



# LIVING LARGE

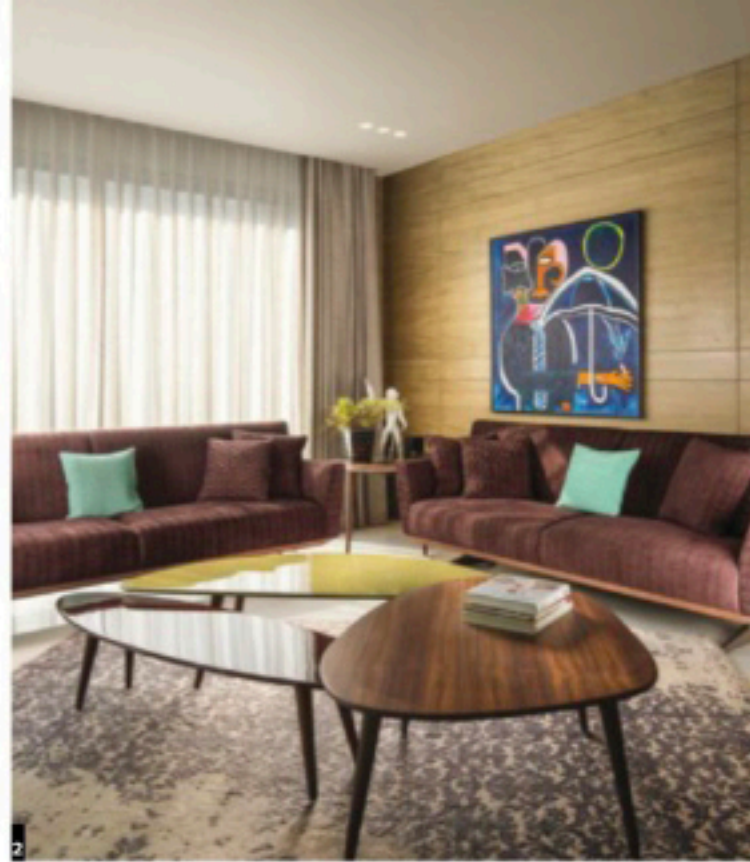
FROM THE REVIVAL OF 80'S AESTHETICS TO A GROWING APPRECIATION FOR LOCALLY SOURCED FURNITURE AND CRAFTS, LIVING ROOMS TODAY ARE INFLUENCED BY MORE THAN ONE DESIGN LANGUAGE

BY CAROL FERRAO

I. Group DCA recommends a splash of colours such as red to add a dynamic look to the space.

**D**esigned to impress, modern living rooms seamlessly integrate comfort, aesthetics and functionality by relying on the most exquisite line of furniture, lights, furnishings and more. Experimenting with materials and textures has become a norm in this space, with high quality material palette and finishes playing a significant role in creating a statement

decor. From rustic, earthy elements to refined, neo-classical features, living rooms are designed with a certain nostalgic character too. Either the space exudes the charm and relaxed ambience of a country life or seeks to resurrect Art Deco styles and classical features for elegant living. "Indians being fond of decorative features and details, the classic style is coming back in several ways," points out architect Aparna Kaushik.



One of the most social zones in the house, it is essential that the space fosters interaction while also being a representation of the family, their beliefs and aesthetic leanings. The design language could be contemporary or classic, but the personalised quality of these spaces results in a design that transcends style. "Now-a-days, living rooms have ascended beyond being just a gathering zone to becoming a representation of the collective likeness, interests and attributes of its inhabitants," confirm Rudraksh Charan & Priyanka Khanna, principals, 42MM.

In terms of style, more and more designers are taking the 'maximalism' route to fashion interiors that are bold and explorative in their use of materials, colours and schematics. Nitin Kohli, founder, Nitin Kohli Home, highlights, "The perfect trending materials doing the rounds are semi-precious marbles, stones and metals of finishes like brass and copper. Also, materials with gloss and sheen for fabrics as well." These bold choices are complemented with soft pastel shades such as powder blue, sky blue and greens

like mint and sage, according to the designer.

