

# TRADITIONAL OR MODERN?



Interior by Collov Home Design via Unsplash

## *Hello Transitional Design*

Our taste is continually undergoing inner transformations as interior styles change, which can leave you straddling a tricky line between opposing looks. One that often crops up between couples in particular, is the traditional versus modern interiors dilemma. Well, wrangle no more, this state of flux has actually been a style in its own right for decades. So, if you're an admirer of old and new but can't choose between them, read on!

**T**ransitional design emerged in response to modern concepts of design that took off in the 1940s and 1950s. As the name implies, it transits between two styles, with a nod to traditional and modern

in equal measure. Simple and sleek are paired with traditional comfort and familiarity, creating a style that's neither too stuffy and traditional, nor too trendy and modern. Particularly popular across the pond, where comfort and homeliness are hallmarks



## Step inside Polly Gibbs

Polly Gibbs, Creative Director at Coco Design, shares her down to earth approach to interiors, from design secrets to trends and everything in between.

# STEP INSIDE *by Polly Gibbs*

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Interior by Collov Home Design

of American design DNA, transitional interiors are the ultimate fusion of present and past, of classic and contemporary style. It's not a scattered, confused mess, rather, it's an elegantly enduring and gender neutral look, lightly adorned with accessories, texture and a neutral colour palette. Let's look at how transitional differs from traditional.

### **Transitional Design**

Light wood tones

Super homely, layered and textured, but not cluttered

Furnishings have both curved and straight lines

Detailing is understated, not overly ornate or distracting

Traditional elements are found alongside modern

Furniture and accessories are often asymmetrically arranged for a more relaxed vibe

Colours are mostly neutral or monochromatic, with calming accents like tan, grey-blues or greens

### **Traditional Design**

Dark wood tones

Furnishings have curves and intricate detailing

Furnishings are placed symmetrically in the room, such as a table and a lamp on each side of a sofa

Ornate flourishes are added to window treatments or moldings

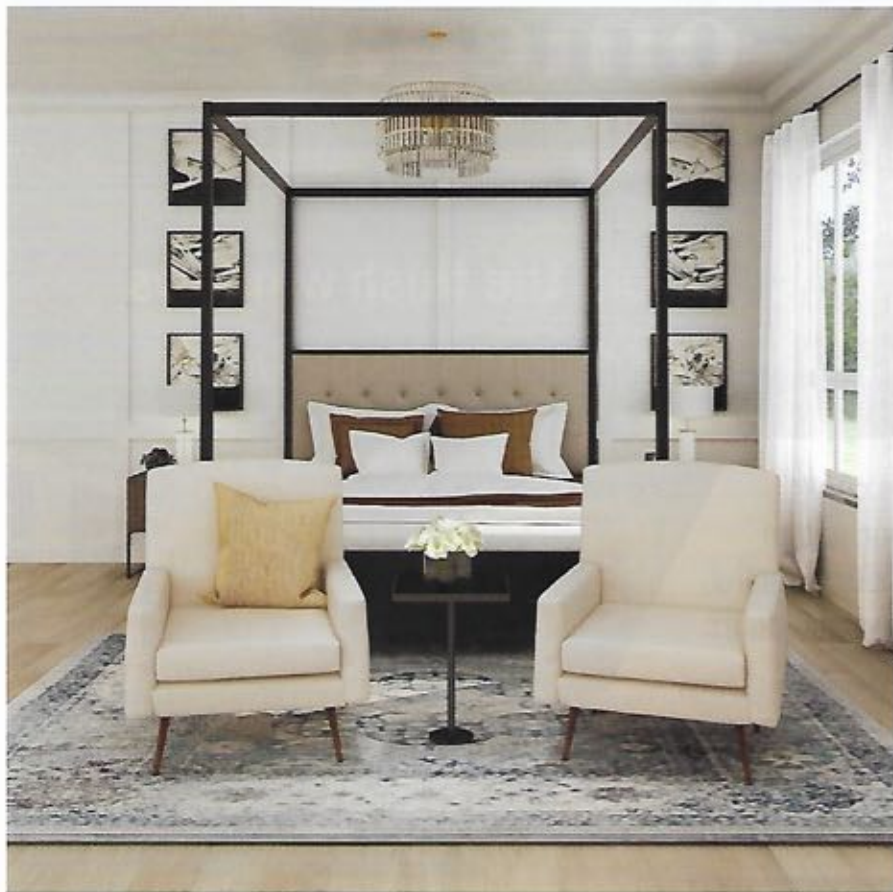
Colours include neutrals along with muted, dark colors, such as jewel tones, red, or green

### **The Art of Mixing**

It might seem challenging to achieve a cohesive look when mixing such opposing styles, so let's look a bit deeper into how to merge them. To be successful, traditional and modern elements need to be balanced. A key trick is to make sure each piece is not extreme in its design, so avoid

using very traditional with very futuristic pieces. Extremely ornate, detailed, traditional furniture will jar with ultra sleek, modern furniture. Instead, choose pieces that possess shared attributes - traditional curves and simple detailing can look stunning next to a clean-edged piece for example.

