



# SNUGGLE IN... TO A COSIER HOME

THE COLDER MONTHS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. AS THE DAYS GET SHORTER, AND THE SKY GETS CLOUDIER, WE BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE A TASTE OF WHAT WINTER HAS TO OFFER. IN PREPARATION FOR WHAT'S AHEAD, **KRISTA MICALLEF TRIGONA** TALKS TO INTERIOR DESIGNER **GRETA APAP BOLOGNA** TO FIND OUT HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOME LOOK AND FEEL COSIER.



**M**aking your home feel more inviting for winter need not be a time consuming or budget busting job. It is simply about creating a comfortable space that is not too cluttered or too casual. With the right touches, colours and accessories, you can make your home feel cosy, inviting and relaxing for you, your family and your guests.

### A Smooth Start

A few additions such as throws, pillows and plants are all you really need to evoke the right mood. Accessories are what finish off a room and give it character, so ensure to choose the right ones that will fit in well with the fabrics and wall colour. These finishing touches are what make a room, when they are not overdone.

Interior designer, Greta Apap Bologna, offers helpful tips and ideas about how to enhance a warm atmosphere and cosy mood. She points out that this can be done simply by combining natural woods with bright felt fabrics, chunky ceramics and rustic textures, adding that "warm lighting, cashmere throws and plush rugs will also contribute to this feel."

Colour also plays an important role; even though the colder season is drawing near, do not shy away from neutral colours. "Autumn heralds the arrival of deep tones," says Greta, "in tune with the cooler days and softer light of the season, furniture and accessories are now in muted greys and neutrals, ranging from palest chalk to deep graphite to black. Colour hasn't disappeared

completely but it is more subdued. Splashes of toned-down purple, peacock blue and mustard, create depth and warmth, while metallics add a glamorous shimmer, creating an effect which is quietly sophisticated."

Lighting has a huge effect on a room, "no matter to what extent you pursue your interior

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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## SNUGGLE IN... TO A COSIER HOME cont. from page 23



Plants, fresh flowers and candles can be used to create a warm atmosphere.

finishes, lighting can simply make or break the atmosphere," says Greta. Ambient lighting such as candlelight is what brings out more of a warm feel. Scented candles can add to this effect and may be used in many rooms.

Task lighting also ensures that your room is comfortable and inviting. In order to achieve the right look and atmosphere, Greta recommends "a balance of low level lighting at different heights, which will achieve a cosier ambience. Table lamps and floor lamps are the key players in this scenario. Use warm coloured bulbs as opposed to daylight bulbs to enhance the feel."

Be it indoor or outdoor, greenery adds a nice touch to a room and at the same time, adds life and oxygen to our homes. Melosaul Balzan from Derek Garden Centre says that a plant needs to be bought according to its environment. "The conditions and environment where the plant is going to be put will affect its lifespan; you need to consider whether it is going to be placed in a sunny or shady area, whether it will be exposed to sea water or a draft. Plants also need to be well taken care of, tap water, for instance is not ideal. Preferably opt for rain water or water from the air conditioning unit," he advocates.

Personalising a room, and adding subtle touches will enhance the cosy look that you are looking for. Here are some ways you can add a cosy feel to the main rooms in your home.

### Living Room

Pillows and throws are a great way to bring in colour and comfort into a room. In the living room, a throw or two is essential during the winter months especially for those of us that own a cold and forbidding leather sofa. Throws can be draped at the back of arm chairs, adding texture and warmth. Experiment with different

fabrics and materials to induce a feeling of cosiness.

Dress up your coffee table! Yes, it does increase that temptation of wanting to put your feet up, but, it is a great place to show off your decorating ideas. You may want to dress it up with a thick pillar candle on a glass candle plate, or, you may want to leave out a book or two which may be a worthwhile read for your guests. The trick, however, is to keep it clutter-free, leaving space for a snack or a cup of tea.

### Bedroom

The bedroom can be turned into an escape haven by using cosy and comforting fabrics, making it more inviting for us to go home to after a long day at work. Little decorative touches that are normally reserved for 'public' spaces can also be used in this room. Plants, fresh flowers and candles can be used to create a warm atmosphere.

This room should be kept free of anything that reminds us of stressful chores or of work. Clutter, papers and computers should be kept outside a bedroom, rather it should be portrayed as a sanctuary that aids restful sleep. Soft music can also add to the calm atmosphere.

### Bathroom

The bathroom can be turned into a personal, inviting and soothing space by adding small touches. Greta recommends that you "replace all your white bathroom towels with earthy tones and add a cluster of chunky candles to create a cosier feel to the room." A thick rug and a rack of books or magazines will also make those days for soaking in the bath more inviting.

Don't be afraid to be artful. Decorate the walls with art in delicate frames, but, due to the humidity, do not put treasured photos or pricey items.



And what about keeping your bathroom warm? Franco Bileci, Managing Director of Energy Saving Solutions, suggests that you install a reliable gas water heater in your bathrooms. Not only are they economical, but they work instantaneously. He explains that you do not need to wait for the water to heat up, and there is also no need to adjust it to the right temperature. Franco adds that a Gas Air Heater is also an economical

alternative to heating up your bathroom, which will surely make your bathroom feel cosy.

### Kitchen

Small touches can also be added to the kitchen. Greta suggests an effective look that will work well for this room during the winter months: "A large wooden bowl filled with oranges and another with seasonal

nuts will give off a wintry feel. A selection of winter-associated spices such as cinnamon sticks and cloves can also be placed in a glass bowl at the centre of your table."

With your home warmed up and looking cosy for the winter, light a couple of scented candles, grab a book in one hand, a cup of hot chocolate in the other and snuggle in to embrace the cosy feel that your home has to offer.



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