

ACNE STUDIOS dress,  
\$690, ELIOU earring, \$225,  
ALL BLUES ring, \$425,  
SAPIR BASHAR choker, \$740,  
bracelets, stylist's own, LULU  
LAFORTUNE lamp, POA



# it's a vibe

Want to know what we'll all be OBSESSED with next? Interior designer and taste-maker EXTRAORDINAIRE Yasmine Saleh Ghoniem consults her CRYSTAL BALL

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ome interior pieces are ubiquitous – the Billy bookcase from IKEA, a fiddle leaf fig – and eventually morph into a share-house staple. More curated aesthetics, like the one dubbed “mid-century millennial” by *The Guardian*, eventually descend into ridicule (as the viral Millennial Apartment Bingo card by design site *Apartment Therapy* demonstrated). And while we still can't help but lust over an Ettore Sottsass mirror or Wassily chair when we scroll past it artfully placed in a stylish person's home, it seems we're finally at a turning point when it comes interiors.

The kind of genuine personal style that makes you buy an ugly-ish side table and plonk it in your bedroom for no other reason than it makes you feel something (and you needed a side table) is suddenly cool. We're over seeing the same things everywhere. Interior designers have always flown their own flag when it comes to style, but one stands out: award-winning designer Yasmine Saleh Ghoniem of YSG Studio (who recently did Hamish Blake and Zoe Foster-Blake's Sydney home). Her curatorial eye, innovative spirit and tongue-in-cheek approach to design infuses fun into finding the perfect piece.

**WHAT WILL BE THE DEFINING AESTHETIC OF THE NEXT YEAR AND BEYOND?** I'd like to hope people do a little soul searching and not necessarily go for a collective style. Long lockdowns dictated a sense of entrapment, so we're

chasing moods. We want to feel like we're in control. One way to do that is through materials that activate the senses – soft leathers, velveteen and organic linens – plus textured wall treatments like Venetian plaster finishes in beautiful shades are ways of activating touch in particular. Wallpaper is also going to get some limelight; I've been cladding walls, ceilings and even cabinet doors in it. Terracotta pavers and travertine floors are giving timber a gentle nudge given their ease of maintenance and textural, tonal appeal.

Equally, there'll be a growing demand for artworks like affordable hand-crafted ceramics, paintings and sculptures to give homes more depth, humour and insight.

**WHAT ARE THE TRENDS THAT WILL STICK AROUND POST-PANDEMIC, AND WHAT ARE WE DONE WITH?**

I doubt the demand for cool custom drinks trolleys will ever wane – they've become the social magnets of the home. But cluttered 'dinks' (dining tables transformed into makeshift desks) are phasing out as we've reclaimed those surfaces to host dinner parties again. I've noticed a resurgence of dining accessories and tableware to really glam the night up – take the surrealist Gohar World that launched earlier this year: Egyptian lace bonnets for fruits and veggies and black satin baguette bags with oversized bows to gift hosts. That's how you get conversations flowing.

“I once took an EGGPLANT to a painter and said, ‘GIVE ME THIS’”

**WHAT MOOD SUMS UP INTERIORS NOW?** Indulgence and escapism – think steam rooms in showers and dimmable lights to create different ambiances.

**DO YOU APPROVE OF MIXING DESIGN GENRES?** There's this common perception that you can't mix them and should stick to one theme and style in a home. It's rigid and ridiculous. The magnetism is *totally* in the mix. I also love how vintage pieces instantly take the sheen off new items they're paired with – whether it's a mid-century armchair from a local market or a special antique Murano glass pendant from 1stDibs. That's the key to making something more generic appear unique, because it becomes totally recontextualised with a vintage piece on or near it.

