

ASK THE DESIGNER: Fearless

Fearless mixing with colours and patterns

By Jean Bisnaire, Niche Decor

?I see so many beautiful patterns in home decor stores ? how do I mix them to look as flawless as they do in magazines??

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to askjean@nichedecor.ca

Today's decor trends are all about mixing patterns, colours and stepping away from being ?matchy-matchy?.

You can see the same inspiration in fashion trends ? colours and mixed patterns in clothing, purses, shoes, jewellery, etc. It may seem daunting when you feel like your patterns aren't jiving but there's a simple trick you can follow to give your space the professional designer look: create themes. This can be achieved with patterns, colours or textures.

I like to caution people against putting bold patterns on sofas or other large investment pieces. Keep those neutral so you can use the toss pillows, throws, art and accessories to introduce the blend you're looking to achieve. Here are some ideas for themes to get you started in your fearless mixing:

Colour: Repetition through colour is always the best way to unify a space. Consider using various patterns that all have the same colour as a unifying factor. Giving patterns this common ground creates a visual story that flows better. When looking to mix colours within your space, consider using complementary colours, blues and yellows for example, for a dynamic and visually pleasing combination as they play up each other's intensities.

Why not take the colour theme and create a black and white story? Mix patterns of varying scales that are all black and white and you will have an instantly dramatic look. Take it the extra step by throwing one pop of accent colour in there whether it's with a throw, accessory or even fresh flowers.

Have a particularly bold painting with a loud pop of colour? Carry the same drama into your accessories by pulling the varying colours in complementary patterns that will create a splash.

Repetition & Scale: Repetition through patterns is another way to create an eclectic combination in your space. Varying scales and styles of a particular pattern such as a geometric, damask or floral can have a very interesting visual effect. They also work to give the space a certain feel ? think of the romance linked to florals or the bold, yet timeless feel of geometrics. Want to bring in a touch of classic? Consider using paisleys, but keep them tonal for a more transitional look.

Keeping the colour pallet consistent but varying the scale of prints will give you a balanced look. For example, using the same colour, mix a large chevron print with a small animal print and watch them come together flawlessly.

Looking for a unique style or pattern? Try using rug remnants. Old Kilim rugs are being used to create interesting and colourful pillow covers, floor cushions and ottomans. With colour as the common denominator, these fun patterns work well with one another and can be great for pulling a room together.

All of the suggestions above can be applied to various elements in a room ? whether it's drapery, toss pillows, rugs, art, accessories, wallpaper or upholstery fabric. When dealing with a mixture of patterns, I would suggest starting slow and creating the space one layer at a time so that you see how it's all going to flow together.

Apply this mixing of patterns and colours to various rooms throughout your house. You can fearlessly play with patterns in any space from your living room, kitchen, bedrooms, and even your washrooms through your shower curtain, towels, art, etc. Have fun with it and use colours and patterns that you like best ? this way you can be assured that you'll love the end result!