

Furniture & Design TRENDS



Brown Is Back

What's old is new again, and that includes the hero of the 1970s color palette, brown.

The modern versions, though, aren't the wall-to-wall chocolate we saw during the disco era. Here's how to stay on trend with earth-toned hues.

ACCENT COLORS

We're going to skip the wall-to-wall brown carpeting butting up against the brown paneling and the brown couch this time. Instead, use brown in accents to warm up a room. And you can even do it with '70s vintage items you come across in the thrift store for fashion on a budget.

PAIR IT WITH OTHER ON-TREND TONES

It shouldn't be a surprise that brown also plays well with other on-trend colors this year, including bold kelly green and cool blues. Edith Young, an artist, designer and writer who wrote "Color Scheme: An Irreverent History of Art and Pop Culture in Color Palettes," told Architectural Digest that brown stripes are the way to go, along with pairing chocolatey hues with light blues.

WARM AND COZY

Brown is a color that can keep us grounded and it's also got a warm and cozy vibe that makes us more comfortable



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after two years of pandemic uncertainty.

"Everyone is wanting to feel close to and comforted by the earth, whether it's an organic brown linen for a family room sofa or a rich chocolate velvet on bergeres for a living room," interior designer Mark D. Sikes told Vogue. He recently paired rich browns with ivory for the

"chicest room ever" in Chicago.

MINIMALISM

Brown also fits into the new minimalist movement in a way that other colors can't. It's comforting but still comfortable in a neutral palette.

"Shades of brown bring about warmth, earthiness and

calm that feel timeless and grounding," interior designer Jake Arnold told Vogue. And it's a great base for other, more transitional trends. "It provides a lovely complement and base for other pops of color in a space."

Sikes also believes that brown is here to stay, so you can decorate to your heart's

content without a worry for your pocketbook. Look for organic shapes, Vogue says, with natural fibers and finishes. Pieces that harken back to the 1970s are also popular.

"Seventies are definitively on trend in design," designer Giampiero Tagliaferri told Vogue. "And there comes the brown."



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Biophilic Design

Biophilic design is a building trend used to increase inhabitants' connection to the natural environment.

Think of spaces with natural finishes like wood, curves and views of nature. Biophilic design looks to bolster our health and well-being by bringing us back to nature through the built environment. It's more than just putting a few potted plants in your office, though.

A HISTORY

Biophilic design goes back to the 1980s when biologist Edward O. Wilson proposed that humans have an innate, biological affinity for the natu-

ral world. And, because we now spend 90% of our time inside, we need to bring more of the outdoors in.

A 2019 study in Denmark found that children exposed to more greenery had 55% fewer mental health problems later in life than those who weren't exposed to nature. Norwegian researchers found that people who read and did other attention-based tasks surrounded by plants improved their scores more over time than those who didn't.

Big companies such as Google, Etsy

and others have embraced biophilic design as a way to make their workforces more productive, creative and happier.

HOW YOU CAN USE IT

You might not have the budget to knock out walls and add more windows and fractal curves to your home, but there are things you can do to implement some principals of biophilic design in your home. Open up curtains and windows and let natural light flood in. Clear away any window obstructions such as tchotchkes perched on the windowsill and keep those windows sparkling clean. Move furniture to be as close to the light as

you can get.

You can also utilize green in ways other than the leafy kind. Choose a pale green for your walls or accents in your home. Opt for rounded shapes in your furniture and other items — there are no straight lines in nature — and vary the heights and shapes of things to mimic the variety we see outside. Fractal forms.

“Fractals are self-similar forms on different scales,” sustainable designer Zelda Elisco told Homes & Gardens. “The leaves of a fern or the branches of a tree are typical examples. No part of the natural world appears free from them: ocean waves contain smaller waves, etc.”

Matte Metal Finishes

Most of our homes contain gleaming metal fixtures in whatever metal was on trend at the time it was built.

Shiny brass, nickel or chrome, usually, or if you have a newer home, rubbed bronze or even black. But the latest trend doesn't focus on the metal's color so much as the finish. Nowadays, it's a matte world.

TYPES OF MATTE FINISHES

There's more to matte than just flat. You can brushed finishes, where there's a movement to the metal, or satin finishes, that lack the brush strokes but have a slight glimmer to the metal. The good news about these flat finishes is that they are somewhat easier to keep clean in that they hide scuffs, marks and fingerprints. But the bad news is that most cleaners can damage that trendy finish.