**WHAT KINDS OF VINTAGE MAKE THE BEST INVESTMENTS?** For those looking for long-lasting pieces, you can't go past a vintage sofa. Textiles are what gives your house history, and if you find the right dealers you can find pieces that have lasted 30-odd years yet still look brand new. But investment values should never influence vintage purchases; how they make your heart sing should always be the key denominator. I recently found an amoebic '60s wall light by the Danish company Sky-Light depicting the Flintstones driving their infamous car. Some might call it juvenile, but for me it drove home happy childhood memories. I loved the Stone Age furniture in every episode and how primal elements were used to create late '60s-style settings. Pure genius. What the heart wants is truly a mystery, but I always encourage clients to listen to their gut.

**WHERE WILL WE DRAW INSPIRATION FROM IN THE NEAR FUTURE?** Homes will become a mish-mash of layered holiday memories because we'll be clinging onto that feeling. Bohemian island life has been big over the past few months, from the Balearics to remote Greek isles, and as for an era, everyone seems to be obsessed with the '70s – the odd lazy Susan has surfaced on several custom dining tables in my residential projects. I craft them from beautiful stone offcuts to up the ante.

**CAN MILLENNIAL PINK BE REPLACED?** I think pink is here to stay, at least until Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* movie does the rounds! But it won't be the pastel shade we've seen on café walls and bathroom tiles, it'll be a deeper, hot-pink tone – thanks also to Pierpaolo Piccioli at Valentino. Purples and limey greens will have their moment, but if you're fearful of going for beautiful

rich tones, don't cover every surface with them – think accent features. And don't be afraid to apply this to painting rooms, too; consider a jewel-toned painted ceiling and more neutral walls.

**SO, ANY ADVICE FOR PICKING THE RIGHT COLOUR?** Try looking to nature for specific tones instead of a zillion swatches. I once took an eggplant to a painter and said, "Give me this," when it came to the Marmorino finish his team applied to the conjoined ceiling of a lounge and dining area. With this approach, your instinct decides rather than your mind having to select. Another rule to break is colour matching. Complimentary clashes define the tones and textures the studio selects; we're never hung-up on cushions pairing a similar shade on a floor rug and often run with pastels and primaries in a room.

**BEING INDIVIDUAL IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA OFTEN FEELS IMPOSSIBLE. CAN FALLING PREY TO THE ECHO CHAMBER BE AVOIDED?** If you're using linked devices to look up a certain chair's price on different websites,

then your sponsored feeds will keenly reflect that. If you're really trying to avoid residential cloning, treat yourself to some library sessions and hit the design books of architectural greats and international furniture designers from the '50s onwards. And get savvy – if the pieces you're set on are beyond your pay grade, find out when certain furniture stores go on sale.

**WHAT ARE GEN Z DOING DIFFERENTLY?** They've grown up with a greater socially responsible conscience, so they'll develop a growing awareness of the impact synthetic fibres have not just on our planet, but on our health, too. Sustainable offerings will be highly considered and they'll prioritise 'invisible' aesthetics like air quality and off-gassing. The great Aussie dream of home ownership has already been usurped by the desire to start your own business for

millennials; gen Z will be more nomadic given they have less impetus to 'settle down' to mortgage repayments. It makes me wonder if, in years to come, I'll be designing more hotels and long-term accommodation, giving people the opportunity to switch and change looks and feels without needing to acquire 'stuff'.

**WHAT'S THE LAST THING THAT INSPIRED YOU?** A workshop at an indigo farm in Ubud, Bali, where a small group of us learnt how to farm and dye our own garments in 1000 shades of indigo. It was the most meditative thing I've done to date, though my poor family is going to pay for this obsession on Christmas day in their matching outfits. ■



ACNE STUDIOS *top*, \$300,  
*and pants*, \$590, MONDO  
MONDO *earrings*, \$330,  
GANNI *shoes*, \$545, *bra and*  
*socks*, *Yasmine's own*, RAPHAEL  
RAPHAEL *chair*; *POA*, from  
*Studio Alm*, HERMÈS *cup and*  
*saucer*, \$710 for two