

Pushing the envelope

Why the eclectic look has become one of the world's most popular interior styles

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Main: All products from Fenton & Fenton, www.fentonandfenton.com.au
Above: Material canvas, \$39.99 Wall Art Prints, www.wallartprints.com.au

Eclectic is one of the most commonly described interior styles. But what exactly does it refer to? The design is a combination of three or more styles or design found in historical periods such as French provincial, vintage chic and modern industrial teamed with unique bold accessories that add style and flare. That's according to TAFE Gold Coast interior design teacher Yvette Switala.

Yvette has a deep love for the eclectic look and is an expert at pulling the style together.

"The eclectic style encompasses a variety of periods and styles which are brought together through the use of colour, texture, shape and finish," Yvette explains.

"It is important to achieve balance through the use of opposites such as timber and aluminium, glass and ceramic, dark and neutral, modern and vintage.

"The knack to succeed in the eclectic look is to marry objects that at first glance seem incompatible; such as linking a vintage table and contemporary sofa using the same colour napkins and decorative cushions."

It's no secret the eclectic style pushes the boundaries with the mixing and matching of old and new, east and west, luxe and humble, and showy and quiet.

If done well, eclectic decor shows style and confidence yet still adheres to the fundamentals of good design.

Creating the eclectic look can be a fun way to express your personality and has timeless appeal due to its celebration of the old and new.

Yvette says the look can be extremely appealing and fun, but can also be quite tricky to achieve.

"When trying to achieve this design in the home, stylists need to be careful not to trip over the fine line between simple contrast and absolute chaos with the room presenting as a flea market or garage sale," she says.

"To avoid a chaotic mess, use a neutral colour base to assist with tying varying furnishings together and the remaining colours should be kept to a maximum of three but they can vary in contrast."

Yvette suggests using one neutral or dark colour for large areas such as the walls

and floors and the second colour as a supportive hue through the use of sofas, rugs and furniture.

The remaining two colours should be used as bright accents with decorative cushions, art and lamps.

When it comes to the finer decorative details, the TAFE teacher recommends layering accessories to create depth and dimension. So, for example, putting large objects at the back and smaller to the front.

Robyn Spratt, who owns Burleigh Heads-based Monsoon Homewares, says the eclectic trend is popular among Gold Coasters.

"It's about mixing it up," Robyn says.

"Everybody wants something different and they don't want their house to look like the house next door."

She says balance is the key when styling with one main piece standing out.

"When you do eclectic styling you might have one piece that will really pop in a room," she says.

"You might have fabulous wallpaper and then put a cushion that's completely mismatched but yet it's going to go and look good."

EXPERT TIPS

- 1** Limit the amount of styles you intend to mix and match. No more than three, otherwise you are at the risk of total chaos
- 2** Be conservative with the use of colour. No more than four
- 3** Use colour and texture to unite objects from different historical periods and styles
- 4** Don't be scared to experiment! This is the general idea of achieving eclectic interiors
- 5** A great start to achieve the eclectic look is to collect artefacts and souvenirs from your travels around the world



Above: Timber + Marble Stool, \$299, Cranmore Home, www.cranmorehome.com.au
Below: Devon chandelier, Boyd Blue Ashmore, www.boydblue.com