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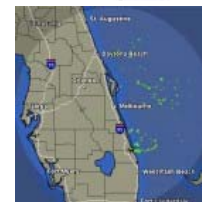


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Black & white delights

Combo brings classic look to home décor

BY KEILANI BEST
FLORIDA TODAY

Black and white, by themselves, can leave much to be desired. The result can be too much starkness or too much gloominess.

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But when combined, these colors can blend beautifully together.

In home décor, black and white always have been a hit in fashionable cities such as South Beach and Manhattan. But the color combo can go in just about every style and environment with a little creativity. The versatility and enduring qualities of black and white make the pair ideal for those who want something different without having to change much.

Elizabeth Amero, an interior designer of Porter Baxter Interior Design in Melbourne, says there are many styles that can be created with black and white.

"It can be very Old World and rustic or Country French. It can be very bold and masculine and contemporary -- it can be very bold as far as geometrically bold," she says. "It can also be very subdued."

Overall, the look is classic and versatile, too. Black and white can be combined with different textures and accent colors that can be changed out periodically to reflect the season or give off a certain mood.

Erin Olson, who dedicated a blog (www.blackandwhitedelight.com) to the colors, says it's her favorite color combination.

"It's just so versatile. You can use it for



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Classic spread. This bedroom decorated in a black-and-white "Country French" style is part of Tom and Nan-Joi Haynes' Viera home. It features antiques, a modified sleigh bed and custom-made credenza. Tim Shortt, FLORIDA TODAY

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On the Web

Porter Baxter Interior Design, Melbourne:

www.porterbaxterinteriors.com

Erin Olson's blog: www.blackandwhitedelight.com

Black and White Store: www.theblackandwhitestore.com



Versatile look. Tom and Nan-Joi Haynes' bedroom features a custom-made credenza with a hutch for the television and laptop. The black-and-white checkered chair adds a nice touch. Tim Shortt, FLORIDA TODAY

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modern or for classic looks," she says. "It's easy. That's the thing I like about it the most. And it's widely available. And you can mix and match patterns really easily, and you don't have to worry about what goes with what, because the different patterns and designs go so seamlessly together."



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Olson, a graduate of sociology who started other blogs dedicated to various colors, started blackandwhitedelight.com so more people could have access to black and white décor that wasn't easily attainable. She lists unique black and white accessories, furniture and art, their prices and where they can be purchased.

"There's a lot of design Web sites to give you inspiration, but it doesn't tell you where you can buy the stuff, and real interior decorators have connections that you don't have," she says. "So I took it upon myself to kind of collect all of these different places to make it easy for the consumer to find exactly what they're looking for."

One great thing about black and white is that together, they can be combined with other colors to accent a room or add a certain ambience. This way, you can change the whole look of the room by just switching up the accessories.

Renee Cooper, who owns www.theblackandwhitestore.com, an online store that sells black, white and gray home furnishings and accessories, says a room doesn't need to be plain black or plain white, but when combined, accent colors are a must.

"You can use something white to lighten the room or you can use something black to ground the room," she says. "You could do a pretty, simple room in neutral tones including black or white, then add a splash of color here and there rather than changing out your whole room or house."

Olson says colors like bright green, bright pink or orange work well as accents with black and white décor.

And, according to Amero, you can mix and match furniture for different styles.

If your black and white room feels too masculine, add some Toile to soften it up, she says. If you want the look to be hardcore contemporary, add a lot of chrome, leather, armless furniture or Lucite accessories.

Black and white rugs can be a nice, subtle way to use the color combination. And if you have the cash, a beautiful black and white chandelier with black crystals or handblown Murano glass can add dramaticism to a room, says Amero.

Olson predicts the black and white color combination will be big in 2008, especially in bedding. But regardless, this combo will always have endless appeal, according to Cooper.

"The colors are classic," she says. "They never go out of style."

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