

A high-angle photograph of a luxurious outdoor pool and hot tub. The hot tub, in the foreground, is a square structure with a light-colored stone or concrete finish, containing bubbling water. The pool extends from the hot tub towards the horizon, where it meets the ocean. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy clouds. On either side of the pool, there are small, raised platforms with neatly trimmed, conical evergreen shrubs. The overall scene is bright and serene, suggesting a high-end coastal property.

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By Design with Lisa McDennon

Spring Fever: Fresh Ideas for Your Home

Spring is a season of renewal, when rejuvenating rains sweep away winter and usher in warmer weather. So now is the natural time to clean house, spruce up interiors, and prepare for outdoor living—all before the summer heat really hits. Here are a few strategies I use to get my decorative chakras aligned, including looking at fashion for inspiration, thinking about how lighting can transform an interior, paying close attention to small but telling design details, and choosing new furniture for the poolside, deck, or terrace.



French flair: The MU modular outdoor furniture system designed by Toan Nguyen for Dedon

On the Block

Fashion and interior design are often in synch, and color blocking—a gorgeous trend seen in many recent spring collections—is totally applicable to home décor. This isn't a new runway look, but it's back with such a bang that you can't ignore the playful juxtapositions of luscious hues shown by such designers as California resident Max Azria.

Color blocking is a particularly effective decorative technique when you want to play with the volume of a space rather than treat it in a two-dimensional way. Simply painting one wall a bright color creates an accent, but painting two or more walls changes the way the architecture of a room is perceived.



Color-block looks from the Max Azria spring 2012 runway show



But even if the walls are neutral, you can use furnishings to create massed areas of deep color and then kick it up a notch by adding a few vivid accents. Think of it like pairing a skirt and blouse in different hues and then accessorizing the outfit with fun shoes or bold bracelets. Toronto-based designer John David Edison gets it right in a Florida vacation house where he uses upholstered furniture in fuchsia, turquoise, and kiwi green along with tables, chandeliers, lamps, and vases in espresso, pink, and azure blue. Delicious!



The living-dining room in a Florida beach house by the Toronto-based interior designer John David Edison. Photograph by Kim Sargent

Light Show

I recently remodeled and expanded a fabulous showroom in Dallas for Hinkley Lighting. The project included creating vignettes to showcase various types of indoor and outdoor lighting, and with so many fixtures at our disposal, we had a chance to play with a lot of different configurations and effects.

Case in point: Create a sense of glamorous arrival as we did in the showroom foyer, where we installed a low-hanging chandelier from Hinkley's Plantation Collection over the center table. A beautiful chandelier makes such a strong decorative statement and is a wonderful way to freshen up any décor. And don't be afraid

The entry foyer of the Hinkley Lighting Showroom in Dallas designed by Lisa McDennon. Photograph by Stephen Karlisch



of using them in areas other than living and dining rooms—try experimenting with them in bedrooms, baths, even master closets. It's also fun to hang two chandeliers over a kitchen island instead of the more expected pendants as a way of really raising the style quotient!

Depending on the type of fixture, it's possible to get a wide variety of lighting effects from chandeliers. Smothered in crystals, they introduce a luxurious sparkle that will dress up the most boring room. Or less flamboyant models with fabric shades can become decorative objects of almost sculptural interest that cast a warm, romantic glow over the whole room.

A living room featuring a Chandon chandelier from Hinkley Lighting



It's All in the Details

Interior design isn't just a matter of getting the big things right, it's also about paying close attention to the smallest details. The little touches—a silver-leaf edge on a table, unique hand-made drawer pulls on a credenza, hand-lettered place cards for your dinner guests—make a cumulative impact that's much bigger than their small scale would suggest.

The living room in a Spanish-style house designed by Lisa McDennon. Photograph by Christian Horan





The Rio outdoor furniture collection by Mamagreen

Take It Outside

Now is the right moment to think about purchasing outdoor furniture. I've just specified Dedon's super-elegant MU modular system by Toan Nguyen. It has a sophisticated European look that I love, and you can see it at the new Dedon flagship store in Los Angeles.

Treat exterior spaces as you would interiors, and don't feel you have to purchase a full suite of matching outdoor furniture. Mix things up! I'm

a huge fan of the California designer, Richard Frinier, who has created fabulous collections for such leading outdoor furniture companies as Dedon, Brown Jordan and Century. Witford, located at the Laguna and Pacific Design Centers, represents a smaller line I've used called Mamagreen. That name alone is like the feel of a warm summer breeze on your skin!

With degrees in both fine art and interior design, Lisa Rachele McDennon opened her own full-service interior design firm in Laguna Beach 11 years ago. Specializing in high-end residential and commercial projects, she has won numerous awards and has been featured in many publications, including being named one of House Beautiful's "New Designers to Watch."

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