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style in 3
easy steps

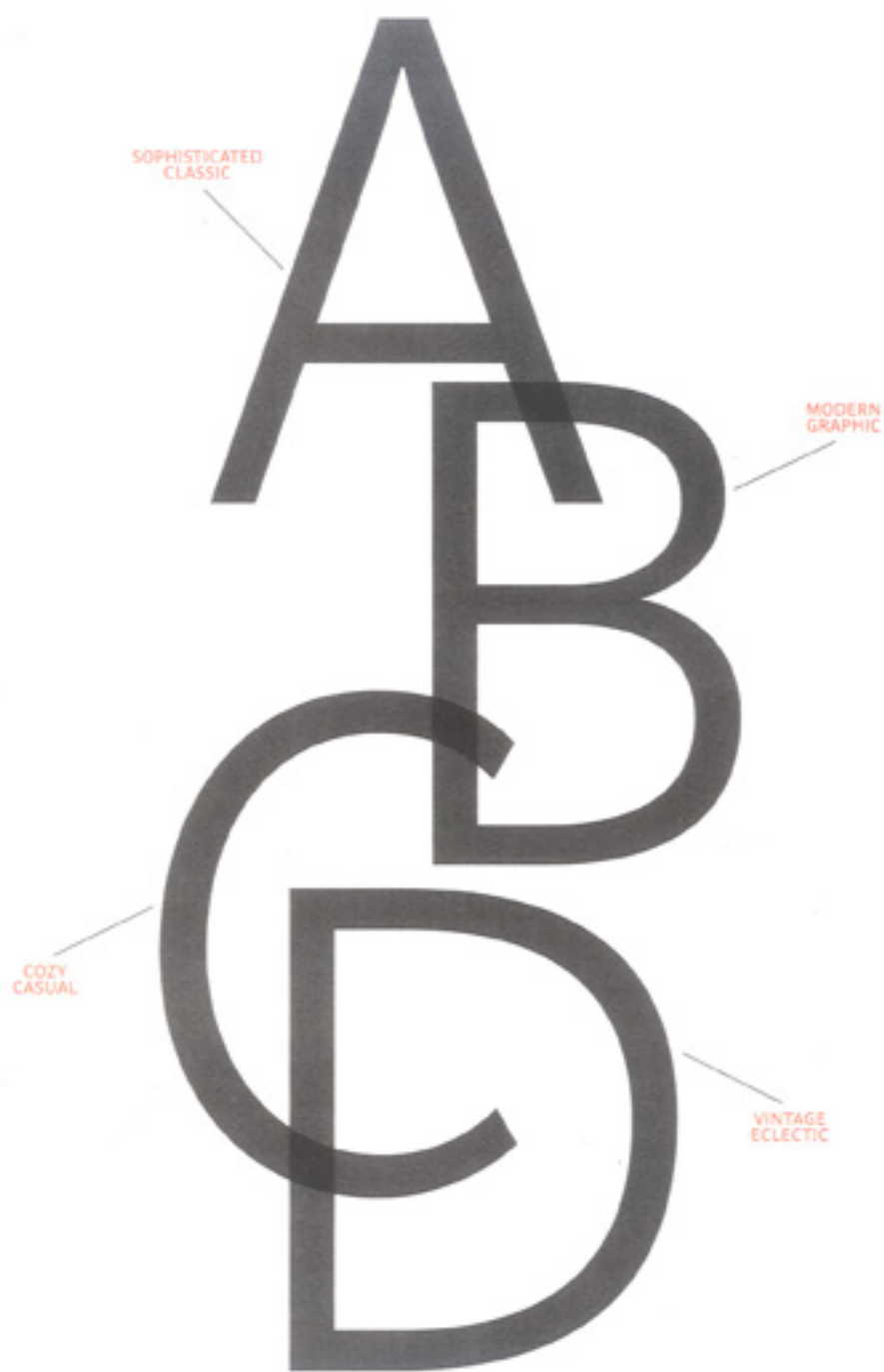
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WHAT'S YOUR DECORATING STYLE?

