

MANSION GLOBAL

DESIGNER'S CORNER

The Modern Way To Do Rustic Design

Forget the cabin-in-the woods vibe

BY JENNIFER TZESES | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 23, 2019 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



Designed by Babcock Peffer, this room features stone and wood accents that mingle with sleek furniture and unexpected pops for a modern rustic vibe.

FRANCINE FLEISCHER

These days, decorating your home with a country feel doesn't just mean a cabin-in-the-woods vibe or an explosion of flower print.

Instead, take your cue from the outdoors by bringing it inside in unexpected ways or juxtaposing harder materials with earthy designs.

To give your space a forward-thinking homey flair, follow the advice from the design pros.

Be Surprising

"Look for opportunities to increase your connection with nature and the outdoors through larger windows, glass doors, skylights and the like. In selecting materials, reference nature in contemporary but unexpected ways. Rubbed steel and open grained woods done with subtlety and refinement, are ideal.

"The interior should feel clean and not dark. Warm, saturated tones create a warmer feel, while cool grey tones make for a more Nordic feel. Pull the colors from the surroundings, such as grass green and sky blue from the landscape. Aim for a mix of saturated and light colors that play with light and how one moves through home.

"Modern lighting for tasks, plumbing fixtures, doors and hardware should all be carefully considered. Keep accessories spare to evoke a Zen-like experience.

"Mixing furniture eras and styles will keep a home from looking like a clichéd cabin in the woods. Opt for comfortable deep-down sofas, rich full drapes with blackout lining, lots of table and floor lamps, large easy coffee tables made of earthen materials like stone, wood and bronze. Swedish antiques and Brazilian vintage finds always make strong statements in these settings.

"For walls flooring, felted upholstery on bedroom walls, simple wallpapers like the Strie collection from Farrow and Ball, thick plush rugs and carpets (both vintage and new) and thick plank open-grain wood flooring enhance the look.

—Fawn Galli of Fawn Galli Interiors, based in New York

Go Natural

"The goal here is to maintain the natural elements in conjunction with symmetry and clean lines. Materials, like wood and stone, should reflect natural elements. Put a more rustic frame on a piece of modern art or mirror, add round and softer features to balance them out, opt for wood flooring with a fabulous contemporary rug atop--over-dyed, Moroccan, cowhides, etcetera. I also love a great stone fireplace.

"Ideas for furnishings include a refectory table coupled with modern chairs or a modern fabric with a pop of color on a more traditional occasional chair.

"My color palette leans toward earth tones with the occasional splash of something bright to catch your eye. For walls, go for wallpaper that very closely resembles wood or use neutral paint colors."



A wood-paneled home designed by Kimba Hills looks more modern thanks to a tiled fireplace, clean-lined furniture and a contemporary sculpture.

Lee Manning

— **Santa Monica-based designer Kimba Hills, owner of vintage furniture store and gallery Rumba**

Create Contrasts

"In a clean setting, rustic elements gain more attention and often take a more artistic and sophisticated feel than they would in an interior that is completely rustic.

"For me, chandeliers are very important. I love, for example, using rustic elements to create chandeliers; they gain a very dynamic feel when paired with elements that illuminate them.

"I love reusing and repurposing old wood for flooring and walls. There is an authenticity to the material that can only be achieved from real use.

"Walls employing rustic materials are works of art in themselves. I tend to encourage my clients to refrain from hanging art on top of these feature walls since they ultimately detract from one another."



Subway tiling and glossy finishes lend a contemporary touch to a barn designed by Phillip Thomas.

Aydin Arjomand

—Phillip Thomas, founder and principal of Phillip Thomas Inc. in New York City

More: [How to Create a Modern Country Kitchen](#)

Combine Styles

"You can create a rustic vibe in a modern room by using wood elements, such as reclaimed wood beams and stone, keeping all finishes natural and selecting a palette that complements the natural materials.

"Juxtapose natural finishes with clean architectural details—wide-plank rift oak wood floors in a satin finish paired with white walls, for instance. Materials such as wood-paneled walls, field stones, black iron, brick, or a blackened wood finish (there's a charring process that gives the wood age and character with a modern aesthetic) on either a paneled ceiling or walls create an unexpected punch.

"Some of our favorite types of furniture for this look are live-edge dining tables and petrified wood pieces with textured fabric on upholstery."

—Cristina Peffer of Babcock Peffer interior design firm in Southampton, New York