

Home & Garden

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Designer Jen Pinto recommends clearing out the clutter and bringing in soft, neutral colors and cozy blankets for lounge-worthy living spaces.



Amid the hard surfaces of a bathroom, live plants provide an organic decor element in this space from Jackson Design & Remodeling.



Even in the kitchen, greenery and a bookshelf with curated displays can brighten up the space with color and warmth, says designer Jen Pinto. JACKSON DESIGN AND REMODELING PHOTOS

By Caron Golden

We're in the thick of San Diego's version of winter, and here's hoping all the holiday decor is finally back in storage. Still feel strange to have put away the cheery, colorful and perhaps even glitzy baubles and pillows, and tchotchkes? Does it make your home feel a little drab, especially in this season when we don't have as much sunlight, and it can be cloudy, damp and cool? With a new year we deserve a home refresh, however modest, to inspire and re-energize us. We asked seven of our favorite designers to provide

Post-holiday decor blahs?

These pointers from San Diego designers can help re-energize your home's interior

simple, easily achievable but creative ways to spruce up, freshen up and cozy up spaces in our homes. If you've made a resolution to get organized, they have some tips for you here. If you're looking to add some soft color — including Pantone's Color of the Year, Peach Fuzz — you'll learn delightful ways to incorporate it. We even have design ideas to help you set up an intimate meditation space in just a corner. And check out the photos for even more inspiration. From designer Jen Pinto at Jackson Design & Remodeling: Declutter and add soft, See REFRESH on Page E6

GARDEN MASTERY

Hops' tiny green cone blossoms into beer

With sufficient sunlight, space, water and persistence, home brewers can grow ingredient

By Barb Sands

Have you ever wondered how beer is made and what ingredients are used in this most refreshing beverage? One key element is hops — a cone-shaped flower of the plant (*Humulus lupulus*) in the horticultural family *Cannabaceae*. It's an incredibly beautiful flower, rich in oils, acids and resins. The art of brewing an aromatic, fine beer is in large part due to the many different hop varieties, which impart a range of flavors including citrus, flower, grassy, spicy, woody and even earthy notes. The hop plant is a fast-growing, herbaceous perennial, native to temperate areas of the Northern Hemisphere. Only the female plants produce cones

for use as hops (the male plants are the pollinators). Hops grow from rhizomes also called root-stalks. The plants need direct sunlight and 15 or more hours of day length to successfully produce cones. They thrive with sufficient water in the spring and warm temperatures in the summer. In San Diego County, hops will likely require additional irrigation. Hop plants love a well-drained, deep, sandy loam soil with a pH of 6 to 7.0. Plant nutrition consists of fertilizers applied in spring as well as manure or compost. Downy mildew, wilt and viral diseases plague hops; spider mites and hop aphids are less aggressive pests. Unfortunately, the plants do not tolerate

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You can try to grow hops in San Diego County for personal consumption; however, it will take time, patience and the appropriate growing conditions. GETTY IMAGES

If you think you clean often enough, think again

By Rachel Kurzius

Common sense plays a big part in determining when many things should be cleaned — if it looks dirty or smells sour, probably best to give it a detox. Other times, though, an item's cleanliness (or lack thereof) isn't so obvious. When's the last time you laundered the throw blanket in your living room, for instance? And do you really need to clean the inside of your washing machine? In cases like those, experts say there are some rules of thumb to help. So, are you cleaning the things around your house frequently enough? Test your knowledge below. And remember, these are generalities. If you live with pets, See QUIZ on Page E4



Adding life can be as simple as peel-and-stick wallpaper on a headboard wall or greenery on a nightstand, as seen in this design by Blythe Interiors. **NATALIA ROBERT PHOTOGRAPHY**

REFRESH

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neutral colors to the area using blankets, candles and flowers to freshen the room. Also, window coverings help to elevate the space and help to bring everything together. It's a simple addition; it doesn't have to be custom.

The addition of plants and greenery can really transform a space and personalize it in a way that makes it feel like home. You can do this in your kitchen, living space and your bathrooms to bring life and warmth to the room.

Adding a bookshelf to a space can also change the look without having to redo an entire space. A stylish arrangement on a bookshelf can really personalize the space to fit your personality and elevate the room into a "designer"-looking space.

From Jennifer Verruto, founder and CEO, Blythe Interiors:

After the holiday celebrations, the transition back to post-festive life can often feel a bit drab. The vibrant decorations are packed away, but winter is still here. Instead of just reverting back to your typical, daily decor, embrace this opportunity to inject a bit of post-holiday energy into your home. Consider creating a transitional feel that bridges winter and spring. This doesn't mean you need to remove all your winter decor, but by starting to blend seasons, you'll add a fresh feel to your space.

You can achieve this by introducing small pops of springtime colors into your home. You might try buying new bath towels in lighter colors, like the Pantone 2024 Color of the Year, Peach Fuzz, or making other simple additions like adding peel-and-stick wallpaper to your headboard wall or incorporating indoor plants and florals to bring a burst of life and color!

