

DÉCOR STYLES

The way we decorate our homes becomes an outer expression of our personalities, our tastes and even our dreams. In many ways, home décor is the “set design” for our lives. Despite our individuality, most of us tend to fall into certain decorating categories. Hence, the different styles of décor and brief descriptions of each follow. Although each style is pretty distinctive, you may find yourself favoring two or more. Experiment with the different looks and have fun!

Industrial Modern

This innovative look originated in large cities where young people, looking for - and not finding -- affordable housing, began inhabiting empty warehouses and factory buildings. Being creative and resourceful, they then converted these dark, gloomy spaces into comfortable, bright and attractive dwellings. As a result, “loft living” was born and is still in top demand today.

The trick to getting this modernistic look down is to try to preserve as much of the building’s original character as possible while renovating for “human consumption.” Keep the space as open, spare and



utilitarian as possible, but “warm it” with feather beds, soft, natural fabric throws and intimate lighting cast by floor and table lamps.

Industrial Modern is characterized by:

- Aluminum or hardwood flooring
- Stainless steel units and appliances
- Track lighting
- Metal shelving
- Bare, concrete blocks for seating
- Large-scaled furnishings, i.e., leather sofas with low, long coffee tables and deep, pile rugs

Urban Minimalist

Those who are disciplined to the max concerning tidiness and clutter best use this bare, strictly contemporary look. This style is often typified by clean-swept floors of natural wood and utilitarian objects that both function and make an artistic statement.

Urban Minimalist is characterized by:

- A very few, well-placed pieces
- Furnishings from virtually any time period that are modern and contemporary looking
- Lots of white to visually “expand” the spaces
- “Undressed” windows or either simple shutters or plain shades
- Walls that are colored based on the room’s function and/or any color in furnishings, artwork or accessories
- A color scheme made up of just one or two permanent colors
- Indoor plants and fresh flowers of a single variety
- “Vases” consisting of tall, glass tubes, moss-covered containers, large zinc

- tubs and grass-filled earthenware tubs
- Single, but distinctive, accessories such as “floating” shelving and throw pillows

Country

Country décor evokes images of cozy kitchens with gingham-curtained windows, handcrafted accents, homemade pies and rows of preserves in cloth-covered jars.

In general, a country look can be achieved with warm touches such as wicker baskets filled with dried flowers and lots of wood in natural, toned-down colors that emulate the countryside.

Country is characterized by:

- Old-fashioned sinks and wood stoves
- Tiled flooring in the kitchen
- Collectibles such as decorative plates displayed on “busy” walls
- Open shelves
- Wrought iron chandeliers or candelabra
- Large, upholstered pieces of furniture in different styles and shapes
- “Distressed” paintwork on large pieces of furniture, such as armoires, cabinets

and hutches

- Wire netting on kitchen cabinet doors
- Baskets instead of cabinet drawers
- Lace and eyelet curtains in the bedroom
- Patchwork quilt on the beds
- A traditional, wooden rocking chair
- Chair pads on kitchen chairs, often matching the tablecloth and curtains
- Frosted, glass lamp shades

Traditional

The traditional look embraces comfort, function and elegance all at once. While never old-fashioned or stuffy, this style is sophisticated and soothing. Traditional probably lets you express your decorative preferences the most freely of all the styles, perhaps, with the exception of Global or Well-Traveled.

Older buildings host the traditional look the most easily, since they are larger in scale. Paint companies even carry “historical” colors that work very well in traditional décor.

Traditional is characterized by:

- Open fireplaces
- Luxurious touches such as chandeliers and guild-frame mirrors
- Wall-to-wall carpeting (some areas feature polished hardwood flooring with scatter rugs)
- Upholstered, comfortable arm chairs
- Lots of decorative cushions and throw pillows
- Formal draperies, many with decorative rods
- Elegantly-framed photos, paintings and prints
- Large table lamps, wall sconces and picture lights
- Bookshelves featuring books in their original bindings
- A large, comfortable, beautiful sofa
- Pretty, decorative dressing tables in the bedroom
- Elegant, stately bedrooms where the bed, often a four-poster with an elaborate headboard or canopy, is the central focus
- “Quiet” colors on the bedroom’s walls and floors
- Formal dining rooms with elegant

- touches such as china collections, mirrors and intimate, accent lighting
- Quality, wood chairs in the dining room (not necessarily matching)
 - Large-scaled accents such as paintings over the mantel, a grandfather clock and lavish chandelier

Contemporary

The contemporary look shares some of the traits of loft and urban minimalist styles, with its uncluttered, open spaces, clean lines and art deco. Simplicity and elegance throughout the home are typically the hallmarks of this style of living. Any unnecessary decorating has been eliminated, letting space, texture and clarity prevail.

