

Metro Home

Go with the flow

Natural elements and contemporary spaces blend to create interesting layers

DENISE SLABBERT

LET the outside in, and the inside out, is the heartfelt mantra of any worthy interior designer, architect or homeowner.

This means our interiors need to flow through to outdoor living areas and the great outdoors needs to play a leading role inside the home.

It also means that you don't have to throw out your contemporary pieces, but rather marry these to natural influences, creating a happy marriage between old and new, natural and man-made.

The doyenne of the local design industry, and the brains behind Rooms on View, is Sumari Krige who owns La Grange Interiors in Kramerville. She feels one can't overdo the natural theme in the home, but advises adding a few elements like glass and rich textiles to add sophistication. And ensure you choose pieces that aren't likely to date.

"The ground rules are that one must start with some good, solid pieces. Your base should be rich and your



NATURAL BEAUTY: Emphasise the beauty of natural materials inside the home with a stone wall, above, or the Butterfly Stool, designed by Yanagi. Picture: JACKET INTERIORS

adds to the aesthetic value of the home space, she says.

In her view, marrying bleached furniture with naturally inspired textiles is a sure winner.

"We like to combine natural upholstery with bleached furniture. We use a lot of texture including heavy woven linens in amazing colours. One can also use hand-painted linen. It is all about layering," she says.

Tips and numbers

● If you're building or renovating, wooden beams (instead of ceilings) is something to consider if you want to create more layers and textures.

● Cottons, linens, leather and bull denim are great fabrics to consider for a natural look.

● Blinds are another way to introduce layers and natural textures into the home. Go for wooden or bamboo blinds, the more rustic-looking the better.

● For funky and fabulous cutting-edge designs and furniture, visit Twice

International at 6 Sherborne Road, Parktown, call (011) 727-8800 or visit www.twice.com

● You'll find La Grange Interiors at 69 Kramer Road in Kramerville. They are open from Monday to Friday and on Saturdays until 1pm. This showroom boasts furniture and objects for the home from



MULTI-TEXTURED: An outside 'stone fence' adds another layer of texture to the outside living area. Picture: DENISE SLABBERT

and well-designed," she says. "A good couch with linen slip covers (that you can change for summer and winter) is a good start. Complement this with wooden furniture: a solid coffee table or antique cupboard."

Krige says Oriental antique pieces in elm can be converted to a wholly natural look, although these generally come lacquered in red and black. She advises they be stripped so the natural wood can come through. Bleached elm furniture is very popular and

interpreted in many ways, and La Grange Interiors create lamps from hunks of natural wood finished off with a snazzy lampshade.

Krige says, in addition to a few signature pieces, carpets in natural colours and fibres add warmth, and wooden floors accentuate the natural feel of a home. But, she warns, go for the real thing.

"If you're going for wooden floors, I must say that artificial wood doesn't do it for me. These days, designers are even using old scaffolding planks, sanding them down and finishing them off with a

(011) 944-2377.

● Contact Jacket Interiors on (011) 646-3505.

● Contact Paul Seggie of Segstone trading about stone-chip fences, or sliding doors using natural woods. Call: 082-958-2899.

whitewash or lime-wash," she says.

Krige says one need not go out and redo an entire space, but for a fresh look, the homeowner needs to complement what already exists with a few carefully chosen accent pieces.

"Natural cane furniture in a honey-brown colour has always been popular, but now we're going for greys and taupes to reinvent that rattan look," she says.

Krige also points out that architecture plays a major role in letting nature blend into the home space, and the design of our modern houses revolves around making the outdoors part of the home. As a result, architects are going for big glass doors and stacked windows so that nature plays a deliberate starring role.

Jaczi Samnios runs interior design consultancy Jacket Interiors in Forest Town with her partner Ockert Snyman.

"We like to use cane or rattan furniture and combine that with colour. The natural cane combined with sophisticated fabrics works both inside the home and outside on the patio," she says.

Samnios agrees that using cutting-edge contemporary pieces with natural elements creates a unique interpretation.

"Using natural driftwood furniture combined with glass and a sophisticated contemporary fabric like velvet really works."

Samnios says one can overdo the earthy natural



look by making everything look the same shade, and she likes to dress up a home with colour in linens and rich velvets.

"I'd keep the base colours fairly muted so that you can change these and accessorise, but I would definitely add colour. At the moment we are using a lot of black and white, which blends in beautifully with earth tones and just adds a new level of

sophistication."

On the other end of the spectrum, Segstone construction project manager Paul Seggie was inspired by a stone-chip-fence idea he once saw and has created his own version that has been used in homes around Joburg.

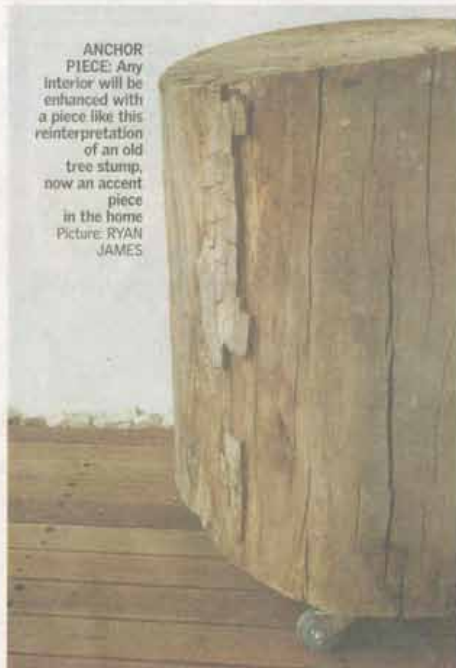
"I'd call it a stone-chip fence. Basically, I use welded mesh to create a frame and this is filled with stone," he says.

Seggie has interpreted the idea into walls and gates made of loose stone.

"The idea has become really popular as it keeps with the natural theme, as well as adding texture to a home space. The design also allows for a certain amount of light."



ARTFUL: Large wooden fish from Swaziland add creativity to any home space. Picture: DENISE SLABBERT



ANCHOR PIECE: Any interior will be enhanced with a piece like this reinterpretation of an old tree stump, now an accent piece in the home. Picture: RYAN JAMES