It's an exciting time in architecture and design, with access to a wide range of materials and style inspirations both old and new. Living spaces, therefore, are expected to be an amalgamation of diverse influences brought together to usher in a new design language. Studios like MuseLAB believe that the palette for 2020 will blend contemporary and vintage design, enabling them to fully express their creativity and potential. "It's a maximalist and eclectic palette made of rich colours referring to the past, especially to the Bauhaus and Arts and Crafts movements, blended with some 80s-inspired hues," specify Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani, directors, MuseLAB.

Parallel to this movement, there is a greater awareness on 'conscious living' today, which has encouraged homeowners to embrace upcycling and recycling, ensuring minimal use of energy. Pankhuri Goel, design principal, Studio Lotus, shares that old furniture is now repurposed and celebrated for its evocative character, and materials are being

2. Essentia Environments prefers the current material palette of rich natural stones, patterned tiles for floors, velvets and suede fabrics for upholstery and rich shimmering textiles with great fall for curtains.

3. When designing living rooms, 42MM introduces lights as art installations, often in unique geometric shapes.

4&5. Rudraksh Charan & Priyanka Khanna, principals, 42MM.

6. Rahul Bansal, partner, group DCA.

7&8. Hardeh & Monica Chawla, founders and principal designers, Essentia Environments.

vastly upcycled to address economic and environmental constraints. Explaining the reasons behind this approach, she mentions, "Modern homes are undergoing a makeover – being envisioned as a repository of memories, shaped by family heirlooms, photo montages/ collections, paintings and memorabilia collected over time."

#### MATERIAL SPEAK

Within the canvas of a living room, there are multiple details that tie the space together. Each element and its materiality are critical to the design narrative of the space. In the current context, rich, natural textures and materials are definitely trending, according to Hardesh & Monica Chawla, founders and principal designers, Essentia Environments. "The current material palettes include rich, natural stones or patterned tiles for floors; velvets and suede fabrics for upholstery; rich, shimmering textiles with great fall for curtains; or billowy, sheer ones with grand tie-backs." Walls are clad with luxurious stones in gorgeous colours, whereas metals screens – often polished in gold, including in furniture pieces – add a textural dimension to the space. "Most importantly, (we see) exotic stones as table tops revealing their natural beauty, often with organic contours," adds the design duo.

When it comes to flooring choices, Amit Khanna, principal at Amit Khanna Design Studio (AKDA) states that period detailing in real hardwood flooring, particularly large herringbone and two-tone patterns, are preferred now. "Also, custom hardwood architectural hardware in sustainable spe-

cies is an area where some manufacturers have started work, but there is a lot of scope for innovation," he adds. Even details like doors and windows are carefully articulated to represent the character of the space. Firms like AKDA are exploring solutions such as custom-milled hardwood windows that offer the sound insulation and robust nature of uPVC/ aluminum along with the beauty of Indian woods.

"Traditionally, Indian wood window framing left a lot to be desired since they would warp, bend and offer little thermal insulation. Now, the complex profiles required for sealants and thermal breaks can be milled on the factory floor on wood that has been professionally seasoned to be incredibly stable in a spectrum of climatic conditions," comments Amit Khanna.

Natural materials continue to be a popular choice for living rooms, especially Italian marbles for floors and wall claddings as well as wooden parquet floors. In fact, exotic

