

 **Real Estate & Home | Decor**

Not Your Grandma's Florals

Today's floral patterns reinvent fresh-from-the-garden looks in bold colors

Author: Annette Rose-Shapiro | Published: Friday, April 24, 2015



It's easy to dismiss floral as an outdated decorating style. The very word "floral" conjures up the dusty rose and pale violet hues of the Victorian era, not to mention the heavy damask curtains and woeful divan associated with Grandma's living room. It's not an aesthetic that's thought of as modern and it can seem a little dreary. But florals are blooming in a whole new way that just might change the minds of the hippest homeowners.

How are designers using them? “Go big or go home,” said Marlaina Teich of Marlaina Teich Designs in Bellmore. “I love the impact large-scale floral prints can make.” Teich used a bold, graphic flower-patterned wallpaper for a dining room accent wall and brought in coordinated faux-silk draperies and an area rug in a deep blue. She also likes the look of Thibaut and Anna French’s super-modern paper. Both collections feature prints that look like they were created by a graphic designer and come in single-colored patterns like fuchsia, bright orange, purple, sage green and black. The monochromatic palette is a fresh take on the designs of yore, which tended to be multi-colored and have realistic renderings, giving them a busy look. Teich is drawn to florals because of the youthful, romantic way that they can play in a space, but she doesn’t like to use more than one pattern in a single room.

Lori Miller, owner of Lori-Girl Creations in Huntington Station, said her clients don’t specifically ask for the look, but often end up embracing it once she presents her design ideas. “The new graphic prints are not what you think of when you think of florals,” she said. “They’re fresh, updated, funky and fun.” Miller used a Carl Robinson wallpaper for a project in Long Beach that had “an Andy Warhol” quality to it, in the sense that the pattern has a loose, airy feel like one of the artist’s early flower pieces. In this case, Miller brought the theme to the ceiling by adding a chandelier with delicate crystal blooms to complete the thought.

Some designers like to use new patterns to bring a pop of color to an otherwise neutral décor. Jennifer Fox and Tonia Omeltchenko of Port Washington’s Fox + Chenko prefer subdued prints that suggest nature (including trees and branches) and not just flowers. “Bright floral accent pillows can be added to an already existing décor,” Fox said. “For larger statement pieces like couches or ottomans, most of our clients prefer solids or textures, but we can make a bold statement with well-edited accessories.” They used grass cloth for an accent wall in a family room that had a graphic leaf print—a print men might be willing to accept as not-too-fussy or feminine.

Other designers, like Keith Baltimore of Port Washington-based Baltimore Design Group, are known for using classic floral prints in a contemporary way. Many of his clients do favor florals, “especially in the bedroom. When you awaken to a soothing floral, it cheers up your day.” Baltimore likes to use modern graphic prints for accent pieces like throw pillows and ottomans, but he’s not afraid to mix traditional prints with several different patterns. He paired the two different floral stripes in a throw pillow and divan with a big, bold floral rug, all in soft roses and blues.

Even though the patterns were different, Baltimore chose colors that played off each other—pale blues, creams and pinks with delicate embroidery—and the richness of the textures created additional visual layers. Using the two together gives the space an updated vibe, but Baltimore cautioned that “using the same pattern looks too ‘matchy-matchy,’ which is not imaginative.” He also prefers solid color sofas to help layer the room with contrasting hues in different patterns, textures and finishes, a nice way of bringing in another print or two.

To experiment without breaking the bank, add one element at a time. In the bedroom, a comforter and pillow shams in a big, bright print can add lots of color to an otherwise neutral space. And accessories like throws in a coordinating color give it sophistication. Sometimes, a

single piece of furniture, like a cozy armchair or a versatile storage ottoman, with an unusual combination like cool blue roses on a chocolate brown background, is just enough to make a statement. Pair it with a solid rug and draperies to complete the look.

Floral rugs, another reminder of Grandma's house, have also come into the modern era and can create a good foundation without dominating the room. Old-school cabbage roses and center medallions were almost sleep-inducing elements dominating spaces. Now there are rugs that can define a room's area, lighten up the space, and set an upbeat and modern mood. Look for simply drawn blossoms in a subtle color on a bright background to pair with solid furniture and accessories.

Another way to try out a new look and avoid spending a small fortune on luxurious fabrics is by putting in a little DIY effort. Top fabric companies have sample sales or sell bolt-ends with just a few yards that are enough for throw pillows, bolsters, table runners, seat cushions and even small curtains or valances. And since these companies are constantly evolving their styles to suit top interior designers, it's easy to find the latest looks and a great deal.

French artist Henri Matisse said it best: "There are always flowers for those who want to see them." Bringing the freshness of flora indoors can add color, style and a whole new mood that's anything but old-fashioned.

- See more at: <http://www.lipulse.com/real-estate-home/article/not-your-grandmas-florals#sthash.Pv6WxJOj.dpuf>