

Changing gear

MPP takes a look at the interior trends that will be popping up in the Coast's most stylish homes in the season ahead.

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It's been a tough couple of years. Since the GFC hit, we've been tightening our belts and watching our bank balances nervously. This fiscal uncertainty has affected our homes, with an austerity creeping into interior design. Utilitarian furniture and a muted colour palette have become the norm, and to a certain extent this trend will continue. But things are changing.

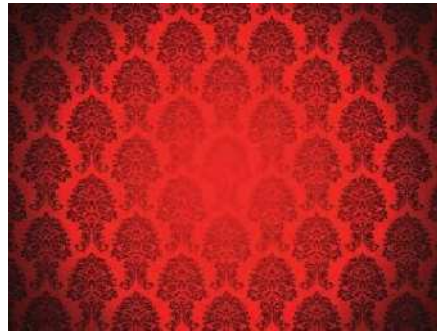
Local interior designer Mark Gacesa believes one of the trends that occurs after a bout of economic gloominess is a changing perspective about the home. "After the way things have been, it's good to have a bit of fun in the interior with pieces of art or the like. It's a psychological upper to splash out on things you may not normally do. At the lower to mid end it is tighter but in the higher end people are still doing some lovely stuff."

It's about lightening the mood, says Mark. "Do it stylishly but have fun—introduce a bit of joy."

So first, to colour. Pantone – the company responsible for producing the colour guide that is considered the colour bible by the world's designers – recently released its colour of the year, called Honeysuckle. The company describes the hue as a "dynamic reddish pink", adding, "honeysuckle is encouraging and uplifting". It

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seems to be a reflection of the trends for the coming year, when optimism replaces conservatism. This will also be reflected in the types of materials we bring into our homes.

"All of the neutral palette is still in vogue," Mark says, "but it's nice to bring some colour in splashes, not necessarily in paint but something a little more artistic, such as textured walls or wallpaper to give an arty edge. I use wallpaper on virtually every project."

Mark says you can add a bit of interest with murals or bespoke wallpaper. "They really excite a room and they're changeable," he says. "But these are still very two dimensional. A lot of the stuff in Europe is really high end – 3D with glass beads and all that flocked stuff."

Overseas interior trendsetters are saying goodbye to the minimalist look in soft furnishings and furniture and taking inspiration from the past, embracing classic shapes in furniture and teaming these with richly coloured and textured fabrics in rugs, throws, curtains and other accent pieces. The art deco and art nouveau movements will continue to provide inspiration. Primary colours will

reappear in some homes, while the vintage glamour colours that we saw last winter – such as smoky greys, deep berry, copper and soft charcoal – will again be the focus in the months ahead.

While home owners are demanding unusual pieces of furniture, Mark sometimes has trouble sourcing new products. "We definitely need more variety from the importers in the way of furniture," he says. "I have a lot of trouble finding different stuff. It's about time importers start sourcing further abroad." A cabinet-maker can produce a bespoke



piece, but it can be expensive. Home owners on a budget, though, can be fashion forward by incorporating the trends in their soft furnishings, in lamps, bowls and vases and in wallpaper and wall colour. Just remember, it's all about colour and texture.

And while we will be stealing a look at the past to furnish our homes, when it comes to lighting, it's all about the future. "The lighting technology is starting to improve and catch up to what the government is trying to implement, such as the lightbulbs that look incandescent but are actually halogen," says Mark.

Recessed and camouflaged lighting will appear in more homes, creating a subtle ambience, while eco-conscious home owners are investing in LED technology and more lamps – both floor and table – to match the interior design.

It's all very well to look to other parts of the world for the trends we'll be following in the coming months, but many Sunshine Coast home owners need only step outside for the elements that most inspire – our stunning outdoors. Indoor/outdoor living is a trend we are all embracing, whether you have a humble beach pad with a couple of French doors leading out to a balcony, or are investing millions into an expansive contemporary abode.

Mark is working on a project that has particularly impressed him. It has flowing water and waterfalls moving in and around the home. He sees this project as part of a greater mindshift.

"The whole alfresco thing is being designed into buildings a lot more," he says. Mark believes the blurring of the boundaries between inside and outside the home is what a successful design is all about. "When you are in the design [in the home] it should be hard to perceive what is inside and outside – that's the challenge of getting it done right." ■