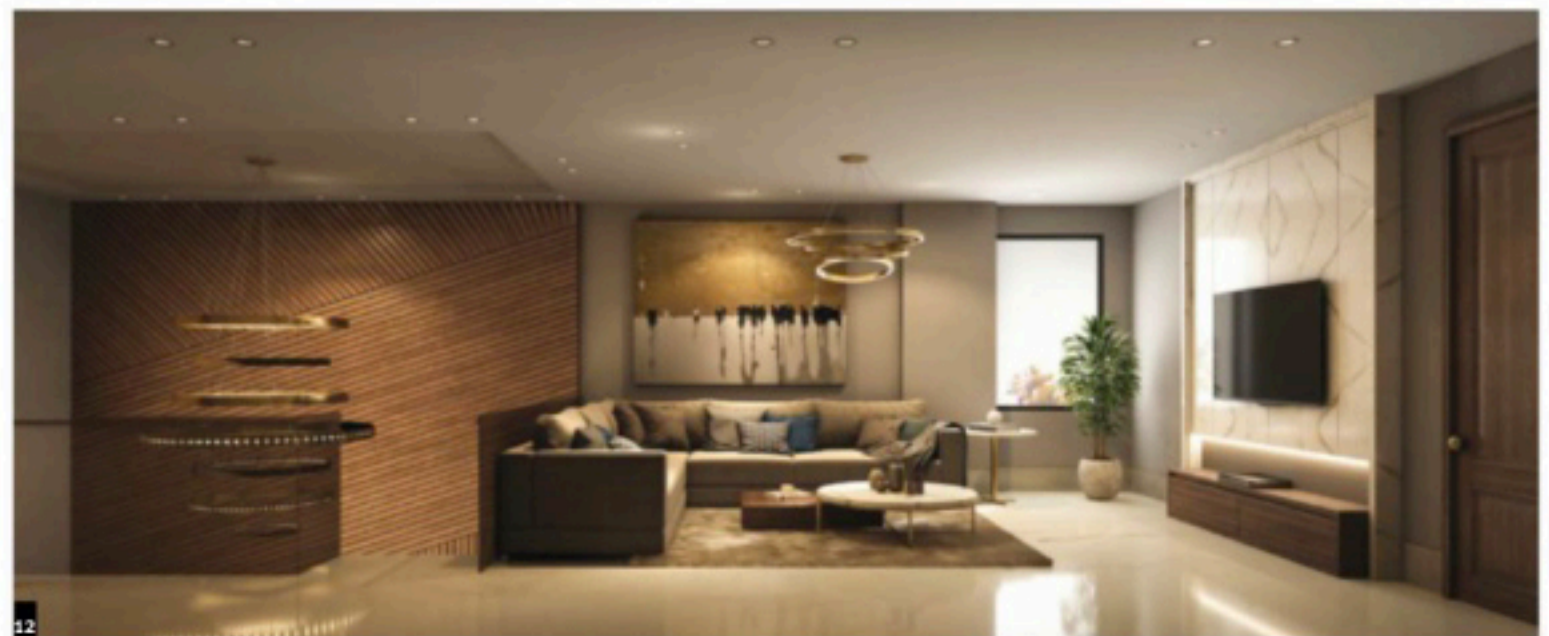


9. Architect Aparna Kaushik.

10. Amit Khanna, principal at Amit Khanna Design Studio (AKDA).

11. Period detailing in real hardwood flooring, according to AKDA, is preferred for modern living rooms.

12. For Aparna Kaushik, the use of Italian marbles for floors and wall claddings, and exotic marbles in furniture are prominent ongoing trends.



#### 2020 COLOUR WATCH

We asked leading architects and designers from across the country for a colour forecast for 2020. Safe to say, we can expect the following recommendations to define living rooms this year.

"A calm and gentle colour palette working around different hues of greens. The inspiration comes from nature, forest, musk, and the sky, together with a hint of refined colours such as mustard yellow and purple."

**Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani, directors, MuseLAB**

"A largely neutral palette with highlights of bright pop colors in the furniture or art is the upcoming trend. The neutrals provide a serene backdrop that sets the spotlight on furniture and art embellishments."

**Rudraksh Charan & Priyanka Khanna, principals, 42MM**

"Bold shades like indigo or vermilion for the walls can make the place look appealing, whereas soothing neutrals can give the space a sense of restraint."

**Amit Khanna, principal, AKDA**

"Greys, whites and peach are popular colours in this space. A splash of fuchsia, red, blue, etc. can add a dynamic look, perhaps for the seating space or for a specific corner to stand out from the rest of the room."

**Rahul Bansal, partner, group DCA**

## CARPETS THAT TELL A STORY

Furnishings such as carpets tie the space together with their intricate weaves, colours and textures. Today, however, carpets go beyond aesthetics, they capture narratives and introduce a soulful character within the space. For instance:

The new carpet collection by Raghavendra Rathore for Obeetee's third 'Proud to be Indian' series finds its core inspiration from the Marwar region, specifically Jodhpur. Paisleys, asymmetrical designs and unusual patterns alluding to the past make up the carpet's texture. The collection is classified into three variants: Jodhpuri Gadi Masand rendered with opulent embroidery in velvet is inspired by the royal seat of kings and queens in darbars of yore; Rajasthan Architecture celebrates majestic arches and structural design elements — including mirror work and brightly painted religious figures — of the Sheesh Mahal in Mehrangarh Fort; and, finally, Jodhpur Coat of Arms is an offbeat showcase of logos, emblems, insignias and monograms of Rajput princely states and jagirs.

