hue of the worn by cardinals, but at the same time the color of the devil. It is the color of love and the color of war, the color of life itself.

In fashion design, red spells excitement, times danger; a scarlet dress resonates with the woman wearing it. Popular as a dress might be, it is red one aspires to.

Above: "Indochin" nesting tables in garnet, \$ 800 (828/584-0654). Left: Lacquer "N" chair, \$1,946; Council Furniture (336/85 "Oliver Stool," with steel base and leather seat, \$1,125; Chelsea House



not elegant, but real." Paula Hoyas, director of the design team at La-Z-Boy, used a vibrant crimson to rethink a different moment in furniture history: "We chose to put red velvet on the Sotheby settee to give it a Victorian feel and make it seem even more feminine. Plush reds were fashionable in that era, and this piece perfectly captures the luxury of the period." And, she adds, "More than any other color, a little splash of red can reinvent a room."

Reviewing how a single, powerful color in such different directions full power and diversity. In red is the color of empowerment by the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's classic *Theory of Colours*, published in 1791, the first in its dark, attenuated tint; and thus the dignity of youth may adorn itself with red.

Indeed, the spectrum that red is the color more attractive to one sex than the other; men and women respond to red in equal measure.

Parker's poem "The Red Dress," she writes, *I always say, I always said / If I were given and free, / I'd have a gown of reddest red / As fine as you could see.* With such variables in meaning, it is understandably a color designers are drawn to.

And the rest of us, too, it seems. An appreciation for the color does not follow any predictable demographic patterns, points out Gabrielle Galardo, from the design team at Elite Leather. "We've found that people all around the country love red, which is not true about other colors. Maybe it is because red, the most powerful color in the spectrum, is revered in so many cultures, and we are such a diverse culture." Not, she adds, is the color more attractive to one sex than the other; men and women respond to red in equal measure.

Furniture designer John Black concurs on its broad appeal. "Red has such great energy," he says. "It has a sense of freshness and excitement." He likes to remind people in his work that while the color can be used on pieces that are contemporary, it can also be used in traditional settings without evoking historic painted finishes. While we may be accustomed to seeing painted antique furniture with crackled finishes or distressed surfaces, furniture painted in bright, primary colors can also have a clean, up-to-date, lacquered look. Similarly, a brilliant red motorized recliner does not convey the old-world, stately look of so much traditional leather furniture; cheerful, energetic, and voluptuous, it may create the same deep comfort zone of its predecessors in English country-house

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2004-011 Nesting Tables and 2004-009 Side Table by Councill.

As seen in *Traditional Home* magazine.