If someone asked you to name the kind of decor you like, could you do it? Or would you stumble and mumble, mention a few stores, and look off into the distance in search of the right adjectives? You're not alone. But the thing is, articulating your style is the key to creating a room that really reflects it. If this sounds esoteric, have no fear: We've got some simple steps to help you identify the look you crave, a few visual tutorials to make you a mini expert on design, and dozens of sources to let you shop your style and bring it home. So whether you're overhauling a mishmash of furniture bit by bit or doing a rapid-fire redecoration, you'll learn how to make great choices and get cohesive results that you'll love.

written by **MERYL LEVIN**



A VISUAL QUIZ TO GET YOU STARTED

Look at the images above and circle all those you're drawn to. No thinking—just go with your gut and move quickly. This is meant to offer a snapshot of your broader tastes and help you uncover your decor preferences. To decode your answers, see Quiz Key (following page).

3 STEPS TO NAMING YOUR STYLE

Decorating is an extension of your personal style, but so much better, because it comes without the concerns of sizing and fit.

That should make it fun, but for a lot of us it's incredibly stressful—a too-blank canvas that involves big commitments and potentially pricey mistakes. Aside from the money part, choosing a sofa is not all that different from picking a pair of shoes:

It's all about who you are and what you like on a gut level.

Finding your decorating groove depends on getting in touch with that.

With advice from design expert and author Carrie McCarthy (stylestatement.com), who helps people define and manifest their personal style in all aspects of their lives, we've created a plan geared toward home decorating. Here's what to do.

1. Tour your home, and really look at your furniture.

With a pad in hand, walk from room to room examining your belongings and make two truthful lists: "Love It" and "Wish I Could Replace It." Catalog everything you can, including art—and be real, even if it's difficult. "It's all based on how things make you feel," says McCarthy. "Maybe you come across a piece of art that bugs you, but you've kept it around because it was your grandmother's. Pay attention to that"—and categorize accordingly.

2. Pull together small items you love, including clothes.

Check the top of your dresser, your mantel, your bookshelves, your china cabinet. Sift through collections and mementos. Make a pile of favorites on your bed. Then pull special clothes from your closet. "Focus on the items that make you feel beautiful and joyful, the ones that inspire you to stand tall," says McCarthy. Take the same eye to your jewelry and accessories.

3. Tap your memory and your imagination.

Get comfortable, then close your eyes and think about places you love to be and why you love them—from a local café to a faraway beach. Recall paintings, movies, and books that have stuck

with you for some reason. Then go into fantasy mode. "Imagine that real-world constraints don't apply," says McCarthy. "Picture your dream home. If you could live anywhere in the world, would you choose a loft in New York? An English manor? A tree house in the tropics?" Then think outside of home: "If you were invited to the Oscars, what would you wear? Include jewelry and shoes." This moves you beyond the limitations of your own lifestyle and budget and into a new realm of creativity. Jot down your answers.

Now for the hard part. Look for common threads—design, colors, shapes, materials, vibe—among the things you love. Because McCarthy can't be there to analyze your results, we have included a mini version of this exercise in the image-selection quiz on the previous page. Note the letters of the items you marked, and see the Quiz Key (right) for some broad-stroke conclusions. You may find yourself attracted to a blend of styles rather than just one; as you delve into the rooms on the next pages, notice which features appeal to you and which don't. This will help you translate your taste into smart decorating choices.



QUIZ KEY

If you circled...

MOSTLY A's: You're drawn to timeless pieces and luxe materials. You'll probably like the style **Sophisticated Classic** (opposite page).

MOSTLY B's: You're into color, contrast, and clean lines. You'll probably like the style **Modern Graphic** (page 162).

MOSTLY C's: You're about comfort and warmth. You'll probably like the style **Cozy Casual** (page 163).

