



Shake Up Your Style



From café curtains to colourful ceramics, home interiors have never been more original or more joyful. While anything now goes style-wise, the key to a chic refresh lies in choosing long-lasting pieces and classic shapes. Interiors writer and author Emma J Page shares some of her favourite finds...



When it comes to what's in vogue in the world of interiors, it's almost easier to ask, "What isn't?" From frills and hand-painted ceramics for maximalists, to simple shapes and a palette of new neutrals (think soft rose and plaster) for classicists, this is the era of anything goes – as long as it's done with a sprinkling of panache. In the years that I've been exploring the idea of what really makes a house a home, the rule book has been reappraised, rewritten and finally (thankfully) thrown out. Now, our interiors are all the better for it.

That said, there are some perennial motifs that I consistently return to. Think of them as a grounding centre in a scheme, around which everything else can orbit. One of those is the classic stripe. Wide and generous or slim and elegant, a stripe won't go out of style. You can dial it up, in the case of a vivid candy line, or simmer it down, in the form of simple ticking. This season, **Bert & May** has introduced its new striped tile, perfect for bringing a smart look to a bathroom wall or floor or for adding punch in the form of a kitchen splashback. For lovers of a trim, fabric specialist **Sophia Frances** has a moreish range of striped, frilled cushions, while **Alice Palmer's** Tangier red striped lampshade will add cheer to even the greyest winter day. For a sofa that'll put up with anything you throw at it, try **Rowen & Wren's** graceful Abington in Blue Ticking or Heritage Red.

Furnishing a home is not for the faint-hearted, not least because it can require deep pockets. But, as with fashion, I like to apply a mix and match approach, which allows for a little more fluidity. That's where artisan and handmade options come into play, as these are likely to stand the test of time. **Galvin Brothers'** Imperfect pedestal table in walnut is a favourite of mine; its round table top feels convivial and intimate for low-key suppers. With home bars being all the rage, I've also got my eye on its new Bobbin Shelving - brilliant for drinks but also useful by the bed. Coffee tables and chairs really set the tone, and simple but strong silhouettes have durable

appeal. I like **Soho Home's** Portnall coffee table, designed with a built-in chestnut leather magazine sling, which feels both playfully retro and cosy. It somehow demands that you curl up in front of it with the papers.

Perhaps influenced by the seductive nostalgia of sunny Mediterranean boltholes, café curtains are in the spotlight right now – they look great as under-counter skirts in laundry rooms or to conceal bar storage in sitting rooms, as well as in their traditional use as half-height curtains. For ultimate glamour, try pairing a bold under-counter curtain fabric with a co-ordinating wallpaper, as interior designers **Salvesen Graham** did recently when creating a vibrant home bar complete with forest green joinery and sky-blue bar trolley. For a more pared-back approach, opt for **East London Cloth's** made-to-measure linens as well as smart brass rods. That 'just back from holiday' vibe is also prevalent in the current appetite for colourful ceramics, last seen gracing china cabinets in the 1980s. This time round, there's a certain wittiness in their application. **Villa Bologna Pottery's** pieces, handmade in Malta, include kitsch vases and soap dishes, as well as nautical nods, such as its dolphin wall light, which is particularly appealing in white. Purists will love **Bettina Ceramica's** designs, which reference classic rural or ecclesiastical Italian motifs, including Acquasantiera (holy water stoup) and Stemmi Medici (modelled on coats of arms), all of which look great as wall hangings. I love its Gigli Bowl and its clever handcrafted wavy wall lights, made in Chianti.

Sometimes, nothing transforms a room better than candlelight, and **Rebecca Udall's** scalloped Murano glass candleholders are delightfully understated, quietly elevating a mantelpiece or dining table. For a finishing touch, pencil or pen and ink sketches have a kind of timeless quality, as well as a softly contemporary feel. There's so many to choose from online, but I particularly like **Luke Edward Hall's** pieces. Trends come and go, but keeping an eye out for fresh interpretations of time-honoured styles is often the way to avoid schemes that quickly date. Choose wisely and you'll be embracing the moment, while collecting pieces to last a lifetime.

London Interiors by Emma J Page, £50, Lannoo Publishers, is in bookstores nationwide and available at lannoopublishers.com



Clockwise from top left:

Café curtain with pleated top, from £95; East London Cloth

Salvesen Graham's home bar scheme in Fromental 'Fiamma' wallpaper and fabric

Bobbin Shelving in natural oak and yellow, £690; Galvin Brothers

Skinny Stripe tiles in rhubarb, £4.80 each; Bert & May

Portnall Coffee table, £99; Soho Home

White Gigli bowl with stand, £195; Bettina Ceramica

Scalloped Murano glass candleholder in denim, £39; Rebecca Udall

Dolphin wall light in cream, £140; Bologna Pottery

Left page:

Cushions in Frill Green & Mustard, £115 each; Sophia Frances Studio