

Doris Day and Rock Hudson knew decades ago: Good pillow talk can make it or break it.



Throw the right pillows — the right textures, colors and sizes —, and a room is redefined. Pillows vivify the lives of residents and welcome guests to sit and be at home. And that’s what you want your home to convey: come-on-in warmth and gregariousness.

“The trend now is neutrals and tans for overall decor, so pillows can provide that splash of color that brightens a space. And, they can be changed quickly and inexpensively to suit mood and change with the season,” says Janessa St. John, interior designer with La Maison Interiors, 15450 N. Scottsdale Road. Davinder Chawla and Alan K. Reinken will celebrate the first anniversary of the full-service design showroom in September.

“Generally, one rule that I have found during a career in the business that spans decades: No pillows — no appeal. Pillows tastefully selected — great visual appeal.”

Should you start with pillows or leave them for last? Either way is an acceptable procedure, Janessa says. The one major caveat: Pillows need to work with overall scheme; they can’t seem accidental or incidental. Doing so brings attention to them rather than to the success of the space. “As with all other components of a well-designed room, they must be part of the totality, part of the whole.”

“I once did a room for a client who found this gorgeous hand-made pillow in Egypt,” Janessa recalls. “We built the room around it: design motifs, colors, everything. It turned out beautifully.”

In addition to adding color and texture to a room, pillows provide softness. “Rooms, especially many of today’s contemporary spaces, can often be hard-edged with crisp angles and a minimalist feel,” Janessa says. “Pillows change that immediately and welcome people to the room.”



Pillows do this everywhere in the home: the great room sofa, beds, chairs, outdoors. “Even on the floor, large oversized pillows are great additions,” she explains. “Children love to sit there and play video games and watch television: Just prop them up against the wall or the sofa. The pillows carry the color theme onto another plane of your home.”

Even Fido loves fluff: “Dogs love them, too. Watch one when there’s a nearby pillow; it’s an instant bed,” she says. “As long, of course, as that’s okay with you.”

Outside, pillows are great accessories, too, provided they are UV, rain and fade resistant. Sunbrella, for example,

Home at La Maison: Pillow Talk

Written by David M. Brown

makes such a line of colorful products for patios and outdoor rooms. These and other manufacturers are well represented in the La Maison showroom, she says.

“Pillows outside provide for that level of comfort that outdoor furniture doesn’t provide by itself,” Janessa explains. She adds that because of our earth-toned desert landscapes, the color from pillows is a great accent for these areas.

In addition to various [colors](#), shapes, [patterns](#), and [sizes](#), decorative pillows are available in a variety of materials: silks, hems, linens, damask, suede, chenille, leather, synthetics and cotton. “Almost any pliable material can make a pillow,” she says.



Many have piping, rope work, metallics and other embroidery. Still others are canvases that have been hand painted. Big now is pillow bling: rhinestones and crystals for example. Other possible adds are beads, coins, even buttons.

Of course, always think quality such as durable linings and zippered closures so that the covers can be removed for cleaning.

“In addition to our great selection of manufactured pillows, La Maison offers custom fabrication, which ensures exactly what you are looking for,” Janessa says.

How many is too many and how few too few?

“Well, when they get to be a nuisance, you know you’ve got too many pillows. They’re overdoing your room,” she says.

“Generally, though, almost any space can gain immediate impact from pillows, as long as they are added discreetly to enhance the space they are in,” she says.

She even brought pillow pizzazz recently onto a private jet: The owner wanted more comfort and color. “That was taking pillow talk to an entirely new level,” she says with a smile.

As always, when you think home, think La Maison.

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