

BEAUTIFUL DESIGN

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PHOTOGRAPHY HANNAH PUECHMARIN ARTWORKS (ON SHELF, FROM LEFT) MATILDA MICHELL,
GRATER BY TRACEY SCHRAMM; (ON RIGHT WALL) ANNA HENDERSON

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2026 trend report

DESIGN DIRECTION

From the kitchen to the courtyard, these are the features, finishes and flourishes homeowners will be coveting this year, in a simple room-by-room breakdown

WORDS HANNA MARTON

Beautiful DESIGN

HIT THE BENCHMARK

The ban on engineered stone has inspired us to think outside the box when it comes to kitchen benchtop materials. Alice is specifying stainless steel and terrazzo, and predicts that quartzite may soon eclipse marble as it performs slightly better under stress. Nostalgic, and reminiscent of Spanish Mission style, square-tiled benchtops are in, too, she says. “Benchtop profiles are becoming slimline again – a 20-millimetre edge, for example,” says Alice. “It helps balance the energy of materials” in increasingly layered spaces. >



KITCHENS

Interior design trends come and go, but this era is a delicious melting pot of different influences. From the gorgeous flouncy fringed tassels of Victorian times to Art Deco burlled walnut and even '70s-style carpet, designers and home renovators will continue to draw from historical interior trends in 2026, dishing up swathes of rich colour, interesting textures and authenticity in spades. We tour the major areas of the home and talk to the experts to find out what they see in store for interiors.

Colour and warmth will dominate in kitchens in 2026. “We’re going to see a more diverse mix of finishes, textures and tiles in kitchens,” says interior designer Alice Penna-Benn, founder of Studio Penna. “Freestanding furniture will increasingly make a statement – particularly as kitchen islands.” Interior designer Emma Blomfield, principal of EB Studio, agrees, citing intricately designed island legs as a trend to look out for.

Personal space A sense of individuality is all the rage. Homeowners are using freestanding furniture, thanks to the flexibility they provide, as seen in this warm and clever space by DeVOL Kitchens (this page). Even benchtops, splashbacks and hardware can showcase your personal style, as Angela Smith Interiors proves with decorative details (opposite & previous page).

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) HANNAH PUECHMARIN (OPPOSITE) DEVOL KITCHENS (ARTWORK (THIS PAGE) PAULA TRUZZI (STYLE)

LIVING ROOMS

After a few seasons of organic, neutral, bouclé-clad living rooms, this year is all about playfulness. Rich tones, theatrical decor, sculptural furniture and a peppering of fringing and tassels will elevate our living spaces – and our mood. Mentions of colour drenching – using the same hue, or variations of it, across walls, ceilings, rugs, curtains and even furniture – rose by 149 per cent year-on-year on US real-estate platform, Zillow, indicating this trend may become de rigueur Down Under. Emma is seeing walls and joinery finished in glossy or lacquered colours, too. “We haven’t done that in a long time; matte and satin ruled for years,” she says.

Not ready to leap into lacquer? Experiment with a high-gloss side table or buffet.



PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) PABLO VEIGA (OPPOSITE) NIC GOSSAGE STYLING (THIS PAGE) ONEFOUR INTERIORS (OPPOSITE) HOLLY IRVINE ARTWORK (THIS PAGE) CHARLIE SHEARD (OPPOSITE, MIDDLE SHELF) EMMA LINDEGAARD (OPPOSITE, BOTTOM SHELF) TRACEY LAMB



Hot hues Colour drenching has emerged as a force to be reckoned with. OneFour Interiors enveloped this living area (this page) in playful pink, from the rug, walls and ceiling to the furniture and artworks. Not willing to part ways with neutrals? Consider a glossy finish, as Michiru Higginbotham did on this bookshelf joinery (opposite).