Hands Cryptos collection may appear unassuming with its mainly neutral colour scheme, but the weaves are shrouded in mysteries, secrets and cryptic messages. Beautifully hand-knotted in 100% botanical silk, the designs are rooted in mythology and history. Each weave and pattern has hidden meanings, waiting to be deciphered. The collection features nine designs: Phaeton, Amadeus, Desiree, Suzette, Patrice, Leonore, Cadencia, Austyn and Florus — all in 8 ft by 10 ft sizes.

marbles have even made their way into furniture design, used extensively as table tops for coffee and side tables. Kaushik believes these choices go well with neutral paints for walls with moulding as highlights, upholstered sofas in velvet or suede and furniture made of a combination of metal and wood. Finer details such as luxurious carpets, linen and textured fabrics, chandeliers, gold finish, enhance the modern space.

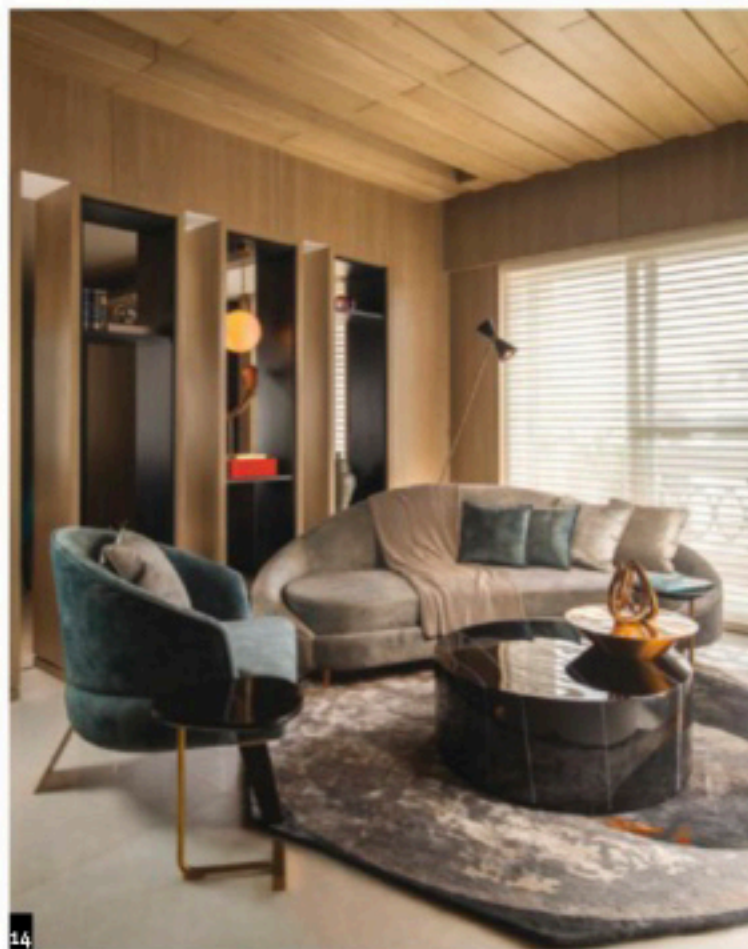
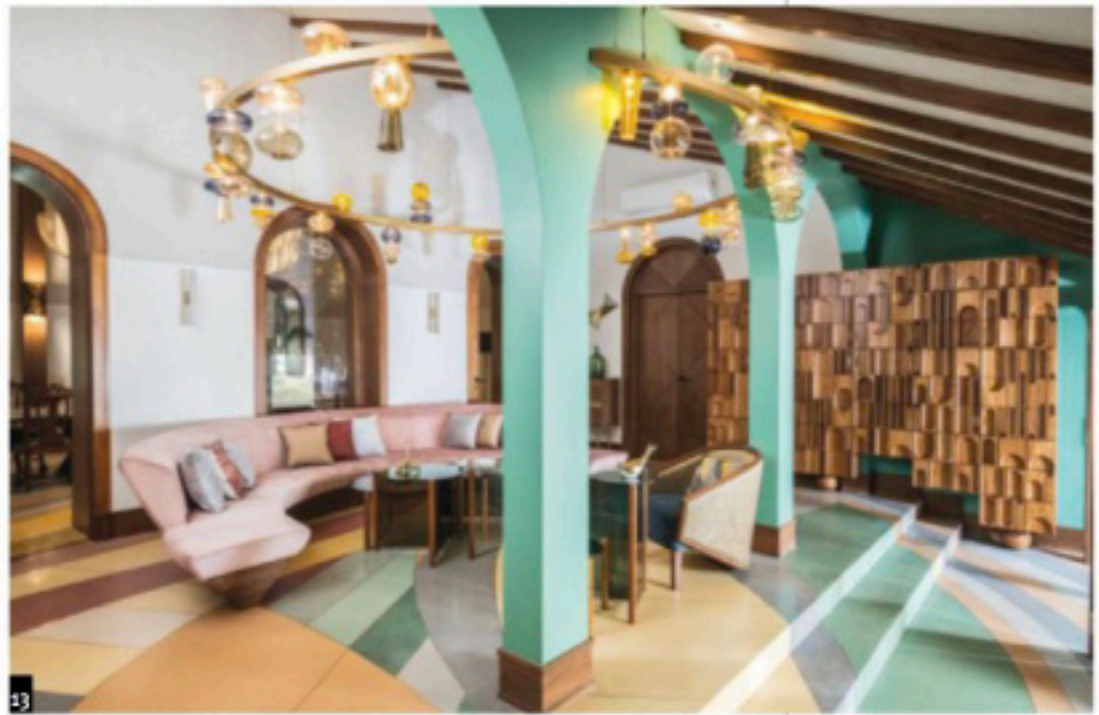
Offering a contrasting view, Goel mentions, "Material palettes have also been marked by a revival of incorporating locally-sourced stones in varied finishes as opposed to expensive Italian marbles — which are also contextually incongruous. While exhibiting durability, they age gracefully, and become expressive of the inhabitants' sense of aesthetics, form and function."

