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TOP INTERIOR DESIGNERS SHARE THEIR HOME DECOR SECRETS

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The secret behind a gorgeous home is a good interior designer. With their unparalleled expertise and knowledge, an interior designer can transform any space and ensure a renovation or building project runs smoothly and quickly. Their knowledge on current design trends and catering to their clients' tastes and needs means they know exactly where to look and what to look for when sourcing furnishings and homewares. We talk to four interior experts, all with a unique style, about their best home-decorating tips and where they go shopping.

BY SELINA GORDEVICH

Interior by Greg Natale Design

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Greg Natale Design

As one of Australia's top interior designers, Greg Natale's bold signature style radiates elegance and luxury. Greg's philosophy of integrating architecture, design and decoration means no stone is left unturned and the elements of every finished project blend seamlessly together.

Describe your interior style

We fuse architecture, design and decoration. We layer clean and classic lines with pattern, colour and opulence.

What are some tips to keep in mind when shopping for the home?

When shopping for homewares and furniture, look at items which suit the space and furniture you already own.

What three pieces of furniture should people invest in?

1. A rug as it defines a space and anchors furniture.
2. A great sofa because it should last 10 years.
3. Lamps because they finish off a space.

Where do you like to shop for home furnishings?

Aero Designs in Surry Hills, Sydney.

What is one item or piece that can instantly transform a room?

A rug completes a space.

What colours work best in interiors?

The classic combination of black and white – both shades are neutral and you can put anything with them.

Worst colour for interiors?

Red – it's so strong and it's hard to make it look sophisticated. Also purple – it can never really look elegant.





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Taste Living

As creative director of Taste Living, Glenda Barnes is passionate about helping Australians create spectacular homes for themselves at affordable prices. With six sleek and contemporary stores across Sydney, Taste Living offers a treasure-trove of pieces for the home as well as an interior decorating service.

Describe your interior style

To me interiors should be warm and inviting – which is why my aesthetic has a more organic feel and incorporates natural textures.

What three pieces of furniture should people invest in?

1. A great sofa will set the tone for the whole room, so it should be a piece which is well constructed and suits your lifestyle.
2. A dining table and chairs – one that can extend makes entertaining more flexible.
3. A great piece of art or a rug. Handwoven rugs such as those by Cadrys will last for generations. With so many open-plan homes, rugs are also ideal for defining areas and creating visual warmth. Artworks are important as they say something about your personality.

What are some common interior decorating mistakes?

Not understanding how to use colour is probably the biggest mistake, followed

by not understanding scale. Also, a sofa that's too small for a room can actually make the room appear smaller but a larger one fills the space and makes the room appear bigger.

What are some tips to keep in mind when shopping for the home?

Don't impulse buy – put the piece on hold and sleep on it. If you love it and are still longing for it in the morning you probably won't regret it. Another good idea is to gather magazine pages and create a dream file of looks you love – that way it will be clear what you are after and your decorator can source the items for you.

Most importantly, keep your lighting ambient as it really creates the mood. Steer clear of those blue-toned energy-saving light bulbs – they cast a cold and unflattering light.

Where do you like to shop for home furnishings?

Often treasures can be found at markets, auctions, online or even garage sales – always be on the lookout as you never know what you'll find. Use your imagination: you can always revamp a sofa if the basic shape is fabulous and what you like.

What colours work best in interiors?

White. There are around 100 different whites to choose from but I love Dulux White On White as it's a crisp, true white. Remember that wall colours should be the backdrop for your furnishings and your furnishings should be the heroes.

Worst colour for interiors?

If not used correctly, blue. Also pastels are tricky as they can end up looking like the top of a birthday cake. And be careful when using reds – you really have to know what you are doing.





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Victoria Waters Design

Combining personalised interior design solutions with expert knowledge and a keen eye for detail, Victoria has a classic and refined style which is evident through her numerous residential and commercial projects, making her a popular choice amongst leading hotels, restaurants and homeowners.

