



Design Trends: Bold Colors, Patterns Prevail

BY LISA JONES TOWNSEL

They make our surroundings beautiful, and they do it with aplomb, ease and wit. They take an idea and whip it into a space that flourishes with vibrant personality and charm. That's why we tapped a few of the area's interior designers to share their choices of the latest home design trends.

AGA ARTKA | Aga Artka Interior Design

"After a few years of drab beiges and grays, we're moving into great colors, definitely brighter colors schemes like blues, greens, and shades of reds and orange," says Aga Artka, interior designer and owner of Aga Artka Interior Design in Milwaukee.

Pantone, which sets the color standards for the design industry, picked emerald green as the 2013 Color of the Year. And Artka and others in Milwaukee's design community say it's none too soon. "Lively palettes are great," she says. "We're tired of being careful with color."

Even emboldened animal patterns, she says, will create a buzz and set the stage this year. "Animal shapes, like owls and insects are very, very popular," Artka adds. "It started in fashion first with owl blouses and summer skirts and dresses. Now those same prints are being used for fabric and upholstery."

Yet it is the sustainability trend that excites her most. Artka says this form of regeneration entails "giving existing furnishings new life" and turning them into items like repurposed furniture and hand-sewn pillows made from old garments. "These are not new ideas," she adds, "but I'm seeing it more, and it's given a higher value."

MICHAEL CARTER | Ken Michaels Furniture

Hard metals rock, says Michael Carter, interior designer for Ken Michaels Furniture. "It had been nickel, but now it's back to the gold tones," he says of the latest trend in hardware and

fixtures. "Brass is back in contemporary settings. It's the metal of the season, and it's exciting."

Conventional color pairings paired unconventionally are also in full swing. Mixes of blues with neutrals and yellows are still trending as are black and white with pops of citrine and other unexpected hues.

"For me, it's exciting to see that color is coming back," Carter says. "Many times it correlates to the economy. As the economy grows, colors increase in vibrancy. We're starting to see color come back — fresh and new."

Expect bolder patterns to pack a punch, too. "They are larger scale and bold," he says of the season's offerings. "I like the overscaled prints. It could be an overscaled damask or ikat. The lattice is still around, and even the Union Jack design. It's not dull this season."

While bolder color schemes are becoming more popular, don't expect neutrals to go out quietly. Grays are being replaced with varying shades of beige on everything from velvets and woven fabrics to sumptuously soft and lightly colored leathers. "Monochromatic doesn't have to be boring," he says of the ubiquitous beige. "It can have patterns and be quite exciting."

MARA LISA WIERSCHKE | Warren Barnett Interiors

Mara Lisa Wierschke, an interior designer with Warren Barnett Interiors in Brookfield, was smitten this season by the versatility of the Indochine fabric ikat.

You might not want ikat wallpaper, but Wierschke says you might be willing to use the patterned fabrics on pillows, a small occasional chair or headboard. "It gives a space a sense of identity and character," she says of the tie-dyed threaded pattern considered one of the oldest forms of textile decoration. When used as a room accent, Wierschke says, "It feels modern, yet it's rooted in history and goes back to Middle Eastern and ancient times."

Another attention grabber for her: the ottoman. "We're doing exciting things with the small cubed ottoman, with bold patterns like the Missoni prints. That's part of the fun," says Wierschke of this decorative essential. "It's a good investment. It can move around and become a place to put your feet up or use as an extra seat."

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Emerald green for 2013

Bolder patterns pack a punch



JOHN EDBAUER | McNabb & Risley

Accent walls have returned with a vengeance, says John Edbauer, an interior designer with McNabb & Risley in Thiensville. The single wall in various rooms of the house, he says, might be covered in bodacious colors like citrine, aquamarine and emerald.

Passionate colors and patterns marry well with neutrals, too, this season. "We can use it in a variety of ways, like a strong wall color as an accent, behind a neutral sofa with pillows with patterns of color." Such pairings with bold and soft hues, he says, offer "a sophisticated way to decorate a room."

In many cases, Edbauer says, the bolder the color and pattern, the better. "You might have an aquamarine or teal wall with Belgian linen drapery panels, which is really nicely accented by stainless steel or brushed gold hardware," he explains.

This is particularly true for smaller spaces. "Bold patterns are always great in a big room, but bold patterns and unexpected pieces can give a small room big personality," Edbauer says. "A third bedroom den with no personality might be less architecturally significant, but bold, big patterns can make the room exciting."

MEG ZAMZOW | Haven Interiors Ltd.

Interior designer Meg Zamzow of Haven Interiors in Milwaukee sees a lot to be excited about — again. "I'm old enough to remember those '60s stripes, dots, plaids, chevrons, the lacquered paint and the giant watercolor flowers," she says of the flower power decade.

The good news is that these time-honored prints, she says, have returned, albeit with some distinctively contemporary updates. Now, you're likely to see such classic prints in iridescence, and more often on linen (another huge trend for the season).

Along with the color and pattern stories of the season, Zamzow says geometric vintage prints have been coupled with embroidery and pleated fabrications to create design options that are both old and new.

It's a trend, she says, that is particularly popular among the 20-to-30s crowd, who go for an aesthetic that is "cleaner and simpler but with more color."

This brings us back around to the inescapably hottest trend of all: color. "People are tired of having the very sedate quiet rooms," Zamzow insists. "They want color. Walls will be yellow, turquoise, pink and even red. And, I've been told that mauve is right around the corner."

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