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REAL ESTATE | DESIGN

The Best Interior-Design Books to Give as Holiday Presents

From deploying pattern deftly to pulling off Parisian chic—actionable décor tips fill these five books. Gift one to the amateur decorator on your list



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A BEAUTIFUL interior-design book may seem the ideal holiday gift for a friend who knows Carrara is a Porsche and Carrara is an expensive white marble. But you'll truly please the compulsive room-rearranger on your list if the book does more than compile gorgeous imagery and also advises on how to rearrange his or her furniture most strategically. Our selections for this year's most giftable volumes span five aesthetics and attitudes, from bohemian Paris to neoclassical New York and, in each case, illustrate applicable advice. Result: They're more likely to become affectionately dog-eared than to join your friend's heap of lovely design tomes waiting to be regifted. For each of these decorating bibles, we helpfully suggest the recipient most likely to value its particular gospel.

The Power of Pattern: Interiors and Inspiration, A Resource Guide

Rizzoli, \$45

Somewhere between the vertigo-inducing style of allover chintz and the Cold War chill of gray-and-white palettes lies the sophisticated use of patterned textiles and wallpaper. Susanna Salk, author of several interiors books and the host of lifestyle blog Quintessence's "At Home With" video series, guides us through interiors of pattern-happy designers including glamorous Angeleno Mary McDonald and Atlanta-born maximalist Miles Redd. Each chapter presents copious riffs on specific styles, such as chinoiserie, stripes, damask and ikat, while unlocking the secrets to successful layering.

LESSONS: Cover an entire room in toile—it grows stronger, not redundant, in bulk. Use the "wrong side" of block-printed floral linens—the flowers look like they were painted with watercolors. Ikats' bold geometric shapes are softer than contemporary geometric patterns and therefore more versatile.

THEN AGAIN: The book runneth over with resources, many of which will runneth over your budget.

IDEAL FOR: Those who admire a spirited combination of patterned tie, shirt and jacket but nervously stick to navy and khaki themselves. Friends who can lose themselves in a wallpaper store's sample books.



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Classical Principles for Modern Design: Lessons from Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman's *The Decoration of Houses*

New York designer Thomas Jayne starts with the sacred tenets of Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman's 1897 "Decoration of Houses" (yes, the revered novelist wrote a book on décor that pros still consult) and expresses them with 21st-century style that goes beyond the Vanderbilt manses of Wharton's world.

LESSONS: Traditional damask-patterned wallpaper makes an artful foil to contemporary paintings. A mud room's dreary functionality can be offset with richly colored beadboard walls and spare but handsome furniture.

THEN AGAIN: Detailed instructions on how to paint the loggia of a Palm Beach villa may make the reader feel less than mirthful.

IDEAL FOR: The 1% as well as your friend whose bookcases sag with 19th century literature.



PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Maison: Parisian Chic at Home

Flammiron, \$40

Fifteen Parisian apartments that eschew "decorated" for "lived in" are toured by Marin Montagut, a watercolorist, and Ines de la Fressange, author, model and creator of an eponymous French fashion and home-accessories brand.

LESSONS: A wooden screen on an apartment terrace creates a secret place high above the city. The smaller the space, the more you should fill it; the larger it is, the more it needs clean lines.

THEN AGAIN: This book may validate hoarders.

IDEAL FOR: Your sister who jets to Paris but hasn't got a real bed.



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Terrain: Ideas and Inspiration for Decorating the Home and Garden
Artisan, \$35

Whether your giftee's thumbs are green or black, they'll muddy the pages of this manual from the team behind Terrain, Anthropologie's garden and lifestyle retail brand. Creative director Greg Lehmkuhl and Terrain's gardeners decorate with flora indoors and out, all year round. With a philosophy of "there's nowhere like home," the book sends us out to forage nearby twigs, berries and buds and create naturalistic, arresting arrangements.

LESSONS: Offset broad leaves with fine foliage in a planter. Pair a fire pit with cozy throws, warming drinks and impromptu seating, and you'll have a prime spot from which to appreciate a snowy world.

THEN AGAIN: Of the very achievable projects, 25% are wreaths.

IDEAL FOR: Earthy DIY sorts. Wreath zealots.



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It's Beautiful Here
Thames & Hudson, \$45

Australian designer Megan Morton shares the voyeuristic pleasure of peeking into the homes of an eclectic group of writers and artists.

LESSONS: Make a fabulous headboard by attaching a shag rug to a metal frame. Add drama by hanging your gallery of art all the way to the ceiling.

THEN AGAIN: When Ms. Morton asks contributors, "If your house was a phrase, what would it be?" it smacks of pretension, not practicality.

IDEAL FOR: Those who are equal parts Martha Stewart, Dorothy Parker and Cindy Sherman.