TRY A SOFT LANDING

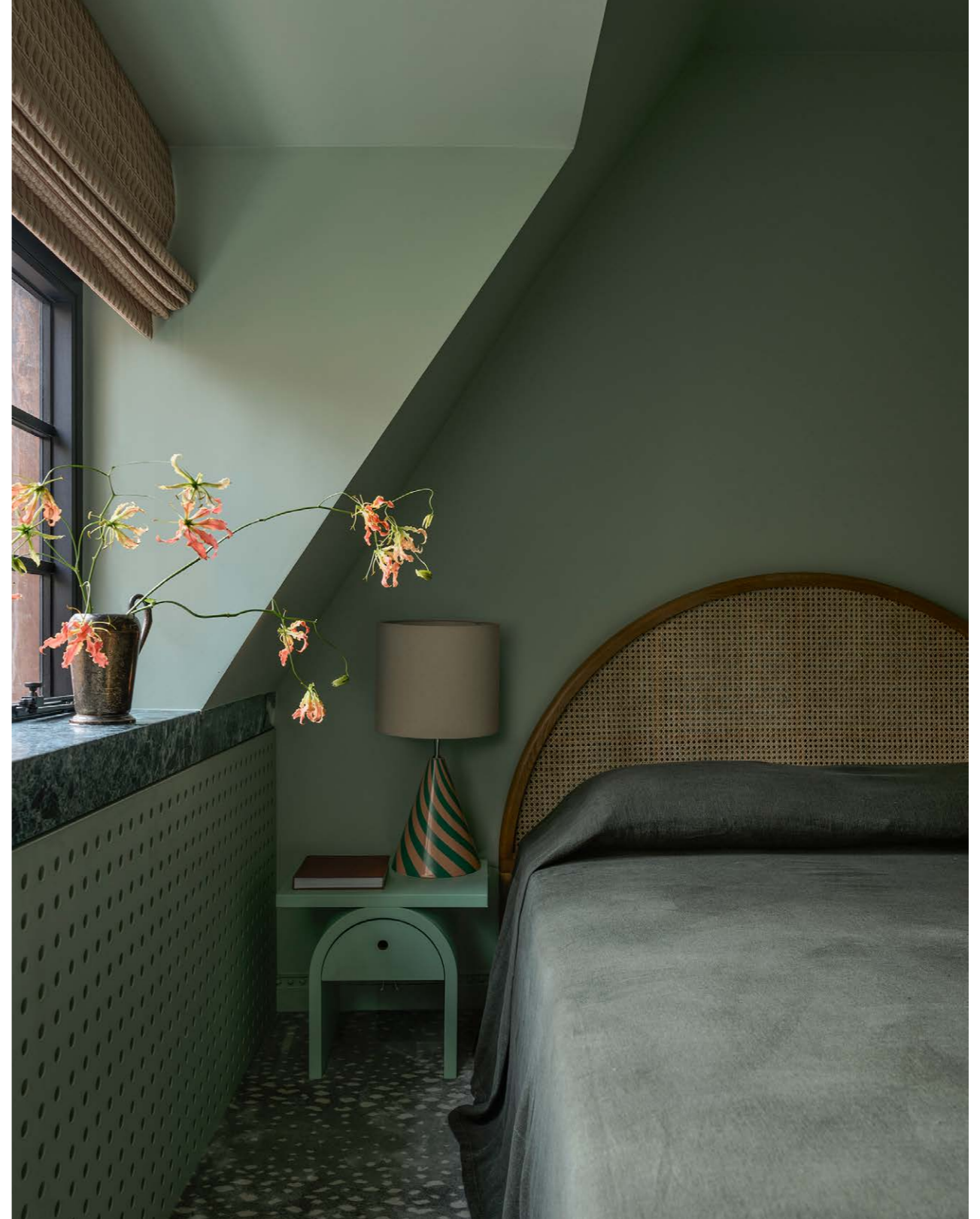
The trend towards warmth and tactility will extend to carpets, says Heather Nette King, stylist and Carpet Court ambassador. “Carpets will be heavily textured, woven or deeply plush and soft underfoot,” she says. “We’re talking imperfect ‘wabi-sabi’ designs with chunky, raised loops.” Heather anticipates that warm, dark brown carpets will make a comeback too – a style rarely seen since the 1970s. After all, trends tend to be cyclical but there are key updates for the modern era. “In 2026, carpet must be not only beautiful and durable, but customers are increasingly seeking products that have excellent environmental cred,” adds Heather. “Advances in technology have created carpets with a more circular lifespan, via recycling and repurposing.” >

BEDROOMS

Colour drenching is coming for bedrooms too, as homeowners covet the cossetting effect of deep, jewel-toned shades. “Many clients are looking to luxury hotels for bedroom inspiration, as well,” says Alice. “People want their bedrooms designed to the millimetre.” For example, built-in timber bedheads are gaining traction, with some featuring storage, shelving, small drawers and integrated wall lights. When they’re needed, bedside tables will be artful – crafted with burl wood, leather upholstery or lacquered finishes.