MOSTLY D's: You go for history, quirks, and curves. You'll probably like the style **Vintage Eclectic** (page 164).

LARGE PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANCOIS HALARD/TRUNK ARCHIVE;
SMALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFFREY SKOOL. SEE CREDITS
PAGE 220 FOR ADDITIONAL CREDIT INFORMATION.



STYLE STARTERS

Statement pieces to launch your look.



OVERSIZED MIRROR

Nearly four feet across, it's a room-defining focal point. Standing Medallion mirror, \$348, anthropologie.com.



SHELTER-ARM SOFA

Dramatically high sides, with crisp definition, thanks to dark wood against light upholstery. Isaac sofa, \$6,625, olystudio.com for stores.



DECORATIVE BUST

A 33-inch resin objet with the feel of an auction-house acquisition. Zeus bust, \$775, olystudio.com for stores.



ART DECO-INSPIRED LAMP

A parchment shade and a delicate base of marble with brass-finished metal show luxe restraint. Marco lamp by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, \$225, mgbw.com for stores.

A SOPHISTICATED CLASSIC

An elegant blend of refined traditional furniture, jewelry-like accessories, and pale hues. Patrician old-world elements pair with cleaner Art Deco shapes. The look evokes a more formal lifestyle. Think Grace Kelly, Tiffany & Co., and Charlotte from *Sex and the City*.

FEATURES

- Delicate furniture pieces with feminine lines and tapered legs.
- A palette of neutrals and soft colors.
- Grand chandeliers.
- Luxurious fabrics, like silk and velvet.
- Rich dark woods with polished veneers.
- Luxe accent materials, including metal, marble, and glass.
- Symmetrical floor plans.

STYLE STARTERS

Statement pieces to launch your look.



FUTURISTIC CHANDELIER

This large, airy fixture makes a huge impact without overpowering a space. Orbit chandelier by Patrick Townsend, \$350, thefutureperfect.com.



COLOR-BLOCK PRINT

Brings energy and dominates a room, in a good way. Rothko: Untitled, \$200, momastore.org.



VELVET SOFA

Cool and clean, thanks to square arms and metal legs. Comfortable, with a slightly reclined back. Theatre sofa by Ted Boerner, \$3,600, dwr.com.



WOOD-FRAME CHAIR

Angular arms balanced by a loungey seat that seems to hover in midair. Floating chair, \$2,200, calvinkleinhome.com for stores.



B MODERN GRAPHIC

A fresh, fun, contemporary look that combines urban styling (imagine a downtown loft) with edgy, colorful elements and midcentury design. Simple furniture forms balance out bold accents and patterns. Think the Museum of Modern Art, Frank Lloyd Wright, a Rubik's Cube.

FEATURES

- Furniture with clean lines and no extra adornment.
- Blocks of saturated color.
- Boxy upholstery with plain legs or skirtless bases.
- Lacquered finishes and a mix of woods, both light (birch, oak) and dark (walnut, mahogany).
- Geometric or abstract patterns and Pop Art-inspired accessories.



LARGE PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM GEORGE;
SMALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFFREY SOROKA

C COZY CASUAL

A warm, traditional look made for relaxing with family and friends. Draws on English and early-American furniture designs, as well as laid-back country, cottage, and farmhouse styles. Weathered, low-maintenance furnishings are easy, inviting, and built for daily life. Think golden retrievers, fuzzy slippers, and just about any movie by Nancy Meyers.

FEATURES

- Plush upholstery, often slipcovered, with roll or square arms and skirts or ball feet.
- Indestructible tables with turned legs, trestles, or substantial pedestal bases.
- Warm wood tones with rustic or distressed finishes.
- Natural fabrics, like cotton and wool.
- Solid textiles, simple stripes, or unfussy florals in muted colors.

STYLE STARTERS

Statement pieces to launch your look.



STEEL-FRAME MIRROR

Adds the old-fashioned architectural charm of a casement window. Factory mirror, \$245, sundancecatalog.com.



