

HOME

For spring, window treatments with flair

Melissa Rayworth
Associated Press

Even the simplest window treatments have an important role to play in the look of a room.

"They really soften and furnish a space much more than most people imagine," says interior designer Betsy Burnham of Los Angeles. Yet she often has to reassure people that drapes, curtains or other window treatments don't have to be fussy.

"It can be tailored, simple panels done in great fabrics and the simplest of hardware," she says.

With spring finally arriving, we've asked Burnham and two other interior designers — Florida-based Maggie Cruz and New York-based Deborah Martin — for advice on what's trending in window design. How can homeowners preserve their privacy while letting in the sunlight and enjoying their view all spring and summer?

SIMPLE CAN BE POWERFUL

"We're seeing a trend more toward minimalizing what's

happening around the window," says Cruz. Her clients are increasingly seeking functional items like simple shades, perhaps softened with a lightweight drapery.

"The hardware," she says, "is just enough to maybe play with the color of the metal."

Burnham loves that kind of simplicity: "I like to use the thinnest rod I can that will support the weight of the curtain," she says. Ideally, that's just 1-inch thick. "For support brackets, I like them always to be horizontal so you can't see them. They're behind the rod. It's really minimal, and yet it's drapery."

Martin says her clients are also embracing soft organic fabrics and natural fibers like woven woods and raffia shades, perhaps looking for "more of a high-touch, tactile element for our homes as we try to disengage from high tech."

MAXIMALISM STILL HAS FANS

Martin is also working with clients who are bringing more color and glamour into their furnishings and window design:

"Color, color, color," she says, "is the No. 1 trend."

Taking their cue from the fashion industry, many of her clients in New York are embracing bold, graphic patterns, and in some cases "shimmery, glittery and even sequined fabrics."

She is also seeing soft velvets, popular for several years as sofa upholstery, now being used for stationary drapery panels that serve as columns of color to frame a window.

Burnham is also seeing some of this embrace of bold patterns, though the look is less overtly glamorous.

"I think that we're done with the urban farmhouse," she says. "Maximalism is coming back to a certain degree. In L.A., it's not about glitz and glam, but it's about pattern. And it can be a pattern that's reminiscent of your grandmother's cottage in the country or it can be a pattern that's more geometric and tailored."

TECHNOLOGY HAS ITS PLACE

All three designers see the growing popularity of remote-controlled motorized

shades, which have become less expensive and less complicated to install. Cruz says her clients love them "just for the ease and functionality."

Martin sees the same trend in Manhattan: "If you live in a high-rise in the city," she says, "and you have walls of windows, who is going to take the time to raise and lower all those shades" every morning and evening?

NEW TWISTS ON CLASSICS

Cruz has been using a lot of wooden plantation shutters for clients, but they are "updated and modern," she says. Because these shutters have wide louvers, they let in lots of light and don't obscure the view when open. Many are designed with a hidden tilt bar, she says, so the horizontal line of the shutters isn't cut so obviously by a vertical bar of wood.

Wooden shutters, Cruz says, "add to the millwork of the house."

Martin, who uses this type of wooden shutter in some rooms in her own home, agrees: "They're architectural and functional," she says, "and they just

add so much to a room, almost like wood moldings."

Another new twist on traditional style: In her dining room, Burnham has leopard-print draperies in a casual cotton fabric. "They're not heavy or fancy," she says, "and they're funky in a way that it's not taking itself too seriously."

Whether you're most comfortable with minimalist Roman shades or leopard-print draperies, Burnham does suggest taking time in choosing new window designs for your home.

"This is a much more complicated category of design" than selecting a side table or rug, she says. "There are a lot of things to consider, and people do make mistakes" if they design their windows without a lot of thought. "They hang their rods too low or too high, so that you walk into the room and you know something is a just little bit off."

Melissa Rayworth writes about lifestyles topics for The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter at twitter.com/mrayworth.

Prepare for visiting elder guests

Metro Creative

Homeowners may find themselves hosting senior guests several times throughout a typical year. These occasions can be wonderful opportunities for making memories, but homeowners may need to take certain precautions to ensure that guests are safe and comfortable. This may involve making some minor

modifications around the home.

Mobility and comfort needs for seniors may differ those necessary to accommodate other guests. Meeting the needs of senior guests may involve any of the following.

- Make sure pathways leading to and from the home are level, cleared and easy to see.
- If possible, add a ramp

over stairs that lead to the front door. Ensure handrails are sturdy.

- Remove clutter and excess furniture if a guest visiting will be using a walker or a manual/motorized wheelchair.
- Remove accent rugs from a home, and be sure that any mats are secured with nonslip material.
- Increase lighting in entryways, staircases and

hallways, especially areas leading to kitchens or bathrooms.

- If guests will be staying overnight, arrange sleeping accommodations on the first floor and/or in a room closest to the bathroom.
- Well-placed grab bars in the bathroom can be an asset. See if you can borrow a portable shower seat to make bathing or showering easier for overnight senior guests.



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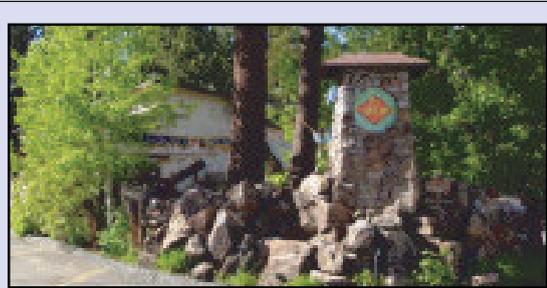
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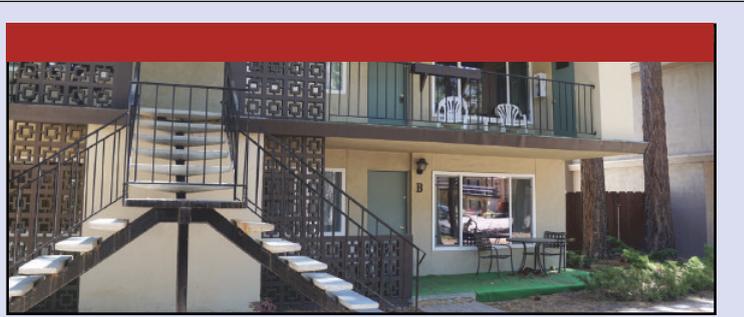
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