

A DINING SPACE THAT CAN SERVE

Smart ideas from three San Diego designers can make it an area where you want to gather



A credenza along the wall provides minimalist storage in a dramatic pink dining room by Mark Stocker Design. **BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY**



A beautiful pedestal base, like in this dining room by Mark Stocker Design, can be shown off by placing chairs to the side. **DOUGLAS FREEDMAN**



A dining room by Traci Taylor of Arise Interiors centralizes the seating around the kitchen island, which eases traffic flow. **BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

By Caron Golden
FOR THE UNION-TRIBUNE

Will you be hosting holiday gatherings this year? Do you host intimate weekend meals for friends and family? Eat meals daily at a table with your family or roommates?

Heck, where do you eat when you're at home?

According to a 2024 article in *The Atlantic*, the once ubiquitous walled-off dining room is more or less a relic in new American homes. Our dining areas are part of kitchens or living rooms to make the most out of smaller square footage so we can enjoy walk-in closets or a larger living space. So, we live in the age of "great rooms."

There are also three times as many people living alone now as there were in 1940 — and do single people need a dedicated dining room? Adding to that, in most U.S. cities, building codes and zoning rules impact the location, size and design of apartments, helping make the dining room a dispensable "appendage."

That still leaves the question of how to create a space, wherever it may be, where people can comfortably dine at home — other than the couch or the bed while watching Netflix or a football game.

I spoke with three San Diego-based designers who have created beautiful and imaginative solutions for dining spaces — some defined and others that are part of great rooms — to get ideas and some general rules for outfitting a dining area.

LIFESTYLE NEEDS

Let's start with the obvious: Consider how you use the space.

Designer Traci Taylor of Arise Interiors suggested first asking yourself how you live.

"When do you sit together for a meal? How do you entertain? Do you only have 30 people over once or twice a year? How do you want to invest space for those rare gatherings, or do you just want to improvise for that one day?"

Put some thought into how you might get the most out of a dining space. Maybe you eat weekly dinners with family or play card games or board games with friends. Perhaps you're still working from home and use the area as an unstructured office, or you want your kids to be in sight while they're doing homework and you're making dinner.

"Sometimes, the answer is a multifunction space for conversation, eating, doing homework," she said.

TABLE AND SEATING

With that sorted out, you can move on

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In this design by Tracy Lynn Studio, a bar and glassware occupy glass shelving in the middle of cabinetry, with refrigerator and freezer drawers below. **RYAN GARVIN**

"When do you sit together for a meal? How do you entertain? Do you only have 30 people over once or twice a year? How do you want to invest space for those rare gatherings, or do you just want to improvise for that one day?"

— **TRACI TAYLOR**, designer of Arise Interiors



A banquette makes smart use of corner space and adds under-seat storage in this dining room by Traci Taylor of Arise Interiors. **BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

THE SUSTAINABLE ROSE GARDEN

When quantity overtakes quality, time to make choices

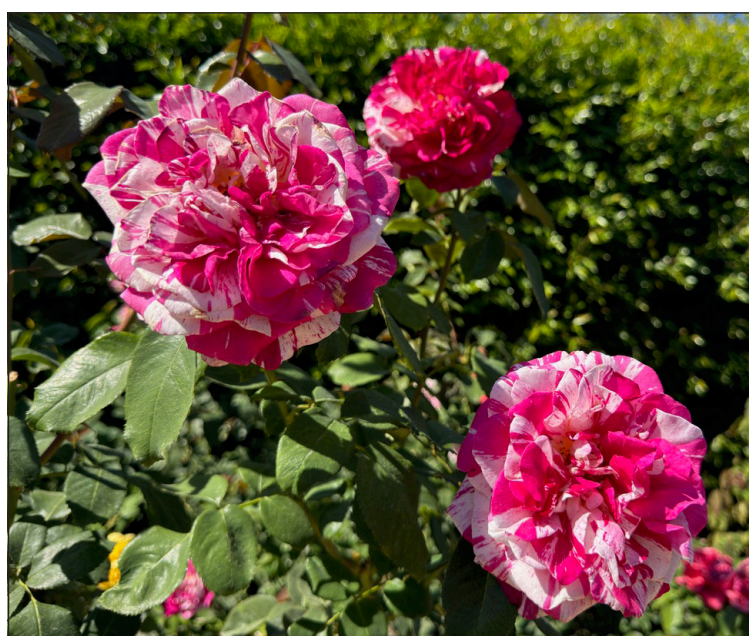
By Rita Perwich
FOR THE UNION-TRIBUNE

"I give a rose three years to produce. If they give me only a few blooms a year, you have to ask if they're worth the dirt they're planted in." — **Clair Martin**

Good gardeners grow a diverse palette of plants to minimize disease and encourage beneficials. So, several years ago, when I had 75 roses growing in my garden, I promised myself I would stop at 100 roses to ensure that there would always be space for other plants. Very quickly, I reached my self-imposed number.

The problem is, I continue to want more roses. I suffer from Rose Acquisition Syndrome. I know this pleasurable and exhilarating "bug" is very contagious, as all the members in the San Diego Rose Society have it.

In fact, some of my rosarian



'Neil Diamond' is an exceptionally fragrant dark pink and white striped tea that was hybridized by Tom Carruth and has excellent disease resistance. **RITA PERWICH**

friends with Rose Acquisition Syndrome have developed some interesting "fuzzy" math skills. They count their miniature and miniflora roses as half a rose, and when they tally up their roses, they count all roses of the same variety in their garden as one rose! This math dyslexia is one of the symptoms of this bug.

Throughout the year, I jot down the names of roses that I would love to grow in my garden. As the end of the year draws close and in anticipation of the new rose-growing year, I review my list and am faced with the same quandary. My garden is small, and my list of desired roses is long. What's a rosarian to do?

The Rolling Stones have an answer to this perplexing annual dilemma. What starts out sounding like a negative — "You can't always get what you want" — ends with the positive "you can get what you need."

I can work with this message!

If you can relate to this dilemma, you might be interested in the steps that I take to get the roses that I really "need."

YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

The first step is to figure out the realistic number of roses we can grow well in the garden with the amount of time we have at hand.

ONLY PLANT WHAT YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF

Rose Acquisition Syndrome is not just a problem for rosarians who have small gardens. It can also be a problem for rosarians who have large gardens. Why is this? Some plants require more care than others. It is said that when you grow roses, you will never be bored, as there is always something to do in a rose garden!

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