

MINGLING METALS

DESIGN MORE WELCOMING TO MIXING MATERIALS

BY BETH WOOD

For years in interior design, silver and gold were believed to not get along. How times have changed! Silver and gold are good friends and meet up with brass, chrome, copper and stainless steel quite regularly. For ways to mix metals gracefully, we talked to Tatiana Machado-Rosas, the design department manager and senior interior designer at Jackson Design and Remodeling (JDR).

Q: Mixing metals is in JDR's list of top interior design trends. Why do you think something that was a design no-no in the past has become popular?

A: There may have been more parameters in the past. There are always certain trends that are set per year, but in fashion, graphic arts and interior design, there's more of a mix of finishes and looks. It's been done before but in a more purist way.

This is happening generally in interior design. You choose your own style, not just what's trendy. It's being proud of your space. People are looking for something that shows an expression of themselves. They want an eclectic look. A good way to achieve that is a mix of materials and metals -- bronze mixed with steel or brass, or copper and steel in one space.

Q: Why is there more of an open spirit these days?

A: Maybe it's a reflection of feeling more freedom after the recession. It's a way to show: 'I'm happy. I'm living. I'm doing this and have more money to do it with.' During the recession, design was more frugal; now it's more lavish and sometimes more ornate.

Q: Are there certain metals that go together best?

A: It depends on what's happening in the room. I designed a kitchen with all white cabinets. Everything is white, except for a large black armoire that serves as a pantry. For the cabinetry, we have the brass hardware, knobs and pulls. The lighting



JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING

This kitchen demonstrates that different metals can be used successfully in one space.

fixtures are brass. The plumbing fixtures are brushed nickel. And the ovens are stainless steel. The fourth metal is antique brass on the black pantry.

It's how you mix the metals. It's great to work with these materials, but balancing them makes a space successful.

Q: How about other rooms in the house?

A: You could have a stainless-steel fireplace. Metal could be added in furniture pieces. A table could be iron or chrome and the light fixtures could be brass or nickel. There are a lot of good ways to add metal. In architecture, they'll have a staircase that's all black or stainless steel or aluminum. If you combine it with wood stairs, then it makes it a little warmer.

Q: Again, balance is crucial?

A: When you put a lot of one material in one room, it is very uncomfortable. It can be too warm, for example, a room with wood furniture, wood floors and wood walls. Mixing materials is good.

It's up to the designer to mix metal, which brings a cold feel, with other materials so it isn't austere and cold. If it's too cold, you feel something wrong could

happen. It doesn't give you a warm feeling of safety.

Q: Does a room need more of one metal than the others?

A: Yes, you have to have one dominant metal. Fifty percent or more of one, with the other metals making up the rest. The rest could be 25/25 percent, but you wouldn't want one at only five percent. But it depends on how you're using it.

The way I use metals is often in the hardware. I have a counter that's copper, like an old Irish bar. You can use metal in wall applications, like tile mosaics with copper. Backsplash material can be everything from metal to a combo of stone and metal. It looks really nice and fun.

Q: Can you talk about mixing concrete with metals?

A: Concrete with metallics could be used on floors, countertops, probably walls as well, for a slick or rustic look. Inlaid pieces of metal in the concrete in different shapes on the floor or a wall can create a really nice pattern. When using concrete, it's better to be simple with metals. You don't want it too fussy. If you're adding metal to concrete, you may want to go with one color.

Q: When using mixed metals, how can you be most cost-effective?

A: No matter what you're going to do, you'll need lighting, knobs and pulls. They can be inexpensive and you can buy very inexpensive light fixtures. Plumbing fixtures and appliances are already metal. That's the kitchen.

In a living space, you could add a table with chrome legs. You don't need to go very expensive for that. You only need to buy one or two pieces to mix things up. You're adding metal when you put in a light fixture. You can have a mirror with a silver-plated frame or a wood resin that looks like metal.

Panels are economical. Home Depot has vinyl panels that are painted to look like metal. There's wallpaper that looks like metal. Some tile looks like oxidized metals.

You can spend a little more and buy real metal panels. MDF panels are 4-feet-by-8-feet and routed with a texture. You can spray paint it with a silver or gold color for a do-it-yourself way to get textures on the wall.

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