

MANSSION GLOBAL

Layering Pattern on Pattern for a Vibrant Interior

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Combining colorful patterns in a single room isn't one of the most manageable tasks in decorating.

Some designers intentionally stick with solids and textures for a cleaner look, but also because layering a potpourri of stripes, florals and animal prints can encourage a space that's too busy. Nevertheless, others are naturally drawn toward pattern play, marrying flame stitch with Chinoiserie and tossing in a polka dot without thinking twice.

"If you love a lot of visual stimulation, like me, successful pattern play often happens naturally," said Liz Caan of Liz Caan Interiors in Newton, Massachusetts. "For those not intimidated by pattern, sometimes I think the best approach is simply to throw caution to the wind and let it happen organically. It's kind of like that adage about if you trust what you love, it'll always be in style."

Create Moments With Lighting

"If you're worried about your pattern mixing getting out of hand or just don't know where to begin, I always suggest selecting patterns that don't directly compete with each other. For example, it would be really hard for a Southwestern stripe to feel at home with a romantic toile. You want balance and variety, but you also want the patterns to feel like they would hang out in the same crowd.

"Spaces that are heavy on patterns usually evoke an intentional moodiness so I like to create additional moments with lighting as well to support that intimate vibe—fewer overheads and more floor lamps and table lamps that break up the room by casting their own glow in different corners and nooks. Sconces are also a great way to call attention to a really beautiful wallcovering.

“I love pairing an organic pattern with a structured one. It’s the perfect amount of tension but each pattern still supports the other. I love hanging art over a textured or patterned wall, regardless of whether the art matches the wallcovering. Sometimes, and oftentimes, opposition is more interesting.”



Designer Liz Caan recommends choosing patterns that feel like they would hang out in the same crowd, as she did in this colorful living room.

Eric Roth

— Liz Caan, interior designer in Newton, Massachusetts