Designers are extracting earthy and warm material palettes by drawing cues from nature. Goel shares, "For instance, there has been a revived interest in the use of Terrazzo as a surface material; its durability and endless colour choices make it a veritable choice for cladding floors." Materials like cane and timber are the next best choices because they offer strength, life, and aesthetic value, along with warmth and texture to cladding surfaces and furnishings.

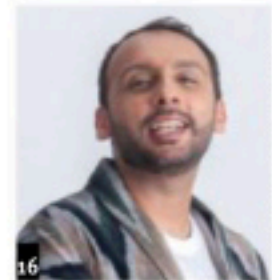
Affirming this trend, the MuseLAB directors say, "Terrazzo works brilliantly for floors — it is versatile, pays homage to the past and brings warmth to the home, along with tonnes of visual texture." As for the rest of the palette, both Rangwala and Pirani prefer to keep the walls simple, acting as receptacles for interesting wall art, paintings and even wall lights. "A simple or minimally textured paint works well," they note.

### FURNITURE INSIGHTS

Living room furniture is determined based on the timeless appeal of its design, quality of the material composition and the overall design aesthetic, and how it relates to the



PHOTOGRAPH: SAMEER TAWDE



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concept chosen for the space. "We are seeing a comeback of 80's trends like curved sofas & upholstered furnishings," point out Charan and Khanna of 42MM, adding that people are also mindful of product quality, eco-friendliness and sustainability today. They also mention, "People prefer buying quality products. It is about finding furniture that speaks to your design aesthetic, it can be unique, custom furniture or can be a simple option from a mass retailer. There is a growing trend towards the use of unique or statement pieces which add a sculptural moment in the overall scheme."

Whether it is a local or imported line of furniture, the design theme and budget define the furniture choices. For example, Kaushik says that for a tropical style in the living room, furniture and upholstery in linen fabric are preferred over velvet. "Fully upholstered, sophisticated seating arrangements with a combination of statement armchairs and coffee tables in textured wood, or marble and metal work are best for modern, contemporary spaces," she further explains. A particular trend to watch out for, the architect says, are digital-printed tabletops that bring an artsy element in the furniture.