Matte finishes are versatile, too, and match almost any decor, and by choosing a neutral shape and color, you can have a fixture for life. Choose simple lines and minimal detail to get the most value out of your new fixtures.

CARING FOR MATTE FINISHES

Matte finishes, especially the popular darker colors of



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black and rubbed bronze, can easily show scale from water and spots. They may also be rougher than shinier finishes, meaning their quicker to get damaged.

To properly care for your matte fixtures, avoid abrasive cleaners and harsh detergents with bleach, acids, solvents and waxes. Don't allow soap

scum, toothpaste or hard water deposits to build up on your fixtures as they may wear away any surface coating and damage the finish. Consider using microfiber cloths, which are less likely to scratch. Lastly, follow the manufacturer's instructions on proper care for your new fixtures.

Also be careful during any installation and repairs. The matte black finish, in particular, is prone to scratching. Put a cloth between your tools and the fixture itself and make sure any professionals you hire take the same care.

MIXING METALS

A while back, fashion em-

braced mixing metals in jewelry, and home designers are now doing the same thing with fixtures. Color, finish, it can all be mixed and matched tastefully with the right choices. Just about any metal can be done in at least one type of matte finish, so if you love it, don't be afraid to mix and match colors between rooms.



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Wellness-Conscious Design

After two years of battling the devastating coronavirus pandemic, designers are building homes and offices with wellness in mind. But it means more than just a pretty interior.

“The pandemic has crystallized the need we all have for mental and physical health, and we have had time to reflect on our pace of life and the impact of technology, both good and bad,” designer Jo Littlefair told *Architectural Digest*. “This, in turn, means that as designers of interior spaces, we need to articulate a response that delivers on not only an aesthetic level but creates an environment to alter moods and assist rejuvenation.”

Designers are including elements that fight disease and improve mental and physical well-being, such as touchless

surfaces to avoid the spread of germs and lighting fixtures that help kill bacteria and purify surfaces. It can also help relieve stress.

“People are understandably interested in therapies that can help them recover from stress. Light therapy usually uses LED light, and from a technology standpoint, has been incorporated into showerheads, taps and cabinetry,” designer Shalini Misra told *Architectural Digest*. “It purports to help boost and improve immune systems and have many other health properties for the skin.”

Shelly Lynch-Sparks said that air puri-

fication is also a concern. Installing an air purification system helps, as do advances in paint, glue and materials to prevent off-gassing are also concerns. She recommends wood veneers, Caesarstone quartz and zero-VOC paints. Wellness design also features elements like sound quality and outdoor-indoor space integration, and, of course, sustainability.

“It continues to grow because it continues to make sense,” said John Shannon of HFZ Capital Group. “Feeling well is a good thing. People like it — they want more and more.”

Shannon likened recent trends in building for wellness to an arms race, saying builders are competing to offer more and more wellness amenities as selling points. It can also be good for designers to focus their practices on wellness.

Kim Radovich, president of the American Society of Interior Designers, said that for emerging professionals, wellness design is here to stay. The ASID devoted its 2019 continuing education summit to the topic.

“We see massive potential for what will happen in that market in the next decade-plus,” GWI economist Katherine Johnston told *Architectural Digest*. “We are at the very beginning of a shift in the way building is done.”

Grading the Curve

Along with the more organic and natural design trends this year are plush, curvy shapes in furnishings. It goes along with the return of 1970s design, but with a modern, luxe twist.

“Today’s curves represent luxury, comfort and relaxation, all of which I think we can, as a whole, admit to needing during these intense last few years,” home interior shop owner Katie Laughridge said. “The new take on traditional curved furniture is art in its own right. Sloped lines, curved silhouettes and plus, overfull cushions are just a few of the stunning additions to shops this year.”

Rounder silhouettes also warm up more stark color palettes and rigid lines of earlier eras of design, so you don’t need to toss out a whole room or knock down a wall to get the look you want. If you’re building, consider adding arched openings, barrel-vault ceilings and curved walkways.

“Arcs are in all around the home,” social media company Pinterest said. “People will invest in home decor such as curved sofas, curved bar designs and curved kitchen islands. Boomers, Gen X and millennials are driving the searches behind this well-rounded home trend.”