Another way transitional design keeps disparate pieces flowing harmoniously is through colour harmony. Palettes are simple, mostly built of neutral tones such as creams, greys, tans, whites and brown. Soft, subtle colours may be added as accents, often grey-based shades of blue and green, or monochromatic accents are used.



In order to add visual interest to the space, textures are layered upon one another. Materials such as metal, glass, wood, leather, rattan and even lacquer are used throughout the space.

After furniture, rugs are probably the most important part of transitional interior design - particularly light coloured vintage Persian or textured rugs, that need to pull the whole look together, anchor the furniture and offer a hint of luxury.

Accessories and art are used sparingly and with intention to keep focus on the flow of old with new. For example, objects (ornaments) are limited and a single large piece of art may be seen on a wall instead of a collage of multiple smaller pieces.



### How To Pull It Off

Here's a design blueprint that will help you achieve a well-blended transitional look;

- Start with a timeless base layer - like a capsule wardrobe, start with quality, staple pieces which can be layered with some contemporary elements.
- Look to traditional design for room layouts, aiming to arrange furniture socially.
- Combine curves with straight lines, being careful to keep it balanced with a near 50/50 mix.

**Transitional Moodboard by Polly, featuring:**  
Chandelier from Wayfair, Rug from Little Persia, Cartmel Sofa & Sagrada Chair from Soho Home, Curtains from HM Home, Vintage French Art, Etsy, Vintage Trunk from McGee & Co, Faux Olive Tree from Charles Ted Interiors, Liria Terracotta Urn from Design Vintage

## STEP INSIDE *by Polly Gibbs*

- Stay neutral with your colour choice, allowing the lines of the furniture to take centre stage.

- Layer textural elements such as wood, glass, lacquer, rattan, fabric, steel and metal.

- Shiplap walls will instantly bring American warmth and charm to any room.

- Limit the use of accessories - remember you're adding artful details through your mix of furnishings and fabrics, and you don't want to confuse the eye.

- Choose impactful art - often landscapes, seascapes or vintage still-life are central to the look. But use art sparingly. In most cases, one large piece on the wall is better than an arrangement of small pieces.

- Roll out a soft, light coloured vintage-inspired or textured rug beneath a reclaimed wood coffee table, large ottoman, dining table or bed.

- Layer two rugs - a great way to introduce the transitional look is to pop a smaller Persian rug over an existing neutral one, so the former



**Evesham Table, Moreton Side Table, Cotton Southwold Sofa - all The White Company**

effectively forms a border around the latter. This also saves on the cost of replacing an existing large rug.

- Place oversized foraged branches in floorstanding pots, olive trees in wicker baskets and bunches of leafy foliage in stumpy clay pots.

### Five Reasons Why It's An Interior Game Changer

1. Transitional is as timeless as a classic interior, giving the look longevity.

2. Opposing tastes merge seamlessly without a sense of compromise, taking the angst out of design decisions.

3. Repurposing vintage furniture, rugs and accessories is better for the planet and for your pocket.

4. It's Versatile - you can adopt many interpretations, from coastal to modern farmhouse.

5. It's a look that evolves and grows with you.

- Add floor to ceiling curtains with a slight fabric puddle at the base for a classic hint that also brings a sense of grandeur.

- Keep pattern mixing to a minimum.

- Include a statement chair or two.

- Make sure you inject personality with art

and unique accessories to prevent the space reading as boring or safe.

### Further Inspiration & Where to Shop

For inspiration take a look at McGee & Co, Amber Interiors and Jean Stoffer Design - all masters at transitional interiors.

Shop the look at Westelm, Charles Ted Interiors, French Connection, Design Vintage, Anthropologie and Little Persia Rugs.

Search granny's attic, antique shops and flea markets, because a striking piece of furniture that is truly traditional can be the highlight of your transitional room. This could be a dresser, mirror, table or anything that harks from a bygone era. Another way to blend old with new is to reupholster a vintage piece in a modern fabric.

By following these tips you'll be on your way to a harmonious transitional interior in no time.

### Source List

Amberinteriordesign.com / @amberinteriors  
 Jeanstofferdesign.com / @jeanstofferdesign  
 McGeeandco.com / @mcgeeandco  
 Frenchconnection.com / @frenchconnection  
 Thewhitecompany.com / @thewhitecompany  
 Littlepersia.com / @littlepersiarugs  
 Westelm.co.uk / @westelmuk  
 Anthropologie.com / @anthropologie  
 Charlested.com / @charlestedinteriors  
 Collov.com / @collovhome

• Polly is an award-winning designer, Top 50 Home Influencer - Sweetpea & Willow, Decorex100 Interiors Influencer & Amara Interiors Blog Award Finalist. If you've got a rockin' interior or design dilemma, message her and it could feature in the next issue. E: polly@curious-coco.com W: www.curious-coco.com



Transitional Lounge by Collov Design