

# How to update English country style for today

(MS) -- One of the most popular decorating styles of the past few decades has been the English country look. Characterized by its comfort, timelessness, and livability, English country style is sophisticated without being pretentious. But today, according to the design experts at a major retail outlet, the high-end resource for decorative fabrics, wallpapers, and trimmings, this look has evolved into one that is cleaner, lighter, less cluttered, and more suited to the way we live now. Here are some tips for updating English country rooms:

- The essence of English country style used to be an abundance of large floral prints. Now, instead of combining several florals in a room, choose one strong pattern, and use it as the focal point. Mix it with crisp stripes or checks and textured solids for a fresh new look.

- Often the most elegant window treatments are simple drapery panels, opulently full and hung floor to ceiling from wood or metal rods and rings, used alone or paired with Roman shades in textured or sheer fabrics. Most major stores offer a range of fabric options for softening windows, including taffetas, silks, damasks, and jacquards.

- To create a more relaxing, modern ambiance, keep the color palette simple, and even somewhat monochromatic, rather than mixing several vibrant colors. Especially effective are warm neutrals with complementary color accents.

- Choose your fabrics and furnishings with comfort and practicality in mind. Furniture that is uncomfortable has no place in an English country-style home. Look for deep-seated sofas and chairs in hard-wearing and lush fabrics -- chenilles, velvets, brocades and tapestries.

- English Country rooms often incorporate an eclectic mix of furnishings. Traditional furniture can blend well with clean-lined, more contemporary shapes, formal pieces can be paired with casual and varying textures and materials can be played off one another for a fresh, timely look.

- Simple, neutral-toned floor coverings or polished hardwood floors will give rooms a newer, sparer look than densely patterned carpets, and help individual pieces of furniture stand out.

- English Country style often includes an abundance of design details, such as decorative moldings, mantels and other architectural elements. Even if your room is devoid of these details, you can give it elegance and personality through the use of trimmings and wallpaper. Many retail outlets offer an extensive range of trims and wallcoverings that have been designed to complement printed and woven fabrics.

- Although English Country rooms are usually romantic and filled with mementos and treasured collectibles, the look has evolved into one that is less cluttered. Choose a few accessories that can be showcased effectively for a look that says "less is more."

A fresh take on English Country style, this room features classic furnishings and rich details set off by a simple rug and window treatments and pared-down accessories. Stonehill washed tapestry fabric, with its subtle large-scale floral motif, provides the room's focal point.



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