13. MuseLAB believes combining a range of colours with raw materials, lots of textiles and different textures, is the way forward.

14. Soft pastels in shades of blues (powder blue, and sky blue) and greens (mint and sage) are colours recommended by Nitin Kohli Home.

15&16. Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani, directors, MuseLAB.

17. Nitin Kohli, founder, Nitin Kohli Home.



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PHOTOGRAPH: ANDRE J.FANTHOMÉ

18. Studio Lotus believes the rise of eclecticism has resulted in unique interior palettes, depicting a combination of several styles — case in point, their design for the Karan Paul Residence.

19. Pankhuri Goel, design principal, Studio Lotus.

20. Vishal Singh, founder and managing director, Vizion.

21. Splendid Stories by PlyMahal builds on the trend for metallic surfaces with its tastefully distressed patina of metals over geometric patterns.

22. Suspended lamps and bespoke ceiling plates — according to Vizion — create a more cohesive spatial experience in the living room.

Another trend evident in living room furniture is the widespread use of imported solutions from places like China. Often contemporary in design, this option is commonly seen in homes for HNI clients. Recently, however, design-

## TRENDING SURFACES

Walls — and even floors — in living rooms are curated with great detail lately. Besides traditional paints, designers are experimenting with varied types of surfaces and panels. Here are the surfaces and finishes to try in living rooms.

**AIS Décor** is a back-painted glass by Asahi India Glass that infuses interiors with vibrant cheer. Available in five series — Earthy, Serene, Vibrant, Pure & Metallic, its coloured opaque appearance is created by applying high-quality paint to one side of the glass, which is then oven-cured through a superior process.

**Microcement** is cement- and quartz-based lining with a thin coat of colour (1-2 mm). Its smooth finish can transform floors, walls, stairs, and even furniture. In the absence of joints or gaskets, the surface appears homogeneous and continuous, and can be easily contrasted with materials such as wood, ceramic, etc.

**Splendid Stories** by PlyMahal builds on the trend for metallic surfaces with its tastefully distressed patina of metals over geometric patterns. The panel designs are delicate and stunning at the same time, and are perfect as accents on living room walls.

**Glimmerputz** lends matt satin effect to walls with micaceous reflections and natural stone shades. This interior finishing by Super Surfaces can be personalised with a colour scheme of choice, including one of the sought after colours of the season — Terracotta Red.

**Muro - Giorgiograesan** by Super Surfaces blends natural minerals, lime, marble powder and mica to lend an authentic, earthy feel to the surface. The finish also ages beautifully and has a natural resistance to mould and bacteria.

**Segui il Tuo Istinto** — meaning 'follow your instinct' — combines lime and marble powders of various sizes along with natural minerals to create finishes such as Split Stone, Polished Stone, Worn Stone, Engraved Stone, Natural Cement, and Zen Stone to Bamboo. Among the different types available in the series by Super Surfaces, Cera del Vecchio lends a unique final finish with beeswax and soaps, while Gioia is an acrylic finishing.

ers like Goel have witnessed a resurgence in hand-crafted locally-made items too. "The rise of eclecticism — fuelled by shifting preferences, experimentation and perpetually changing trends — has resulted in unique interior palettes, depicting a combination of several styles. The fixation on convention has essentially dissolved, and clients are more willing to appropriate styles evocative of contemporary times," elaborates the designer from Studio Lotus.

In this setting, studios like MuseLAB take great pride in endorsing customised furniture and sourcing from local brands. "There is enough talent in our country and the craft has a lot more finesse now," note Rangwala and Pirani.

AKDA's Khanna agrees and fully supports the shift from imported to local & sustainable. "Clients are keen to minimise the environmental impact of their projects and choose locally manufactured products," mentions the architect. He suggests opting for a colourful piece of furniture to accentuate the whole aesthetic of the space. Paired with soft colours and rich textures in furniture, the scheme ensures a remarkable appearance.

## LIGHTING TRENDS

Exquisite design elements are seen everywhere in the living room, but when it comes to ceiling and lighting, the less imposing the design, the better. Homeowners and designers now prefer to maintain the volume and visual depth of the living room and are avoiding excessive work on false