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Spring 2018 decor: a happy and relaxed refuge at home

By BY KIM COOK
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The biggest trend in decor may be that there isn't a big seasonal shift in style any more. In an era of democratic design, there's a relaxed approach to home decorating that has put the notion of "in" or "out" on a back burner. We can decorate our homes more freely.

There are furnishings, palettes and materials in the spotlight, to be sure. But we're more inclined to decorate in a personal and emotional way, making home a happy refuge in an uncertain world.

WARM AND WELCOMING

"Cozy seems to be the buzzword for 2018," says Joan Craig, partner at Lichten Craig in Manhattan. "Every client this year has told us they want their home to be soft, warm, relaxed, luxurious... and easy."

Craig said that for a few years now clients have wanted high-performance fabrics that can survive kids, pets and wine. "This is still the case, but now these textiles also have to be incredibly lush and soft," she says. "We've started doing indoor/outdoor fabrics mixed with the most delicious mohairs and alpacas, combined with textured chenilles

and weaves."

Miami-based designer Phyllis Taylor says her eponymous firm is getting many requests for ethanol-based fireplaces, which are easily retrofitted into homes because they don't require venting. Taylor's team is using the fireplaces as room dividers, and situating them in master baths, dining rooms and on television walls. "These fireplaces are a luxurious focal point, giving a space an unexpected touch of coziness and glamour."

Farmhouse sinks, like Stone Forest's hammered-copper version, meld relaxed rusticity with modernity.

Eclectic décor is part of this trend, too — a curated mélange of whatever makes your inner decorator's heart beat. Pieces from different eras, travel souvenirs, favorite finds — the shelter magazines have embraced eclecticism for its ease and personality.

Quiet color palettes are part of this aesthetic. Think muted sugar hues, deep limpid blues and fog.

Hastings Tile & Bath's new collection features handmade subway tiles with names like Duck Egg, Snow and Cloud.

"We think greige is making a re-emergence in 2018," says Los Angeles-based lighting, furniture and product designer Brendan Ravenhill. "A mix of grey and beige, the color brings warmth to wood and whitewashed spaces."

Melissa Lewis of Lewis Giannoulas Interiors in Chicago says there's a new way to tweak the perennially popular combo of gray and white: Envelop the space.

"Take the warm neutrals and paint them on everything — doors, trim, walls, etc. The unilateral color makes any space feel much more refined and welcoming," she says.

That refinement is also being reinforced with touches of drama and texture, says Charlotte Dunagan of Dunagan/Diverio Design Group in Coral Gables, Florida. The firm is using matte black accessories, light fixtures and decorative hardware in many of its projects. Warm woods like walnut and warm paint colors generate an ambiance

she calls "classic modern."

"Bold materials and textures offset by relaxing neutrals create the '2018 equilibrium," she says.

PLAYING WITH PATTERN AND COLOR

While many designers are embracing calm and quiet, others are excited about the proliferation of imaginative, interesting patterns, shapes and textures. It's a trend that allows personalities to shine.

"I think people are less afraid to use pattern in bigger spaces," says L.A. designer Amy Sklar. "Patterned tiles for kitchen backsplashes and bathrooms are going strong, and I've also been using patterned runners for stairways and hallways. It's a fun way to add a little personality without overwhelming the space."

Bonnie Saland of the Los Angeles-based design studio Philomela has done a fabric collection based on rocks and minerals, as well as batik-style abstracts.

"We're enjoying the layering of pattern on textured ground, increasingly offering wallpapers on grass cloth," she says.

Pronounced weaves, knits and channeling are in soft accessory and upholstered furniture collections at many retailers this spring, including www.jaysonhome.com, www.inmod.com and www.target.com.

Los Angeles designer Raun Thorp sees red coming back, in new versions and applications.

Pantone's new palette has several vibrant hues, like Cherry Tomato, a zingy red; Meadowlark, a bracing yellow; and their color of the year, Ultra Violet.

Thorp is interested in avant garde Italian patterns now, too. "Cole & Son has some amazing Fornasetti wall coverings that will completely transform a room in unexpected ways," he says. "Surreal pattern is so appropriate in these surreal times."

Floral and garden patterns are cropping up everywhere, especially exaggerated ones. "The wackier the better," says Thorp.

Dutch designer Ellie Cashman has drawn inspiration from her country's art masters, creating oversize floral papers that look like they've been plucked from a moonlit garden.

And British firm Graham & Brown has collaborated with musician Brian Eno on a contemporary flower wallpaper full of kinetic energy.

IT'S THAT '70s SHOW

Midcentury modern still has legs. So does the hybrid style known as transitional. But interior design's relationship with fashion and glamour has placed new focus on the '70s and '80s.

The look may not seem quite as au courant to those who grew up in the era, but the young and daring will find Jonathan Adler's new pieces chic and fun. Inspired by Studio 54, the famed '70s-era New York nightspot, the seating in the Bacharach collection combines velvet upholstery and brushed brass bases. And in Adler's Ultra collection, mineral-hued velvet or black-and-white printed upholstery dresses up an array of seating that blends Italian modernism and futurism.

Another feature of this '70s style? A palette of happy hues like daffodil, gumball pink, acid green and sky.

You'll see lots of kicky pop art prints on textiles and wallpaper. Fab's got One Bella Casa's Eyelita throw pillow, with a cartoon eye repeated on vivid green. Here too is the trippy, candy-colored geometric print of LiLiPi's Pop pillow.

So here we go, 2018. Some of us are ready to cozy up with Netflix and a faux fur throw in a quiet room wrapped in milk chocolate paint. Others want to enliven our space with a madcap array of fun prints, a gold chandelier and the tunes turned up.

This year, it's all good.

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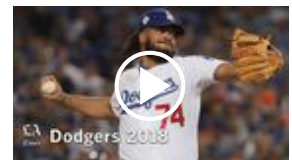


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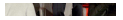
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