



DECOR

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Transitional Design

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The latest décor trend easily mixes old world with new, contemporary with modern and the past with the present. Transitional design is proving to be the one design trick that is easier done than said.

Changing and evolving lifestyles no longer need to be offset with replacement furniture or the purging of old family keepsakes. Transitional design works with your shifting needs, creating a timeless look without abandoning your grandmother's aged console table or your priceless antique plate collection. It's an updated look that allows your unique tastes to be at the centre of your living areas.

"The beauty of transitional design, and the reason it is in such high demand, is that the results are so unique for every individual," explains Toronto Interior Design Group (TIDG) founder Yanic Simard. A CityLine regular, Simard is regarded as a leading expert in the area of transitional design.

"I like to call it 'transi-chic.' There are no formulas. There are no rules. It's comfortable and flexible. At the same time, it is one of the most challenging to pull off in a way that is both beautiful and harmonious."



Eclectic charm meets harmonious comfort in the "Vintage Romance" style from Benjamin Moore.

Walls: Sandlot Gray 2107-50
Trim: Chelsea Grey HC-168

This hot design trend allows you to re-interpret your current space from a contemporary perspective. Sometimes, all it takes is one new or updated element to re-invent the entire décor. Contrasting colours, traditional shapes and soft textures all work together to create a space that is warm, inviting and esthetically modern.

Simard first noticed the trend becoming popular in Canada about six years ago. It has the greatest appeal to those who are going through a transitional period in their lives, like a divorce, a new home, a second marriage, or empty nesters. It's about compromising and blending different decorating styles.

"It takes the coldness out of modern styles and takes the stuffiness out of traditional."

One of the biggest elements to successfully achieve this look is to bring the architectural details of the home into focus. Then, look at each piece of furniture – can it be updated or used as is? By incorporating different finishes, materials and fabrics into traditional furniture like daybeds, chairs and armoires, it brings a timeless and modern quality to the forefront. Fabrics can range from monochromatic graphic patterns on overstuffed sofas to plain leather on carved wood bergere frames. The overall effect is simple, yet sophisticated, with a clean, comfortable environment.

"You still get the look and feel of the past but you've made it modern," he says.

Use contrasting colours, says Simard, like black and white or grays and

taupes. The more vibrant the colours, the better. He recalls a neoclassical chair, painted dark red and upholstered black, that when placed in its environment, fit the transitional style beautifully.

Though transitional design may seem similar to eclectic, it is actually very different. Eclectic encompasses different periods of time and includes quite a few different styles in one room. Transitional really only sticks to two – French antique to midcentury. Those looking to do it right can go as far back as Louis XVI of France. The elegance of French décor adds a balanced comparison to the firm lines of modern furnishings.

Simard believes transitional design first originated from Europe, as most design trends do. Travel savvy North Americans then adopted the look.

"This design gives the flexibility for change and works with any budget. People have probably been doing it on their own and not even realized it."

When looking to add new pieces to your transitional room, look to the floor for inspiration. A well-chosen rug may be all you need to bring the room together

Rug as Art owner Nicolas Hornbostel is passionate about rugs and says the right floor covering is just as important as the rest of your carefully chosen furniture.

"A rug is art that covers the floor. Many people don't consider it that, but it is," he says.

In business for 20 years, Hornbostel sells upscale floor coverings that are made in the ancient Middle-Eastern

tradition, using the same methods as 500 years ago. Some are vegetable dyed and made with imported wool from New Zealand; others are knotted on the floor versus a vertical loom.

Depending on the intricacy of the design and the methods used, prices can range from \$1,500 to \$50,000 for an 8-ft by 10-ft carpet. Depending on the tightness of the knots, that same carpet could take up to two years to complete.

"Some carpets have 1,000 knots per square inch very complicated."

To add a hint of old-world to your modern living spaces look to coloured glass lanterns, oversized gilded mirrors and elaborately designed tiles.

Fran Devlin, owner of Palmyra Design, specializes in importing fine quality Moroccan products. She personally shops in Marrakech and only brings back a handful of selected designs ranging from traditional and distinctly Moroccan to modern-inspired pieces, which can easily fit into any transitional designed room.

"The traditional pieces can be put into a variety of different environments and the modern designs encompass the traditional shapes but with nontypical finishes. You don't have to do the entire casbah look; just a touch of it."

Her camel bone and silver mirror could easily be the focal point and conversation piece of any room. Slim tablets of ivory-coloured bone are alternated with rows of worked silver to create a delicate backdrop to a contemporary décor.

"Some pieces are complex, some simple and some unusual."

Her European-Moroccan blended mosaic tables have a simplicity and elegance when used either indoors or out. Add a beautiful rug and some throw cushions to complete the look.

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