ROLL-ARM SOFA

Two cushions (rather than three) have an especially friendly vibe. Nicki Platinum sofa by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, \$4,050, mgbwhome.com for stores.



FLAT-WEAVE RUG

Subtly patterned, it gives a kick to solid furniture. September rug, \$4,800 (8 by 10 feet), ashacarpets.com for stores.



CHUNKY COFFEE TABLE

Reclaimed pine planks make for rustic warmth. An unexpected platform base offers storage. Balustrade table, \$1,795, restorationhardware.com.

STYLE STARTERS

Statement pieces to launch your look.



CRYSTAL-BRANCH CHANDELIER

Organic and romantic, it seems one-of-a-kind. Butterfly and Blossom fixture by Canopy Designs, \$1,928, abchome.com for stores.



ANTIQUE RUG

Both rich and faded, the ethnic pattern feels timeless and decadent. Antique Persian Isfahan wool rug, \$4,499, abccarpet.com.



CURVY SETTEE

The shape evokes 18th-century Europe. A rustic finish and cocoa linen make it cool. Amalfi sofa, \$2,895, jaysonhomeandgarden.com.



TURNED-LEG TABLE

Cast-aluminum spindle legs and an inlaid-shell top offer quirk and character. Ichibad round side table, \$1,625, olostudio.com for stores.



D VINTAGE ECLECTIC

A rich, layered look combining flea-market finds, furniture designs from various time periods (including Victorian pieces and 18th-century French styles), and a diverse collection of accessories and artwork. Dusty colors, timeworn or handmade textiles, and collected objects create a lived-in feel. Think Paris flea markets, Granny's teacups, the film *Grey Gardens*.

FEATURES

- Furniture with shapely, feminine silhouettes, intricate detailing, and weathered finishes.
- Jewel tones mixed with washed-out, chalky shades.
- Antique and vintage elements interspersed with newer, offbeat items.
- A varied mix of fabrics (on pillows, upholstery, and window treatments), including jacquards, paisleys, ethnic tapestries, folk motifs, botanicals, and florals.
- Crystal chandeliers and embellished lamps.
- Abundant art and decorative accents on walls and surfaces.



WHERE TO SHOP YOUR STYLE

Once you've ID'd the look you want—or gotten a handle on your mix of looks—the fun begins. Whether you're ready to buy, creating a wish list, or just poking around for ideas, this page will take you where you need to go, either by foot or by click. Here are stores, blogs, and books that present products and ideas in a range of prices, tailored to your taste. Tear and save.

A

Sophisticated Classic

Baker
Ballard Designs
Barbara Barry
Bernhardt
Darryl Carter for Thomasville

INSPIRATION
insideavenue.blogspot.com
stylebeat.blogspot.com
stylecourt.blogspot.com
Home: From Concept to Reality, by Kelly Hoppen

Ethan Allen
Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams
Ralph Lauren
Williams-Sonoma Home

Crate & Barrel
Libeco Home
Maine Cottage
Pine Cone Hill
Pottery Barn

INSPIRATION
brilliantasylum.blogspot.com
portabellopixie.typepad.com
smallplacestyle.blogspot.com
Classic Country, by Kathryn M. Ireland

Cozy Casual

C

B

Modern Graphic

CB2
Design Within Reach
Ikea
Jonathan Adler
nova68.com

INSPIRATION
apartmenttherapy.com
design-milk.com
padstyle.com
Terence Conran's Inspiration, by Terence Conran & Stafford Cliff

Intérieurs
Room & Board
Vivre

Elizabeth Bauer
Karkula
kennethwingard.com
Madeline Weinrib
West Elm

Horchow
Jayson Home & Garden
Restoration Hardware
Shabby Chic

ABC Home
Anthropologie
Brocade Home
John Derian
Lars Bolander

INSPIRATION
designspongeonline.com
fernseed.com
remodelista.com
Flea Market Style, by Emily Chalmers

Vintage Eclectic

D