

WHAT THE HAY?

These top fall décor trends are all in the family

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Special to Postmedia Network

Top Toronto designers Rebecca and Melanie Hay share more than a surname. Cousins by marriage, they coincidentally have a kindred passion for creating spaces that are comfortable, reflect individual style and stand the test of time — making this fall the perfect time to ‘make a little hay’ with trending home décor.

Heading into winter, home interiors continue to embrace warm, earthy colours, natural fabrics and finishes, and textured accessories, adding up to a homey design aesthetic that lends itself to curling up on a velvety sofa with a cozy cashmere throw. And though they haven’t collaborated on a design yet, both experts are simply loving the new direction.

“Industry-wide the trend is towards warm, muted tones. It’s been slowly happening over the past year, but going into fall, it’s just perfect,” says Rebecca, president and principal designer at Rebecca Hay Designs and host of the Resilient by Design podcast.

“Fall décor elements feel very livable and authentic and not too flashy,” adds Melanie, owner and principal designer at Melanie Hay Design Studio. “It’s a little more down to earth which I really love.”

The simplest way to transform a room this season, according to the Hays, is with a fresh coat of paint. Cooler navy and grey are out; rich browns, creams, tans, cinnamon, terracotta and mossy greens are in, as well as deep plum, mulberry and muddy blues. In general, colours are less saturated with warm grey or creamy undertones, and can serve as a neutral background in any room.

It’s also a breeze to swap out accessories. Textured fabrics and natural materials continue to drive home décor towards a more comfortable, cozy ambience, says Melanie, making it easy to refresh a room by changing your throws, pillows, guest towels or linens.

On trend fabrics include mohair, shearling, bouclé, cashmere, wool, or anything with a “nubby texture,” she adds.

Due to supply chain issues more people are heading to antique markets, garage sales and local consignment shops. The good news is that vintage finds have carved out a place in the fall trends, providing more sustainable décor options that elevate charm.

“If you want to make your space feel warm and a little more current, get rid of that big box store bookshelf



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Rebecca Hay, designer

and find a vintage wood bookshelf or console table,” says Rebecca.

“I still have an old dry sink sitting in the front hall of my studio ... the plan was to turn it into a vanity for a powder room in a farmhouse, but right now I’m really enjoying it as a hall table.

Similarly, she uses an antique brass bar cart from France as a living room side table and once she cut down the legs of an older teak table to make it more suitable as a modern coffee table.

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One of Melanie’s favourite examples is hand-blocked prints which are showing up on toss cushions, draperies and other accessories. “They are a little bit irregular and have a nice authentic quality to them,” she says.

It’s also in fashion to mix two to three wood varieties in the same room. And in keeping with the more laid-back vibe, how you go about it is not an exact science.

“Generally you can mix organically,” says Melanie. “If you have darker floors, maybe you want lighter legs on your furniture. You can mix and match.”

If you like to “pepper your shelves with tchotchkes,” now’s the time to replace clear glass vases with larger ceramic vessels or Grecian urns, or to swap out crystal bowls for wooden ones. If you’re looking for additional seating or lighting, try hunting the floor of the nearest antique shop.

“There’s no crazy lead times. You’re not waiting 12 weeks for something to be delivered and there’s the thrill of the find,” says Rebecca, who is seeing a clear movement towards a more eclectic style. “And more often than not, they’re really well made pieces,” she adds.

The whole idea behind the new design aesthetic — which Melanie



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refers to as “relaxed, not too fussy” — is that the more unusual or imperfect the look, the more authentic your room will feel.

“There is so much inspiration everywhere, it can be too much,” says Melanie. “You have to look inward to say, ‘What really suits me?’ and ‘How do I want my envi-

ronment to feel?”

“We were trapped in our homes for so long, two things happened,” adds Rebecca. “One is, we want it to be a space that suits us, but feels cozy, warm and comfortable. The other is bringing that nature in ... it’s definitely a softer, more muted and less vibrant design trend.”