Contemporary is characterized by:

- Light-colored, polished wooden floors
- Lots of glass: on desks and display tables, shelving, and dining room tables
- Very plain window décor: paper shades, wooden blinds or simple drapes
- Low, low clutter-free coffee tables with

- aluminum or chrome legs
- Muted, soft natural color schemes
- Leather seating, including ottomans and cubes, in the living room
- Tall, large-scaled, light-colored table lamps and metal floor lamps
- Large candles
- Large-scaled, plain but “chic” sofa with lots of comfy seating
- Casual chenille or mohair throws for the couch in complementing colors
- Decluttering and storage vehicles, such as acrylic magazine holders, wall-mounted CD storage cabinets and low tables with compartments or drawers
- Open shelving with only a few items on display
- Squared off, “boxy” furniture (tables) with straight legs in either dark, stained wood or pale ash
- Distinctly-modern, upholstered chairs in the dining room, preferably matched
- In the bedroom, a large, simple double bed, such as a low-level platform bed, with little to no fuss in the coverings
- “Ambience” lighting in the dining room and all types (overhead, reading and task) for the bedroo

Coastal

Since the magnificent sea sparkling through a front bay window is often the focal point of homes on the ocean, large windows facing out predominate, acting as a “frame” for this unequalled splendor. Although nautical is the popular way to go, décor wise, the style of a seaside home more often than not reflects the spirit of its location and “townsfolk.” A simple, sweet, Cape Cod cottage will reflect a different “attitude” than a rose-trellised, stone mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, or a stately, brick-built home in The Hamptons, for example. A west coast home will speak a different “language” than that of a home in coastal Maine.

Coastal homes are characterized by:

- An open-air feeling, with unadorned windows (to let the “salt air” in)
- Open fireplaces
- A range of comfortable seating
- Collectibles and artifacts prominently displayed, often evoking a feeling of the sea, as in pebbles, sea shells, driftwood and more

- Lobster traps used as side tables and storage
- Fisherman’s netting mounted on walls
- Sailing ropes and anchors
- Nautical objects and accents such as a captain’s wheel “coffee table,” or curtains fashioned of rope and canvas; in the bathrooms, this same motif is carried out in shower curtains, towels, rugs and soap dishes
- Color schemes that echo the outdoors; whites with brights or pastels, sea foam greens, powder blues, and soft yellows are common
- Patterns of stripes, floral and “fish” motifs
- Light wood-paneled walls or walls in plain white

Global or “Well Traveled”

What we refer to, fondly, as “destination décor,” this memorable, sometimes flamboyant, style is driven first and foremost by color. Color schemes are often inspired by paintings, posters of far-off paradises, the outdoors, or a singular, spectacular souvenir/keepsake. With this in mind, the colors throughout such a home can

be a virtual rainbow and are reflected in furnishings, walls, floors and ceilings, accents, and objects d'art. Great for color lovers, the Global or Well-Traveled look is one in which practically anything goes. The irony? Often the inhabitant has never traveled beyond his or her immediate vicinity!

Global is characterized by:

- Unique attributes such as stone floors, colored textiles in energetic patterns or a "straw hut-thatched" ceiling
- Seating close to or even on the floor
- Artistic shapes in everyday items such as coffee tables, fire places, chairs, stairs and lighting
- A color scheme that reflects the landscape of a favorite place
- Unusual touches, such as marbled flooring with mosaic patterns and motifs incorporated
- The outdoors brought in: bamboo walls, exotic plants, indoor waterfalls, pebbles, logs, custom-carved ceiling fans, animal rugs or antlers
- Different color and décor schemes for

different rooms throughout the house (think of restaurants with their various function rooms individually named and decorated)

A look that is obviously ruled by color and detail -- fun and creative!