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what's your style?

by sue agresta

knowing what we like is often more important than knowing the history of furniture styles.

Clean contemporary casual... Euro-minimalist... Old world charm... or maybe an eclectic blend. Just as with the couch and sofa styles shown above, you may admire rooms in all these styles, but knowing what you can live with and setting a clear direction will save you time, tears and money.

*photos clockwise from upper left –
@ Bo Concepts – Carle Place and Manhasset
Baker @ Safavieh – Carle Place and Manhasset
Burton James @ diSalvo Interiors – Garden City
Duchess @ Domain – Manhasset, Carle Place
and Huntington*

what do i see?

here are a few things to consider:

image. Look in your clothes closet. After all, your home is a setting for you and your family. Do you wear twin sets and pearls? Chances are you are a traditionalist when it comes to furnishings. Do you have piercings and tattoos? Well you get the idea. Too radical

should your 'home' be a quiet sanctuary – or a bustling hub for friends, family and neighbors?

a shift may seem exciting, but may make you unhappy in the long run.

feeling. Do you like to feel that home is a quiet sanctuary? Or is it a bustling hub for friends, family neighbors, etc.? A busy lifestyle may work better with more casual décor. Kids with skateboards, schoolbooks and toy chests are the antithesis of minimalist design. If you live alone or are married to a neat freak a more formal style may suit you to a tee.



traditional style of baker @ safavieh – carle place and manhasset

architecture. What style is your house? An open plan, vaulted ceilinged contemporary may be out of scale and resistant to a fussy, chintzy traditional plan. Designing with the architectural scope and details of your house in mind will give you a much more pulled together look

where to start? Go to a good bookstore that has all the décor magazines. Look at the covers. Which ones capture your imagination? If you go for *Traditional Home* you may not even want to look at the trendier-than-thou *Wallpaper*. Buy yourself a

scandinavian contemporary @ bo concepts – carle place and manhattan



what do i see?

latte and take a stack to the reading table. Thumb around and see which magazines show the most styles that you like. Buy 3 or 4 and take them home. Tear out and make a pile of all the rooms that appeal to you. Next, take a pad of post-its, noting what you like in each picture and attaching it for future reference. You may like the color in one room, the scale, pattern, feeling or style of others—it may be just one element like a chair with curvy, carved cabriole legs or a rough-hewn stone floor that attracts your attention.

If you have enough pictures, you will start to see a consistent pattern of colors and styles you like. You

may be drawn to the dark wood tones and warm colors of an old world style. You may find that you prefer light, airy florals of an English garden, or the more reserved neutral pallet of a Japanese-inspired dining room. The trick is to look at each picture quickly. Go with your gut. Don't over-think the process and you will discover what makes you comfortable and happy. Remember, you can't change your décor as easily as you change your clothes so don't go too far out on a limb.

Louis XV or XVI? Professional designers, serious style-o-philes and wealthy antique collectors, know and relish the differences between classic styles. If

what looks appeal to you? what it is... what it takes...






	wood/finishes	details	fabrics	colors
 english country	mahogany, oak scrubbed pine, marble, brick, fieldstone.	crystal, silver, wing chairs, straight lines or gentle curves.	leather, chintz, damask, floral.	rich tans, black, rust.
 american country	oak, pine, beech, maple.	simple, clean lines, can be rustic or more formal.	cottons, wools.	clear blues, greens, reds, yellows.
 swedish country	light or white painted wood.	simple country styles, crystal chandeliers.	cotton, toile, checks, stripes.	white paired with blue, rose, black or cream.
 tuscan	walnut, dark oak, marble, painted wood, textured plaster.	curvilinear, carved detail, classic urn, shaped lamps.	velvets, silks, luxurious trim.	rich golds, reds, russets.
 modern	maple, walnut, denge, bamboo, stainless steel, granite, glass,	geometric shapes, clean lines.	bold geometric patterns, solid colors.	brights neutrals, black and white.
 japanese modern	teak, stone, glass, bamboo, rice paper.	clean lines, geometric spaces based on number of tatami mat squares.	silks, cottons, linen, solids and subtle patterns.	taupe, grey, white, black, smoke, red.

chart by christoph blumrich

you are one of these, you already know Hepplewhite from Queen Anne, Bauhaus from Art Deco.

For most of us, knowing what we like is more important than knowing the history of furniture styles. Popular American design lingo you hear on HGTV or see in furniture ads tends to simplify. For instance, what does "old world charm" actually mean? It's more a feeling of warmth and permanence than an actual style.

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able and happy.

To achieve looks that fall into this category, many American companies offer furniture with period European and Asian influences so you can create a formal English dining room, a



american contemporary @ ethan allen - long island

romantic French boudoir, warm Tuscan kitchen, or a Zen-like bathroom. If it's in the budget, add genuine antique accessories for flavor.

"Contemporary" is another catch-all for a myriad of styles including the country casual look of The Pottery Barn, Euro-fresh Ikea, mid-scale Crate and Barrel, or the more polished and expensive Maurice Villency. There are specialty stores and websites for every style in every price range. If you're not sure what you like, visit showrooms including Ethan Allen, Macy's and Bloomingdale's that offer decorator "rooms" that allow you to experience the completed look of many different styles. Study the details, color palettes and accessories used to create each space.

Keep it personal. Whatever style you chose, don't be afraid to make it your own. You may be inspired by the design of a rug or piece of artwork you acquire on vacation. You could build a very successful room around a settee your grandmother left you. Or, you might try your hand at combining styles. To achieve harmony in an eclectic design, remember to mix elements in your room that share a common color, scale, shape and feeling.

Even the choice of your kitchen appliances reflect a certain style and sensibility. The old world detail of the ever popular AGA stove, long heralded for their superior cooking qualities, give it a distinct European style and feel.

