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dress your HOME *for the* FESTIVAL



THE FESTIVAL SEASON IS UPON US, AND THIS IS THE BEST TIME TO GIVE YOU HOME A FESTIVE MAKEOVER

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



Getting your home ready for the festive season without losing sight of its existing architecture, interiors and personality is an art. If you are wondering how, we let the experts weigh in.









KEEP IT SIMPLE

It is important to note that festive dressing should feel like an extension of the home rather than something temporarily imposed on it. The festive layer can then be introduced through warmth, light, flowers, textiles and objects, without overwhelming the original design. A home should still feel recognisably itself, only a little more generous, luminous and celebratory.

Devika Khosla, Creative Director & Co-Founder, The Works Interiors, says: "Flowers and foliage bring life and movement; textiles add softness; and a few beautifully chosen objects can introduce colour and celebration. I don't necessarily believe festive décor needs an entirely new palette. Sometimes brass against timber, deep red flowers against a neutral room, or candlelight reflected on stone is enough."

Light, without question, has the greatest ability to change the mood of a space. "I prefer pools of warm light; rather than illuminating everything uniformly, candles, diyas, table lamps and subtle accent lighting immediately create intimacy," she adds.

CONTEMPORARY CUES

A festive home must be lived in. Beautiful things should not become so precious that people are afraid to use them. It comes down to restraint and giving motifs room to breathe.



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Ankit Modi, Managing Director, Durakraft Extrusions



"THIS GENERATION DOES NOT WANT NOSTALGIA DISGUISED AS DESIGN. NOR DO THEY WANT STERILE WESTERN MINIMALISM TRANSPLANTED INTO INDIAN REALITIES. THAT IS THE REASON WHY THE INHERENT IDEAS OF 'FESTIVE' ARE BEING REPLACED WITH HOMES THAT ARE WARM AND CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT OF THE FESTIVAL WITHOUT TOO MUCH BLING."

Gaurav Jain, Founder and Creative Director, Orange Tree



Mandeep N. Housego, Creative Director, Shades of India, says: "I think it comes down to understanding what makes something feel Indian rather than simply reproducing familiar festive symbols. Colour, textiles, flowers, metal, natural materials and hand-finished details can all carry that sense of place without needing to be used literally. I would rather take the richness of an Indian palette or the character of a textile and interpret it through a contemporary setting. Restraint also helps. When every element is trying to signal festivity, the space can quickly lose its subtlety."

There is a move away from making the home look uniformly festive and towards creating a more layered, personal atmosphere. "People are becoming more comfortable mixing older pieces with contemporary ones, using richer textiles alongside natural materials, and bringing colour in selectively rather than covering every surface. There is also a greater appreciation for things that can be used beyond one occasion," he adds.

THE SMALL CHANGES

We often assume that preparing for festivities means redecorating the entire living room. But all it adds is stress. Instead, one can enhance the guest experience at





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Piyusha Upadhyay, Founder & Principal Designer, That Design Studio

home through small, immediate touchpoints.

"Start with threshold spaces. For instance, keep a simple brass vessel with floating flowers and a lit diya near the entrance to set up a warm welcome. In the dining area, avoid clichéd dining napkins; instead, choose something with subtle metallic stitching, or drape an antique kantha quilt over the back of a sofa where someone will end up sitting for hours," said Suparna Handa, Managing Director, Sarita Handa.

Fragrances and incense add an invisible layer of festive vibe without taking up added square footage. "Use natural sambrani, vetiver, or crushed dried mogra to keep the home smelling fresh. When you focus on these smaller aspects instead of trying to cover every coffee table, the entire house feels dressed up yet warm and lived in," she adds.

BALANCING ACT

When doing up a home for the festivities, there is a need to balance visual drama with functionality, especially when a home is hosting large gatherings, dinners and family celebrations.

Ankit Modi, Managing Director, Durakraft Extrusions, avers: "Gift decorations are supposed not to prevent the room from being functional. It's essential to guarantee that the paths are unobstructed and that the guests have a good seat and feel at ease. Everything placed in the room should enhance its attractiveness but not create any obstacles."

A few changes can work wonders. Just to give one example, one cannot imagine how a few cushions, a blanket,







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or a couple of flowers may create the atmosphere of an entirely different room. "Rather than employing designs that divert people's attention away from the window, it would be advisable to choose decor pieces that may enhance the look of the window as well as the look of the interior," he adds.

FORM MEETS FUNCTION

A home can look beautiful and still be terrible to host a dinner in. Clear circulation, comfortable seating and accessible surfaces matter as much as the décor. It is advisable to create a few visual moments rather than decorating every corner. The space should support the celebration, not make people nervous about touching anything.

"I am interested in the move towards more personal, tactile spaces – handcrafted objects, natural materials, thoughtful lighting and a mix of old and new. There's also more room to think about the experience of hosting, particularly the dining table. Ultimately, people want their homes to feel special without losing the feeling of home. The most interesting spaces are the ones that feel collected over time, rather than decorated all at once," opines Piyusha Upadhyay, Founder & Principal Designer, That Design Studio.

Festive décor doesn't have to be expensive, elaborate or perfectly coordinated. A home isn't a finished photograph; it's where life happens, often messily. "Some of the loveliest celebrations happen around crowded dining tables, mismatched crockery and flowers that aren't perfectly arranged. If a space feels warm, welcoming and yours, you've probably got it right," she adds.

TREND CHECK

Young Indians today are globally exposed yet culturally rooted. They are digitally connected, aesthetically aware, professionally ambitious, and increasingly confident in their identity. They do not seek homes that imitate Europe, nor do they seek to recreate the past.

"This generation does not want nostalgia disguised as design. Nor do they want sterile Western minimalism transplanted into Indian realities. That is the reason why the inherent ideas of 'festive' are being replaced with homes that are warm and celebrate the spirit of the festival without too much bling," concludes Gaurav Jain, Founder and Creative Director, Orange Tree.

Festivals are ultimately about people, rituals and memories. Design can create the setting for those moments, but it shouldn't become the protagonist. Ready for a festive makeover?