Describe your interior style

My style is very classic and sophisticated with a modern edge.

What three pieces of furniture should people invest in?

1. A good sofa is vital in any home. The lounge room is where you spend most of your time relaxing and entertaining so it's important to have a sofa that will stand the test of time. Ensure it's made by a quality manufacturer, is comfortable and made with durable fade and stain-resistant fabric.
2. A quality bed. You spend a third of your life in bed so it's vital that you take the time to select a bed and mattress that's comfortable and suits your needs.
3. Lamps; lighting is a key component in any room and creates ambience. Invest in quality lamp bases as you can always change the shades. I recommend glass or chrome bases as they are a classic look and suit any shade. Also, oversized lamp bases add drama to a room and can become a key design element.

What are some common interior decorating mistakes?

Not planning a purchase. Know your style

and how you want your home to look and feel before you make any purchases.

What are some tips to keep in mind when shopping for the home?

Try not to follow trends, buy items that you really love instead.

Where do you like to shop for home furnishings?

Garage sales, antique stores and auction houses are great places to find some unique, quality pieces. However, it's important to know what you are looking for. Do your research to determine what the best price to pay is, and make sure you go and see the items so you can touch and feel them.

What is one item or piece that can instantly transform a room?

Introducing design elements through the use of fabrics, wallpapers or floor rugs will instantly transform your room. Firstly, choose colours for your room, then decide on your design scheme, including which patterns or textures you would like to feature. Ensure what you have chosen incorporates your selected colours so the look will be cohesive and add a real design element to your room.

What colours work best in interiors?

White and grey. If used correctly both colours can add a contemporary and fresh look to your home, but it's important that you select the right shades as certain tones of white can be stark and grey can be dull. Review your selections at different times of day as the colours will change in different lights.

Worst colour for interiors?

Black and red. While I love using black as an accent colour, it needs to be used in small doses to create the right amount of drama. Red is another colour to avoid in decorating as it initiates an emotional response and most people either love or hate it.





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fenton & fenton

In demand for her bold bohemian style and stunning Melbourne store, fenton&fenton's Lucy Fenton is one interior designer changing people's preconceived ideas on home decorating. Inspired by her extensive travels, her eclectic look is both colourful and unique.

Describe your interior style
Unexpected; modern meets boho!

What three pieces of furniture should people invest in?

1. A nice comfortable sofa makes all the difference to a living room.
2. A great bed – comfort is so important.
3. A beautiful dining table, so you can sit around with family and friends and enjoy good times!

What are some common interior decorating mistakes?

I often see people who want to decorate their whole house quickly, but making a house homey can take many years of collecting the right pieces. Over-cluttering small spaces is also a common mistake – for me it's about quality not quantity.

What are some tips to keep in mind when shopping for the home?

Don't try to buy things that are

trendy, buy pieces you love and you will enjoy them for many years. Trendy items won't be fashionable forever and you will grow tired of them. Try to have fun with your choices, everything does not have to match perfectly – invest in the bones of the house and take your time with the joojing!

Where do you like to shop for home furnishings?

I love to scour the auction houses, markets and op-shops around Melbourne but, unfortunately, there is nowhere in particular that stands out, it's all pot luck with the second-hand stores. But the country towns are where some real gems can be found.

What is one item or piece that can instantly transform a room?

Artwork is so important – it can transform an entire room! I'm also obsessed with our colourful dhurries (flat-weave rugs) we custom-make and design at fenton&fenton. I have a different colour in every room of my house and it really sets the whole mood for the room.

What colours work best in interiors?

Any colour and the more of it the better! I don't believe there are any colours that are better than others – it's whatever you are drawn to!

Worst colour for interiors?

Beige and beige.

What are your tips on introducing colour into a home?

I like to keep the main pieces such as the sofa and carpet more neutral and go crazy with cushions, rugs, accessories etc. I think about the overall colour scheme of the room first, then see how things turn out. If the base is neutral it's a lot easier to change things around later.

