



**INSPIRATION**  
The extra-large ottoman is easily reached from all sides in this furniture layout, but the lightness of the antique suzani upholstery keeps it from feeling monolithic.

# Windsor Smith

The Los Angeles designer answers your decorating questions.

**Q** Our family room is large, and I haven't been able to find a coffee table that's the right size. I was thinking of buying two of the same and butting them together. Would this look okay or should I leave space to walk between them? Any other suggestions?

— MAUREEN GILLIS, *Calgary*

**A** Abutting two coffee tables can work, as long as they match or at least complement each other. But in family rooms, I also love using a large ottoman that you can spread out on. They're subtle, approachable and casual. And a seating plan built around a single oversized ottoman can create an interesting look, especially when you use mismatched chairs. Keep in mind, though, that if you do want to go very big you will most likely need to go custom, which can increase the cost.

Upholstered ottomans are also an opportunity to introduce pattern and

colour, as I did in the Inspiration room. I generally don't use a lot of pattern in my work, so the antique suzani satisfied that whim — plus it filled up the centre of the room nicely.

An ottoman also provides a surface for building a pretty vignette. Start with a great tray. I love an inlaid tray for a hard-soft contrast, or a simple woven- raffia one to add more texture to a room. And, as in the Inspiration, a glossy ebonized tray injects a weighty note. (Look for one that can hold drinks without the worry of watermarking, or have coasters on hand if you're concerned.) Then, pile on vases, books, old baskets, African headrests ... really anything that feels collected and will give the room a special personal signature.

It's a bit bohemian, but I also like to tuck floor cushions underneath an ottoman for extra seating. It's a totally relaxed move that can work in rooms of many different styles.

Overall, I believe a room should feel smart, fun, historical *and* modern. Mixing older elements — like the wood columns and gilded mirror here — with modern ones — the light fixture and artwork — keeps a room from feeling too on the nose.

## H&H'S TOP PICKS

OUR FAVOURITE WINDSOR SMITH-INSPIRED TRAYS FOR A HARDWORKING OTTOMAN.



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1. Breakfast tray in Black by Pacific Connections, *Provide*.
2. Madeira large tray

- by James River, *Hickory Chair*.
3. Onslow tray, *Crate & Barrel*.

Photography courtesy of Windsor Smith Home (portrait)/ Max Kim-Bee (Inspiration)

