

## Pattern play can add pizzazz to your favorite spaces

By Mikalee Byerman

**M**ixing patterns in home décor can reflect the ultimate eye for style — or serve to make your room look like the unfortunate design love child of

Minnie Pearl and Bozo the Clown. How do you find the right mix without crossing the line?

The key, experts say, is balance among four main elements of any project: color, scale, shape and texture.

For inspiration, begin with one element you love: a painting, piece of furniture, rug, wall covering or throw pillow. Make this the anchor from which you pull other color/texture/pattern ideas. Then follow these design tips to finish with flair:

### He says, she says

Mix elements with a masculine feel (dark woods, geometric shapes and animal prints) with feminine elements (florals, stripes and dots).

### Opposites attract

When mixing patterns in a room, pull key colors from

opposite sides of the color wheel: vibrant blues and citrusy oranges work well together, as do rich hues of yellow and violet.

### The same ... but different

Use similar patterns in different colors for a sophisticated style complement.

### Weighty considerations

Make sure you distribute patterns throughout the space; overwhelming one part of a room with the bulk of the pattern can make it feel visually off balance.

### Solid ground

In a room with multiple patterns, the eye needs a place to rest. Neutral tones and expanses of solid color are a necessary contrast when mixing patterns.

### Be white wary

While other colors don't need to be matchy-matchy, whites are the exception. Keep white tones in the same color family.

### Quick Tip

*Nervous about how to begin your pattern-mixing adventure? Start with black and white. By removing the conundrum of color, you can focus on scale — large patterns on centerpieces like sofas, medium patterns on smaller furniture like accent chairs and small patterns on throws and lamps. Then add a pop of color — any color — for the ultimate designer touch.*

# Mix it up!

## Three's company

In design, odd numbers — especially the number three — lend the perfect sense of balance.

### Pattern 1:

The centerpiece of your room should have the largest-scale pattern — go bold on a sofa, a wall covering or an Oriental rug.

### Pattern 2:

Pick a pattern that's different in tone (if the centerpiece is floral, for example, perhaps a medium-scale plaid). This should provide consistency in color but be about half the scale or size of the first pattern.

### Pattern 3:

This should be similar in tone to one of the other patterns but much smaller in scale (think dots or small stripes).

## A closer look Beyond the fabric

It's easy to fall into the trap of assuming mixing patterns only involves balancing the patterns of fabrics in a room. But in its truest sense, "mixing patterns" involves interrupting a flow in color, scale, shape or texture.

These design cornerstones are the foundation for successfully mixing patterns in your interior design plan:

**Color:** Use shades in similar levels of brightness (keep jewel tones away from pastels, for example). And remember that tone-on-tone is a color pattern that adds dimension.

**Scale:** Vary the scale of patterns. Large-scale patterns can have many colors, medium scale can have some colors and small scale should have just a few.

**Shape:** The lines created by furniture placement create pattern, too. Try positioning square chairs or a sofa diagonally in a corner — creating a triangle — and then repeating angles throughout the room with tables or ottomans.

**Texture:** Add a sense of drama and dimension to design with metallic or mirrored accents, woven textures and soft or silky upholstery. And experiment with pattern repetition (mirrors, sconces, floral accents, etc.) when decorating your walls.



## Extra, extra

## Running wild

By H&L Staff

**Are animal-pattern prints classic?** Or will all of the zebras, leopards, tigers and pythons soon slink away?

Many decorators and décor-happy homeowners argue those prints, which come into vogue again and again, are timeless. The trick to using zebra-striped rugs and python-ized upholstery is moderation, say those in the know. As one online fashionista notes, a little leopard goes a long way.

That tiger-striped wool area rug or zebra-patterned chair will add a touch of pizzazz on its own. Put those items in the same room with animal-skin print pillows, a snakeskin-pattern recliner and an ottoman that appears to be covered in antelope and you're asking for trouble. Just imagine all that stuff's alive, and then imagine the soundtrack. The visual effect would be much the same.

Used sparingly, animal prints can add a visually surprising touch of the exotic, a stylized reference to the wild, to all sorts of highly civilized spaces

— a contemporary dining room, a traditional den, a sophisticated bedroom. Faux skins and hides play particularly well against a black and white palette, adding a bit of natural warmth to what can be a stark look.

Beyond animal-patterned textiles is the real thing — cowhide rugs are also a perennial favorite among homeowners and professional decorators. Like animal prints, these rugs fit into a wide range of settings, from Western-themed to modern. Cowhide, however, can't go everywhere that a zebra print can, and might look out of place in a traditional formal dining room. Hide could be called rustic, casual, contemporary and, pun intended, a hair unrefined.

Taken all together, the animals are one of the livelier options in the decorator's pattern palette, and they're likely here to stay — in moderation.

