

Decorating

3

IT'S YOUR CHOICE

There are many ways to decorate a home but finding the right design style is not always straightforward, as **Kath Ryding** discovers

Experts agree that if you decorate to reflect your personality and lifestyle, rather than follow market trends, you will be happier with the result for longer and feel more comfortable in your home.

But how do you identify which style suits you best?

"The cardinal rule is that the style chosen must be functional and suit the owner's everyday routine, otherwise they will be miserable with it no matter how aesthetically pleasing it is," says interior designer Felicia Olsen, of Felicia for Lifestyle Design.

"If they are carefree, love lots of colour and have children, then the minimalist look is not for them. Instead, they should go for a more casual, modern look."

Fiona Hutchinson, from Revive Design, agrees. "Lifestyle and how you like to live should always be the first consideration," she says.

"Although the basics of personal style generally remain the same, we change with age and even seasonally. Therefore, like you, your home's decoration should be constantly evolving.

"Each room should serve a purpose, otherwise they could end up like the old-fashioned formal dining room, filled with expensive furniture that is only used once or twice a year."

Ms Hutchinson also recommends careful consideration of the property's features, lighting, sense of space and materials.

"Inspiration can be drawn from magazines and books," she says. "I encourage clients to cut out or collect samples of everything that inspires them including colours, textures and materials. From this there will usually be a common theme that can form the basis for the design style chosen.

Meryl Carter, from Meryl Carter Interior Designs, prefers to sit down with her clients for a long chat to ascertain all the information required and help her pinpoint the right style for their home.

"Designing and decorating is a very personal choice," she says. "It is important to have an intimate knowledge of a client's likes and dislikes, their home situation, their lifestyle choices and the things that are important to them to create an environment that they love."

Topics that are discussed in depth include not only colour, texture and furnishing preferences but also hobbies, living arrangements, pets, entertaining habits and favourite mementos or cherished possessions that the client wishes to be featured.

"Whether you want to decorate or renovate, work on a whole house or just one room, it is important to have a clear picture of what you want to achieve," Ms Carter says. "This also has to

include practicalities such as the time frame available, the living arrangements while the project is under way and the budget."

Once all of this information has been carefully gathered and considered, the designers and decorators agree that one particular style, or a combination of styles, usually becomes apparent as the right choice for the client.

"Imagination goes a long way," Ms Olsen says. "If the client can picture themselves living with and maintaining the style they have chosen, then they should go for it."

But with many different design styles and products available on the market, it can be confusing and overwhelming when attempting to select the right pieces for your home.

"The biggest mistake I see is when clients have decided to decorate their home room by room without an overall plan," Ms Hutchinson says. "This usually results in a home with no flow and lots of costly mistakes. Failing to plan is planning to fail."

Flow from one space to another can be achieved by using a distinctive colour, material or design motif in furnishings, drapery, accessories and art work.

While there are specific classifications of design styles (think Federation, country, contemporary, Colonial), the reality is that each person should choose a design style that suits them. Many people will draw from different styles.

If co-ordinating your own design style seems too difficult to contemplate, then professional interior designers and decorators can provide invaluable guidance and creative ideas to update or change the look of a home.

Contact Felicia for Lifestyle Design on 93411591 or 0418 922 140, Revive Design on 0418 383 182 and Meryl Carter Interior Designs on 0438 444 000.



Revive Design used neutral colours and modern furniture with clean lines for a contemporary feel, adding richness with warm colour tones and statement accessories.



Contemporary furniture in white and aluminium with a splash of colour gives this room, styled by Revive Design, a modern look and feel.



In this Meryl Carter design, the lounge suite divides the room, colour was added in small touches with plants and the black and white theme gives a sleek look.



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