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Greenwich home says  
'hello' to fearless color

# Bye-bye boring

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# HOME



Chi Chi Ubina / Contributed photos

Greenwich's Sandra Morgan Interiors recently designed a bedroom rich with coral tones and honeysuckle floral prints for a Greenwich residence. Modern, graphic print on the headboard and dust ruffle add color and visual accents, while the grasscloth walls add texture.

Interior design is boldly going where neutrals once ruled

# Color is the new gray

By Christina Hennessy

If you haven't said nay to gray or nixed the neutrals, just know that home design is trending toward a palette with punch, where colors pop and patterns and prints pulse on walls, ceilings, furniture, pillows and carpets. It's a mix-and-match attitude, and area designers are finding clients ready for the look.

Mother-and-daughter interior designing duo Sandra Morgan and Laird Morgan Tolan, who run Sandra Morgan Interiors, a Greenwich retail boutique and art gallery, aren't ones to shy away from bold colors or prints. Their boutique is a testament to achieving serenity and solace even when surrounded by vibrant hues.

"I think people are hungry for the energy (and joy) that color and pattern bring to a space," says Sandra Morgan, as she sits in one of the in-store vignettes in apt attire — a burnt orange sweater, a leopard-print scarf, chocolate brown slacks and black boots. A small abstract painting, swirls of red, orange, yellow and pink, hangs near her left shoulder. To her right, throw cushions of swirling patterns of navy and fuchsia add pop to a cream-colored couch. "We are seeing this sense of adventure now, to play with tradition and update it. It's not just to rebel against it, but freshen it up and use it in concert with a more modern, bold approach."

Recently, the designers worked on a Greenwich residence where color was paramount and pattern and prints were key. "It was more so than we have done before, where color has been an accent," Morgan says. "In this project, it was the anchor."

Guided by a love of color from the client, the duo created scenes that went bold in pastel and rich tones. The living room's pale green ceiling and lavender walls are the canvas to which the designers added white linen club chairs with bold floral prints, a side table covered in bright green grass cloth, a large lavender ottoman with magenta piping and a high-backed chair covered in an embroidered purple and pink pattern. Vibrancy, energy and verve continue to the bedrooms. There's one filled with bright coral accents, a green and white palette and, in another, turquoise teams with blues of various hues and patterns — periwinkle, cerulean, indigo — found in everything from the walls, to the chairs to the headboard.

Even such a staid space as a home office gets a boost from a deep-pink wall covering with repeating white geometric shapes that rises from the floor and continues

across the ceiling. Throughout, curtains and window treatments feature graphic and bold florals. It's a nod to their 1970s and 1980s predecessors, but these flowers are fresh and sophisticated. "There is this energy and willingness to take a risk again," Morgan Tolan says. "It's a willingness to be more individual. It's about the way a pattern in the room can make it look unique."

Bold, deep colors have been creeping into the consciousness for several years, particularly in complex patterns. For one, technology has provided greater possibilities than traditional and handmade techniques. "Technology is enabling an amazing amount of color, variety and vibrancy in design," says Leslie Harrington, president of Greenwich-based LH Color, a color research and consulting firm established in 2001. Colors can easily and quickly be swapped out, custom-blended and created.

The interior landscape is "ripe for all this pattern and color," she says, adding that with renewed confidence in the economy comes a craving for color. "When we are hesitant, and not sure where the next dollar comes from, we buy beige and gray."

Fashion designers have been leading the way. Gucci's spring 2011 line popped with teal, orange, magenta, emerald, violet and lapis-blue looks. A year later, designer Derek Lam followed with bright prints and contrasting geometric patterns. By 2013, consumers could get kitchen appliances and utensils in lime green, orchid and mimosa. Most recently, lush colors, geometric patterns and bold floral prints have landed on home fabrics.

It's the kind of inventory Jane Mercaldi finds hard to keep in stock, especially indigo and peacock blue and anything in orange, at Greenwich's Fabric House, which sells high-end home decorating fabrics and trims. Mercaldi's family has run it for decades. Beyond color blocks, floral prints abound, including one with a purple background that contrasts with blue, forest green and chartreuse leaves and maroon, mauve and pink petals.

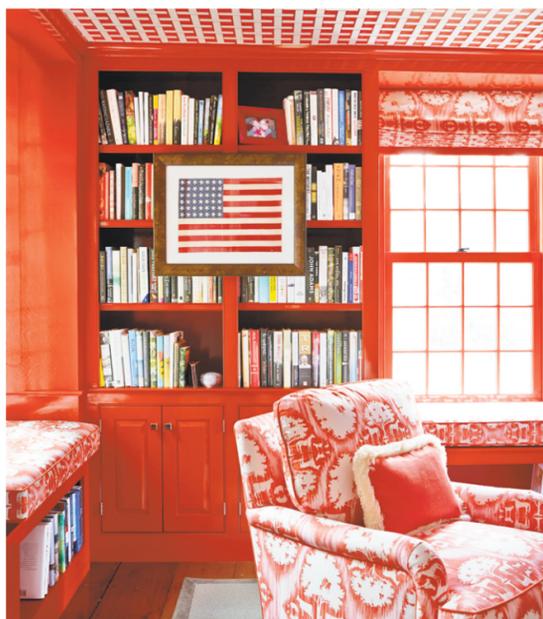
So, go ahead, dive into those deep blue walls, dig into those bold, graphic florals and make room for texture with colored grasscloth.

"People are looking for a look that lifts," Morgan Tolan says. "They are not looking for something that is subdued and quiet. They are looking for something that is fun."

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WITH A RENEWED CONFIDENCE IN THE ECONOMY COMES A CRAVING FOR COLOR



Top, Sandra Morgan Interiors created a colorful living room for this Greenwich residence, which features floral printed linen club chairs and a wing chair with embroidered graphic fabric of pink and purple accents. Above, using one fabric on a chair, window seats and shades makes for a cohesive room in a Vermont farmhouse featured in House Beautiful magazine's fall color issue.