

# TO THE

# MAX

STORY CLARE RYAN

PHOTOGRAPHY IAIN GILLESPIE

Luxury homes have long been synonymous with pared back interiors, but maximalist style is rewriting the rules with its ‘more is more’ aesthetic

For decades the concept of a luxury home conjured up images of cookie-cutter mansions with soulless interiors, but the mould has been broken with the dominance of maximalism. Rebelling against minimalist style, maximalism is an over-the-top design concept, which has rewritten what is perceived as luxury, with its visually rich decor that is a mash-up of different design styles.

“Maximalism offers a sense of surprise and wonder . . . it is all about fun and celebrating life, a rebellion against drabness and conformity,” explains founder and director of KWD, Kate Walker. “The global anxiety we have faced due to COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions has now morphed into a united optimism and a longing for brighter days.”

Rules were made to be broken and maximalism embraces it with a mix and match aesthetic that favours big doses of

colour, dynamic furniture, large scale art and unique homewares.

“More is more with maximalism, with a focus on three core elements; pattern, colour and texture. Think richly coloured and patterned wallpaper displayed on every wall, lush carpets and layered rugs, intricately designed floor tiles, and a blend of eclectic furniture,” explains Walker, who effectively layered colours and textures in her project, Biscayne.

“Maximalist homes are filled with treasures, curios and meaningful mementoes, coupled with artistic elements and a clash of colours.”

The Menora home of Natalie Stacey-Conway, founder of Natalie Jayne Interiors, is a sea of prints and individuality. Every corner is filled with unique objects, from a giant gold alligator statue hanging on the wall, to gold lounges and giant artworks. Her home, where she lives with her daughter and managing director of Natalie Jayne

Interiors, Isabella Conway, is the epitome of visual excitement.

“Maximalism is about animal print and beautiful jewel colours like emerald green, and you can’t go wrong with leopard or tiger print, it’s timeless,” explains Natalie Conway. “People are wanting big sculptures that are over the top and eye-catching pieces that are daring, like a zebra statue.”

There are no hard or fast rules when it comes to incorporating the style, just soft guidelines; the more intense the colour

the better, avoid clutter and buy what you love. Isabella Conway says it’s not about following a particular style or design era, but making it personal and working with pieces that are an expression of who you are.

“It could be as simple as adding new colourful cushions to a lounge, or getting a large statement piece like a velvet blue lounge and working around that. It’s less trend driven and more about what resonates with you and it might not work straight away, but you can move pieces

around the home until it does,” she explains.

Incorporating the old with the new plays a big role in creating individuality. Building designer Alana John of Alana John Design, says it’s about creating a visual feast and showing objects of interest, such as travel mementos and personally significant art and meaningful accessories.

“Let one piece take control and lead the design and build from a focal point; it could be a bold rug, art piece or a

pre-loved vintage sofa,” explains John. “Feature plants are a cost effective way to bring dimension and colour to a space, and for those who still prefer a neutral pallet, maximalism can be achieved by still embracing texture and pattern. Don’t be afraid to clash. Sometimes so wrong can be so right and be confident in what makes you happy.”

Maximalism is executed perfectly in her home, where she was created a vibrant style.

“One of my favourite spaces in our »



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home is focused around a vintage brass and agate coffee table that mixes vintage armchairs, a modern sofa and a Milano-vibe floor lamp. It's hard to identify what is old and what is new," says John.

From loud wallpaper to striking tiles in the bathroom or kitchen, creating a luxury interior is about adding in, not taking out. Sales and design consultant, Jessica Ciccarelli of Myaree Ceramics, says the recent push for experimentation and individuality has seen maximalism gain momentum over the years.

"In recent years people have become more open minded to new and unusual styles such as maximalism, thanks to travel and social media. They can see and understand the trend, and are willing to try it out for themselves," says Ciccarelli.

When selecting tiles, Ciccarelli recommends starting with the loudest and boldest tile first, and then pairing back with matching colours or textures that create contrast.

"Patterns are being created by laying multiple colours together rather than repeating the one tile over and over, and people are also pairing contrasting colours together like green and terracotta to create little pockets of interest," explains Ciccarelli. "Coloured marble is massive at the moment, with emeralds, rich reds, and even navy blue. Patterned tiles are still popular, but we love the ones that are more intricate in nature, like our Pulp or Mattonelle ranges."

When it comes to architecture, Ara Salomone, director and architect at State of Kin says people are becoming bolder with their design choices and more confident with expressing their personality through the architecture of their home.

"There are so many factors that come into play when designing a home and I think we push our designs to the limit of our client's brief. People love obscure designs for others and often not for themselves, but we're finding that people are becoming braver and have more of an appreciation for architecture, and are putting their own personality into their home, which is where we come in," says Salomone.

It's the commitment to colour and high-quality products that creates the luxurious aesthetic. Director and interior



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Clockwise from top: Alana John at her Peppermint Grove home; KWD's Biscayne project; a room inside Natalie Stacey-Conway and Isabella Conway's Menora home.

designer at State of Kin, Alessandra French has noticed a greater appreciation for the value of high quality furnishing, fixtures and finishes that endure and stand the test of time.

"There's a desire to customise the home and really make it suit your lifestyle now and into the future, rather than fitting the idea of 'the things a home should have,'" explains French.

In State of Kin's Shutter House, French created a feeling of excitement, bright energy and vigour in the home.

"We played off the timber and concrete, softening the materials with primarily warm hues in rich tones and lots of natural textures. Various stone was used . . . and we pulled colour inspiration from these throughout the home; chocolate brown, burgundy-plum red, and terracotta all feature against a fresh white canvas," explains French.

"Art and furniture then layer pastels and brighter shades to enliven the whole story, with teal, pink and yellow pops throughout the home."

BISCAYNE PROJECT PICTURE: ARMELLE HABIB