



The heart of the home is the kitchen, and Ann-Marie Anton's kitchen is cozy and romantic with a casual eating area and fireplace. Counters are granite, the backsplash is tumbled marble, and the custom cabinets are glazed maple. COVER: Anton's two-story great room seen from the second floor.

Wayne E. Smith / The Detroit News

# Flair for the romantic

Metro Detroiters show off their inviting spaces for Valentine's Day

February 14th is an unabashedly sentimental day that celebrates love, a time when our thoughts turn to red roses, champagne, chocolate-covered strawberries and Valentine's Day cards that are simultaneously sweet and sappy. Wouldn't it be lovely, though, if we could keep the romantic notions in our homes alive all year-round? We asked Homestyle readers to show us

their romantic rooms, and we can confirm that romance is, indeed, alive and well in Metro Detroit residences. "Our master bedroom is a warm, cozy space to relax, so inviting whether to read a book or share good conversation," says Shelby Township resident Janice Schnabel, who's been married to Dennis Schnabel for 32 years. "A warm fireplace, candles glowing and a glass of wine — it's the perfect

setting for a romantic evening at this time of year or any time of year." It's no surprise that when the Schnabels were house-hunting several years ago and spied the master bedroom, they instantly knew they would buy the place. The room's carved fireplace has a dramatic mantel-piece that reaches to the ceiling. Imposing windows flank the fireplace. The couple furnished the fireplace area with a plush

chair-and-a-half and a matching ottoman. Accessories include votive candles, crystal candleholders with tall tapers, a crystal decanter, a fringed throw, fresh flowers in a silver bowl and heart-shaped toss pillows, including one that reads "Hug Me." "I love to decorate, and this is my haven," says Schnabel, who works at Parisian in The Mall at Partridge Creek in Clinton Township. Retirees Dan and Lynda Pearce of East Lansing are wine buffs who transformed a corner of their basement into a Napa Valley-inspired wine cellar. While it might not seem romantic to be sequestered in a basement, Dan Pearce begs to differ. "Our wine cellar is accented by a curved stone entrance, which is 42 inches deep, giving the effect of entering a cave," he says. "Once inside, you are surrounded by textured, sensual, earthy red walls with a



MARGE COLBORN



Anton prides herself on finding unique accessories, such as this curvy wall clock with Roman numerals.



The art of accessorizing comes naturally to Ann-Marie Anton, whose Grosse Pointe Farms business is It's Personal Design.

trellis ceiling. Marc Chagall's painting 'Lovers in the Red Sky' is on one wall. The other walls house a collection of our favorite Cabernet, Shiraz and Malbec wines from Argentina." Pearce is planning a special V-Day repast in the cellar with smoked oysters, Greek olives and a 2002 Markham Cabernet. Nine long-stem roses — one for each year of the Pearce's marriage — will be placed on a small table between two cozy, contemporary armchairs. Lights on a dimmer switch will provide the romantic ambiance.

Ann-Marie Anton of Grosse Pointe Farms is currently single, although there's a significant other in her life. Four years ago, following a divorce, she felt a need to express herself with a new home. "It was very important for me to create a home that was uniquely mine and truly reflected who I was," says Anton, 42. "I wanted a space that was warm, romantic and very inviting." A former real estate broker for new home construction, Anton also helped new homeowners with interior design decisions (flooring, paint colors, kitchen materials). "My love has always been interior design," says Anton, who now has her own business, It's Personal (itspersonalonline.net), focusing on personal shopping

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Anton's master bedroom suite, with its serene colors, is romantic without being overly feminine. The tufted headboard and bedding were made by Linda Knapp of Royal Oak.

and design services, which she operates out of her home. Anton's parents, Gabe and Pat Anton, found her the perfect dwelling to transform — a foreclosed house that had been vacant for two years. "It was a 1953 ranch that had been turned into a 3,100-square-foot split-level by a builder," says Anton. "It was all white ceramic tile flooring with pink-and-teal foil wallpaper. It looked like a tacky Florida house, but the bones were good, and I knew I could make it work." Today, the house is filled with warm, earthy tones and crimson accents and boasts an Old World ambiance. Anton installed hickory floors and, with the help of decorative painter Greg White, applied faux paint treatments on walls and columns. The kitchen came to life with taupe granite counters, glazed maple custom cabinets, a tumbled marble backsplash, stainless-steel appliances and romantic touches, such as a charming seating area next to a fireplace, curvy wrought-iron



Anton loves sentimental touches. This sculpture of a girl and her grandfather playing checkers is in her living room.

chandeliers and carved wood corbels. Throughout the home, Anton displays romantic touches — a tall, tufted headboard in the master bedroom, sconces for decorative lighting, lush linens, elegant window treatments, oil-rubbed bronze hardware, a cherub sculpture from a favorite aunt and cherished antiques and artwork from her parents. "Romance is all in the details — candles,



Anton relaxes in her remodeled kitchen, which has an intimate seating area for two in front of the fireplace. The cherub on the mantel came from a favorite aunt.

framed family photos, vintage books, beaded lampshades, even stuffed teddy bears from old boy friends," she says with a laugh.

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TAKE A TOUR

Go to [www.detroitnews.com/homestyle](http://www.detroitnews.com/homestyle) See a video tour of Ann-Marie Anton's home.