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Using curved lines helps you integrate natural shapes into your design. Research shows that biophilic design elements like curves, organic materials and natural light can relieve stress and improve creativity. A 2015 Human Spaces report found that employees in work environments that incorporated natural elements reported

a 15% higher wellbeing score and a 6% higher productivity score than employees whose offices did not have such elements. The study also found that two-thirds of respondents said that they felt happy with they walked into work environments with green, yellow or blue colors. Window views of greenery and water were

also linked to lower stress levels in employees.

Of course, nature — including those good-feeling-boosting plants and water — has no straight lines. So including curves in your design can help your brain feel like it’s in a more natural, comforting space. In a 2013 study by the University of Toronto at

Scarborough, more people found rooms well-stocked with curves to be beautiful. More importantly, the parts of their brains that deal with emotion lit up. Curves make us feel. A Harvard study found that objects with sharp elements, meanwhile, activate the part of the brain that deals with fear.

Sustainable Design

Green just isn't a bold choice on a palette. It can also be a way of life.

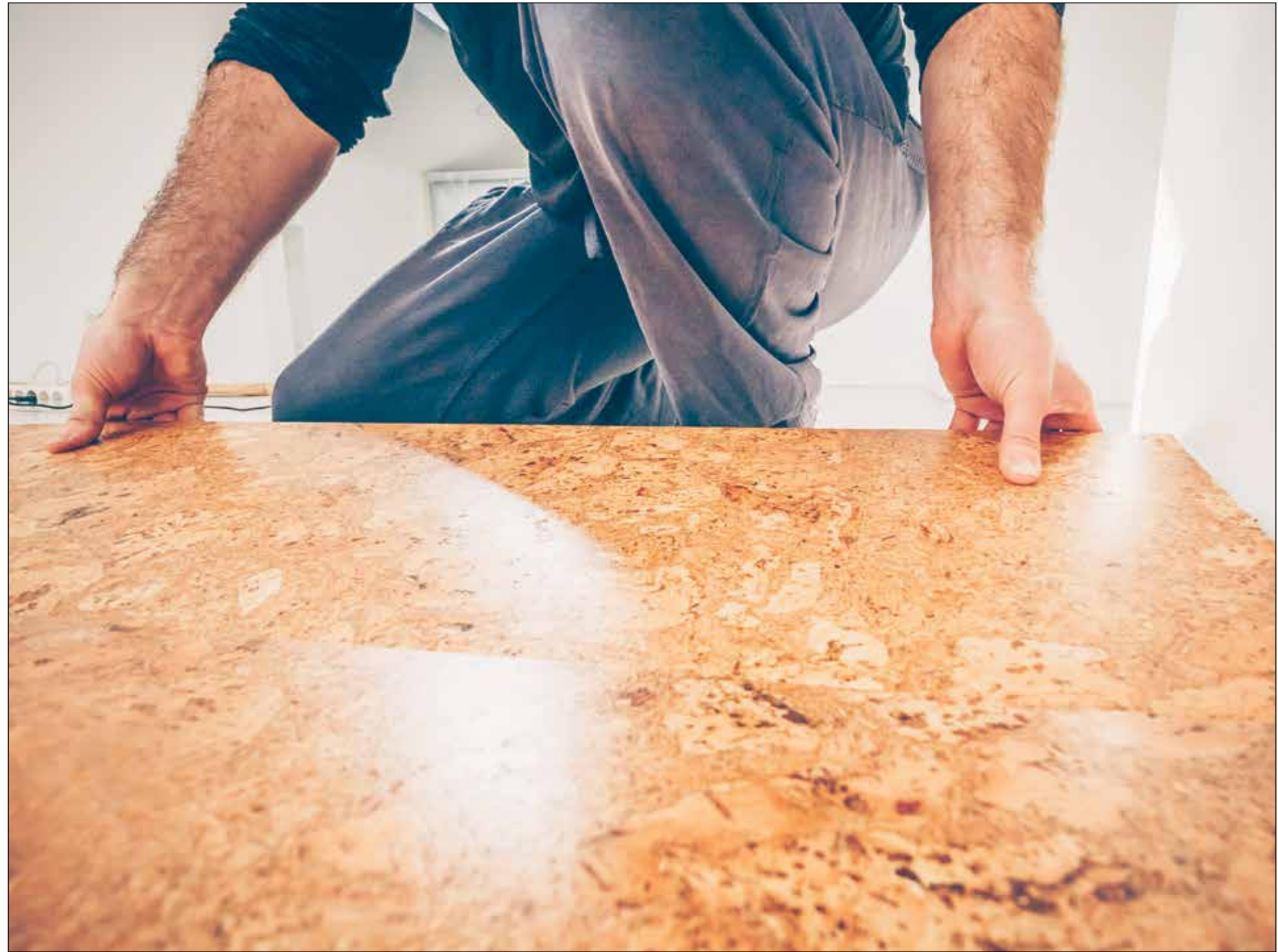
If you're remodeling, redoing, redesigning or building a new home, you have a wealth of sustainable choices to help you live a more earth-friendly lifestyle.