Another pro tip is to transform your TV from a black void into a work of art ... no Samsung Frame TV required! Simply search You Tube for "free artwork," and you're all set to display.

From Mark Stocker, Mark Stocker Design Inc.:

Here's a game-changer for your post-holiday blues — let's start right at the entrance! Imagine swapping the interior side of that ho-hum entry door for a pop of personality — a vibrant color that screams "welcome" to both you and your guests.

Add a funky rug that not only keeps those winter boots cozy but also sets the tone for a fun, fresh vibe. It's the easiest way to inject some joy into your home after the holidays — because why should the party stop at the doorstep? Let the color in and let the good times roll!

From Traci Taylor, owner and principal designer, Arise Interiors:

It's not uncommon to feel like your home is a bit drab after the holidays. Many



Creating a meditation space doesn't have to require an entire room. Carving out a corner of a room, as this rendering shows, can be enough to create calm. **KIM NADEL**



A vibrant color on the interior of an entry door provides impact and, paired with an unconventional rug, adds a lot of personality, according to Mark Stocker Design. **DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN**



Woven baskets tidy up a mudroom, where they help organize what would otherwise be loose piles of belongings. **NATALIA ROBERT PHOTOGRAPHY**

of us put a lot of effort into making things look wintry and festive, and now it's time for a turn.

Luckily it doesn't take much to feel the wings of spring here in SoCal. There are transitional colors that could help a lot. Going full spring does not make a lot of sense, but bringing in some softer, bright colors can do the trick. Greens, peach and earthier oranges are all good options to break out of the holiday themes and feel fresh. Think of it like bringing some sunshine into your color scheme. This can be a towel or new decorative pillow set or even accessories. Flowers always help.

Did you happen to see that the Color of Year from Pantone is Peach Fuzz? This color is a perfect starting point for this task. As the deeper colors of winter and the holidays get stored away, there is room to bring in some brighter colors that

remain soft. Peach Fuzz fits the bill perfectly.

We are all typically thinking about storage this time of year as well. For our design process efficiency is always part of the consideration. With a lot of smaller homes, every space must be used as effectively as you can. This can include using the space under stairs as an optimized storage area with cabinets or rollouts. Or using a mudroom/laundry room to include more storage solutions.

For instance, we are building an entry area for a client that also can be used as a mudroom, adding a simple partition wall that separates living areas. The mudroom/dropzone will have ample storage and tidy places for mail, bags, shoes, and the other items we all drag in throughout the day. And when guests pop in, the homeowners can close it up behind beautifully finished



These rich blue cabinets and adjacent taupe cabinets are part of a laundry room/mudroom designed to streamline would-be clutter and create an organized multifunctional space. The vertical cabinets hide a stackable washing machine and dryer. The blue cabinets and counter create storage and a drop off place for entering the house from the garage. **PHOTOGENICSD**

cabinet doors.

From Caitlin Aberle, owner + interior designer of Realm Design:

The new year usually means a fresh start, which we're all excited for, but it can be really hard to not feel like your home is a little cold feeling after we remove all of the cozy holiday decor. We always recommend sprucing up with smaller accessories and bringing life into your space with new plants as a new year begins. Mixing in plants with sculptural objects as well as some books and photos really creates a collected look that doesn't fall flat. You want to make sure you have a mix of items, so everything balances each other well.

New styling on shelves and the addition of plants can create a fresh start without spending a lot of time or money. Throw pillows and new cozy blankets for your sofa can also create new visual interest. This is a great way to bring in some nonpermanent color to the room. I love to mix it

up based on what's drawing my eye when I'm looking — currently, I'm really into greens. Pillows are also a great way to bring in pattern that is easily swapped out if you get sick of it. Different sizes is always a good idea, some bigger around 22 inches and some around 18 inches work great. You can also throw in a lumbar pillow around 12 by 20 inches if you want.

From Kim Oceana Nadel, principal of Gaia Inspired Design and Partner of Sacred Space Sisters eShop:

As we embrace the new year, creating a personal sanctuary for meditation, yoga or self-care is essential for maintaining balance. Even in a modest corner, you can cultivate a tranquil retreat.

Start with a palette of serene colors like soft blues, gentle greens, warm white or muted earth tones that evoke a sense of peace. Incorporate textures that soothe the soul, like a plush rug or a soft throw.

A comfortable large floor cushion or a sturdy yoga mat is a must, along with some shelves for inspirational items such as an intention candle, crystals, or a beloved plant.

By selecting items that resonate with tranquility and personal significance, your corner will transform into a haven for rejuvenation and reflection.

From Megan Siason, owner, interior designer of M Studio Interior Design:

The new year is all about reinvigorating your surroundings and creating fresh new starts. One way to achieve this in the home is to get organized. One of my favorite ways to declutter is to use baskets in place of those open shelves. Whether it be in a bathroom, pantry or mudroom, baskets are a great way to add warmth and texture to space while hiding some of the everyday items.

Golden is a San Diego freelance writer.