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ISSUE 466 / 25 MARCH - 8 APRIL 2022 / £3

INTERIORS

THROWING SHAPES

Expert advice on how to make patterns in your home

By Sarah Moolla

Many of us find using pattern in the home a little intimidating – will it clash, will it jar, will we get bored? But used the right way it's a wonderful way to personalise and energise spaces and can really lift any room from ordinary to spectacular. It doesn't have to be walls of stripes or floors of parquet – pattern can be added to the curtains, tiles, bedlinen and the odd piece of statement furniture. Here our local interior experts advise on where to start and how best to pattern down the hatches.

Animal Architecture wallpaper by Brand McKenzie is available through Woodhouse & Law

"It is important to incorporate a plethora of prints in every room"



Sean Symington is all for mixing and matching different patterns within a room



IN THE ZONE

A clever way to use a strong pattern is when you want to distinguish or zone an area – a trick that works really well in open-plan spaces, as **interior designer Lola Swift** explains. “Adding a patterned wallpaper as a backdrop helps to create a zoned area in an open-plan kitchen, a busy hive of activity and fun. A Portuguese tile wallpaper with a three-dimensional design can look like real tiles and creates a trompe l’œil effect that is fun and playful. Adding plain coloured accessories on shelves in front of the wallpaper makes the whole area really stand out.”



STEP ON IT

“When it comes to wood flooring, the key pattern choice is between plank or parquet,” says **Vanessa Garrett of Broadleaf Timber**. “A plank will generally create a simpler style, but it’s worth remembering that a mixed width pattern of boards mixing will create a more traditional looking floor and wide boards in a large room will feel wonderfully luxurious as well as making them feel more intimate.”

“Parquet is all about pattern, and there are many classic designs to choose from. Chevron is well known for its directional pattern and naturally invites you into any space where it is used. You can mix colours within a parquet floor if you want to be more daring and really make a feature of the pattern and you can mix parquet and plank to create more individual designs or add borders.”

“Parquet floors make the biggest impact in rooms where plenty of floor is on show and are a particularly good solution for open-plan spaces that are entered from multiple directions or change scale in different areas.”

You can play around with patterns on the floor to alter the dynamics of the room, as **director and designer Victoria Evans explains**, “Pattern can alter your perception of a space. And you are allowed to break the rules. Floorboards are often laid lengthways, and this draws your eye to the end of the room. However, when a space is already long and narrow, I advise to lay the boards

across the width of the room, and this will make it feel wider. Pattern has its practical uses too. An intricate, multi-coloured tile in a busy hallway will hide all the muddy footprints.

“Use large print wallpapers in small rooms, like the downstairs loo. And make sure every wall is covered, even the ceiling if you want. Layer it up by adding panelling below the paper, a hexagonal floor tile and a square tile behind the splashback.”

FEELING IT

Charlotte Wright, design consultant at Hobson’s Choice reminds us that patterns can also be in the texture adding a whole new dimension to the effect. “Reminiscent of waves, ripples in water or leaves, textured tiles in a bathroom can create a calming and contrasting feature wall. The same tile pattern created in a subtle alcove of the walk-in shower room, adds yet another level of visual detail and interest.”

It’s subtleties like this in traditionally plainer spaces like bathrooms and kitchens that can have the greater impact, as **Leroy McKenzie of Schmidt Bath** explains, “Some people would prefer to keep their kitchen colours plain, and then using a vibrant splashback to create that ‘wow factor’, and patterns are common for this. It doesn’t take much for your new kitchen, bedroom or bathroom to become a work of art, using contrasting colours or shapes that match patterned wallpaper.”

“Using pattern in the bathroom is proving popular, with customers choosing designs for vanity units as a small design flourish for their space. Using too busy a pattern could be considered controversial in spaces such as the bathroom, bedroom or study where they can prove to be a distraction, or be overwhelming when waking up early in the morning.”

ABOVE: A strong pattern will help to zone an area, says Lola Swift; INSET: the wallpaper by Louise Body has an almost three-dimensional effect; BELOW: Jennifer Mosse suggests rugs as an easy way to introduce pattern



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Using parquet flooring like this from Broadleaf Timber offers a classic design pattern; textured patterns such as this ripple effect by Hobson’s choice adds a whole new level of visual detail and interest; using pattern like art work, as in this Schmidt Bath design, can create a real wow factor



“Pattern can alter your perception of a space”



INTERIORS

THINK SMALL

You don't have to go all out on walls and floors to bring plaid, geometrics, stripes or spots into your life as **interior design consultant Jennifer Mosse** points out: "There are numerous ways to incorporate pattern into a scheme, from the bold and brave to the statement shy. It can be as simple as adding a couple of floral or abstract cushions to a sofa. It can be a curtain or blind in a tonal stripe, a chair covered in a check or damask or even a geometric bathroom tile.

"Rugs are also a great way to introduce pattern, I find a bold print on the floor particularly grounding and it really helps to piece a room together, both in period and contemporary settings. Think of it as a piece of art but for the floor, geometrics and florals are both firm favourites. Keep the walls to one colour though or you risk making the room look smaller. If you are worried that a pattern may be too busy, try contrasting it with a solid block of colour, this will work as an anchor and tone it down."

Product and creative director with Cox & Cox, Dani Taylor agrees: "You can easily introduce colour, pattern and texture to rooms with soft furnishings. Go for cushions to experiment with patterns and floor coverings to transform the look with a patterned design. When it comes to rugs, time-aged patterns work incredibly well in industrial-inspired schemes because they bring with them an authenticity that anchors the look and warms it up. For muted Scandi rooms, choose a design made up of block colour, a monochrome scheme or a Berber-inspired design to complement."

FRAME WORK

There is one source of pattern that may already exist in our home that we aren't always embracing or enhancing – the structure itself. **Natalia Karvouni of Batterham Smith Architects** explains, "From an architectural perspective, structures and shelters imitate nature in their simplest form; columns and roof represent the branching tree trunks and their canopy, solid masonry buildings replicate shielded cave-like structures. For example, the use of timber throughout habitable spaces, with its tactile nature of cracks and grain patterns, weathered or



BELOW: There can be pattern in the house structure itself, as **Natalia Karvouni** explains; **ABOVE:** **Dani Taylor of Cox & Cox** advises introducing colour, pattern and texture to rooms with soft furnishings

distressed, can help create an environment that feels naturally familiar and immediately puts one at ease.

"Referencing nature with decorative biomorphic motifs in tiles and flooring in their natural colour palettes or stonework with stimulating textures can also be highly effective in bringing nature indoors."

Backing this up is **Charlotte Wright**, who advises to look out for the already occurring exposed timber and brick slips in your home. "Presenting the interior architecture of your home as a feature can bring pattern and character to a room. By revealing, or recreating with timber cladding and brick slips, the texture and detail of structural materials, a room can take on a very different personality full of pattern and detail."