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Look for materials that are better for the environment when you're building or remodeling. This can include recycled materials such as metals for railings and countertops and bioglass for sinks, walls and flooring. Choose earth-friendly bamboo and cork instead of hard woods for flooring and cabinetry. Another flooring option comes in the form of natural fibers, such as wool, sisal, jute or hemp. They're renewable, durable and resist shedding. You can also purchase paints that are low VOC or low odor. These paints won't contain harmful chemicals.

SAVING ENERGY

Wire your home with smart devices such as thermostats and switches that can help you save on your energy bill. And design trends are going away from heavy curtains and blinds and toward letting natural light shine in. Just be careful to position your windows in the shade or use window



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films to reduce heat gain in your home.

LIVE LOCAL

Just like with food, local home products also tend to be better for the environment. Look for locally sourced woods, fibers and artisans to make quality, long-lasting pieces that will grace your home

for years to come. The longer a piece lasts, the fewer times you have to replace it and the better for the planet it is.

REUSE, RENEW

While you're thinking of sustainable materials, add pre-owned furniture to your list. Look for classic pieces in good shape and refinish them to fit

your decor. Garage sales, thrift stores and online marketplaces are a great place to start. Preowned pieces are also more budget friendly than buying new home furnishings, and you may be more likely to find a well-made, quality piece in your budget than going with a more cheaply made brand-new counterpart.

Avoid any pieces that have been recalled, unless you can still get the fix to make them safe, and also be on the lookout for finishes that contain things that we now know are toxic, such as lead. It's not a deal-breaker, but you should research how to safely remediate any older finishes before redoing the piece for yourself.

Going Big in the Home

Mimimalist, all-white color schemes are giving way to bolder, brighter and, yes, bigger patterns.

If you're in a smaller space, fear not. The artful use of today's larger-scale patterns can actually make a bigger impact and make your space look larger than it is. Here are some hints for applying this hot design trend in your own home.

COMPARE, CONTRAST

Choose your big pattern and then design your room around it, choosing colors that contrast rather than blend in. Even throwing in multiple patterns flies nowadays, so long as you tie them together with color.

Adding multiple patterns can give your room dimension and texture, meaning it can be a more inviting and cozy space.

USE YOUR PALETTE WISELY

Part of the key to making a bold pattern work is keeping your palette and space minimal other than that print. Try staying in the same, contrasting color family with the remainder of your pieces to keep the look fresh.

Fixtures and accessories should be chosen with a light hand and with minimal lines and flourishes to keep the focus on your pattern.



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PLAYING WITH TEXTURE

Bold doesn't necessarily come from color and pattern. You can also contrast textures by using different paint finishes. Instead of the usual satin or eggshell look, go with a shiny high-gloss paint paired with rich textures of fabric (brocade and velvet, for instance) for an

ultra-luxe look.

60/30/10

If you're just starting out in the pattern-mixing game, try this equation: Start with 60% of your favorite pattern, then 30% of a second pattern and 10% of a third as an accent. Include solids as supports in your decor, and make sure

you repeat colors in the patterns to tie it all together.

BOLD ON A BUDGET

If you're not doing a whole remodel or new build on a budget, go for a low-cost pattern update in pillows and throw rugs. Coordinate the colors in your favorite pillow. Try using the less-prominent

colors to make a statement.

BREATHING ROOM

No matter which technique you try, remember to give your boldness room to breathe — space where the eye can rest. The absence will make the eye, and the heart, grow fonder and the bold pattern or color won't overwhelm the room.