Creature comforts This custom integrated bedhead and bedside unit (this page) by YSG Studio conceals all the charging stones a modern person could want while a tactile bedhead and colour drenched surfaces by Greg Natale lean into the minimalist appeal homeowners are craving in the bedroom (opposite).



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STYLING (THIS PAGE) MARIANA MARCKI-MATOS (OPPOSITE) FELICITY NG

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Stephanie Lee, brand manager for Luxaflex, is seeing a rise in “fabric-forward Roman blinds with relaxed folds, linen textures and semi-sheer options that bathe bedrooms in soft, diffused light”. Layering blinds and curtains will give home renovators functional, thermally comfortable and chic window treatments that support sleep routines. “Think a blackout blind or honeycomb shade paired with long, fluid sheers,” explains Stephanie. Neutral hues are here to stay – in cashmere creams, soft mushroom and muted greens – but curtains and blinds are increasingly patterned, floral and colour-rich. “Dusty rose, muted berry, clay and gentle cinnamon, for example, add depth without overwhelming the serenity of the room,” says Stephanie. >

So mature Texture is taking a turn in the spotlight, with microcement finishes set to rise in popularity, as seen in this bathroom by OneFour Interiors (this page). Vintage mirrors and lighting will also feature. Tamsin Johnson opted for a 1950s mirror and 1970s wall sconce, both from Italy (opposite).



BATHROOMS

While many of us grew up queuing to use the one family bathroom, kids today are progressively being treated to their own ensuite or a Jack and Jill bathroom. The latter is accessed from two bedrooms, typically via doors on either side. Expect to see them popping up on floor plans in 2026, as well as over-bath shower curtains, in botanical or bold prints. “These seem to be back for some reason, although I am not a fan,” laughs Alice. Just don’t forget to use high quality mildew-resistant materials. Ornate hanging mirrors and vintage wall lights (enter, Murano) will be gussying up our previously minimalist bathrooms and, boosting the warmth, microcement wall finishes (such as Tadelakt and Venetian plaster) will go mainstream.

TAP INTO STYLE

When it comes to tapware, cool it. “Brass dominated the last few years, and now we’re seeing a full-circle return to silvery metallics – polished chrome, stainless steel and brushed nickel,” says Luli Farrell, co-founder of ABI Interiors. At the same time, “texture will be the defining design story of 2026”. Characterful tapware with reeded, fluted or knurled details will lead. As such, there’s still room for aged brass and bronze materials – especially if patinaed. Ultimately, tapware that suits your personal style and bathroom palette should be the goal. “When a finish feels considered and connected to the environment, it’s far less likely to date,” says Luli. >



PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) PABLO VEIGA (OPPOSITE) JANSON SMART STYLING (THIS PAGE) ONEFOUR INTERIORS

OUTDOOR AREAS

The top three search terms on Domain in 2025 were 'pool', 'waterfront' and 'view', according to the real-estate platform's End-of-Year Wrap Report. Australian homeowners clearly value their alfresco spaces above all else, and so it should come as no surprise that 2026 will be the year of the 'outdoor room'. Or many rooms. No longer sated with a deck or lawn and a barbecue area, we're elevating and demarcating our backyard zones. This could look like a sunken fire pit for connection; a pool cabana for parties; even a spot for practising your passions, such as pickleball or putting. Similarly, 'bento-box' garden design – creating moments separated by hedging or pavers – will be on everybody's Pinterest boards.



Out and about Australians can't get enough of alfresco living. Whether you're incorporating outdoor dining, as architect Peter Couvaras and interior designer Sally Farrugia have (this page) or relaxing in an alfresco lounge like this serene Coco Republic-furnished space (opposite), embracing the great outdoors is right on trend.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) KRISTINA SOLO (OPPOSITE) COCO REPUBLIC (THIS PAGE) SOPHIE WILSON

MIRROR THE INDOORS

The outdoor room that's likely to get the most use? Your alfresco living or dining, which should feel like an extension of the indoor entertaining zone. Characterised by plush but durable lounge chairs, outdoor rugs and thoughtful lighting, this trend will put an end to matchy-matchy outdoor-furniture sets and uninspiring (and uncomfortable) timber chairs. Instead, it calls for eclectic, playful and colourful pieces that are just as likely to be installed inside your home. **HB**

