

HOME & GARDEN

INTERIOR DESIGN

Eclectic design is best when edited

By **Merlisa Lawrence Corbett**
Special to *The Washington Examiner*

Often defined as the style for those who love everything, eclectic design works best when edited.

"I think a common misconception is that eclectic means 'a lot,'" said interior designer and design blogger Desire Green. "You can, in fact, have a very streamlined but eclectic home. It's more so about incorporating pieces of different styles and periods."

Blending styles, textures and period pieces requires knowing what works where. Green suggests using chronology when mixing furniture.

"Since Midcentury Modern furniture was kind of a bridge between what we know as 'traditional' and 'contemporary,' it can be easily incorporated into many kinds of spaces," she said. "Mixing old with new naturally lends itself to an eclectic look."

Instead of throwing it all in together, however, she suggested some juxtaposition. Contrast old with new, wood with metal or the ornate with the simple.

"Intentional juxtaposition is also fun," Green said. "For example, pairing traditional art, like an old master replica, with modern furniture is an easy way to inject eclecticism. Mix it up. My favorite trend is using modern dining chairs with a rugged, wooden table."

In a modern space, another inter-



esting look is using a few ornate pieces throughout, like a mirror or chandelier.

When in doubt, operate from the heart, adding those pieces that inspire.

"I often say that an eclectic home best reflects the person who lives there," Green said. "People are multifaceted, with many likes and dislikes, yet when we decorate, we tend to rein ourselves in and replace gut reactions and emotions with an overly critical eye. While restraint is good, I tell clients to never lose sight of their own personality."

For those less adventurous, Green suggested adding "the one fun thing." It's what many designers refer to as a conversation piece and

could include a chair upholstered in a bold fabric, an antique cabinet or a pop of color, she said. "It gives the client permission to go crazy, so to speak, and adds some eclectic oomph."

Although eclectic design often bends the rules, interior designer Charles Almonte said the general principles of design should still be in force.

"Balance, rhythm, scale and proportion should still be in consideration when designing an eclectic space," he said.

This especially applies to world travelers who collect textiles, art and artifacts. "Too much stuff will make a personal living space feel like a retail store," Almonte said. "Show



PHOTOS COURTESY HEATHER O'DONOVAN INTERIORS
Eclectic style is a blending of styles, textures and period pieces, and the key to make it fashionable is to edit.

and highlight pieces that have stories to tell or a personal connection to the homeowner."

Interior designer Heather O'Donovan takes a layered approach to creating eclectic spaces. She recommended starting with a neutral wall color or upholstered piece to serve as a canvas. Then she adds layers of eclectic accent pieces and accessories.

For example, O'Donovan took a living room with gray walls, added cream-colored upholstery pieces, and then purple and chartreuse accessories.

"There are splashes of color, but not every color in the rainbow," O'Donovan said. "You have to show some restraint."



HOLLY RAMER/AP

Decorate for Easter with faux chocolate eggs

Given my weakness for chocolate, I know I could never put out a bowl of pretty foil-wrapped chocolate eggs a week before Easter and expect them to last until the holiday. But you can get the same effect, without the temptation, by painting papier-mache eggs and partially wrapping them with pastel-hued foil. These eggs make a sweet Easter display that will last for years.

MATERIALS:

- » papier-mache eggs
- » brown satin finish spray paint or acrylic craft paint
- » satin finish clear sealant or varnish (if using craft paint)
- » paint brush (if using craft paint)
- » large cardboard box lined with waxed paper or parchment paper for containing over-spray (if using spray paint)
- » foil sheets for candy wrappers
- » white glue or Mod Podge

INSTRUCTIONS:

1) If using spray paint, place eggs in lined cardboard box and, working outside or in well-ventilated area, apply several light coats of paint. Follow directions on the paint canister to determine drying time between coats. Turn the eggs to make sure you are painting all sides. Three or four light coats of paint should be enough for even coverage.

If using craft paint, you can work indoors. Use a brush to apply two or three coats of paint, allowing eggs to dry between coats. Apply a coat of satin finish varnish. Allow to dry.

2) Cut a piece of colored foil a bit taller than the height of the egg and wide enough to wrap around it. For the eggs I purchased, I cut the foil into a rectangle roughly 6.5-by-4 inches. Cut slits roughly 1-inch long along one of the long edges. This will make it easier to fold the foil tightly around the bottom of the egg.

3) Brush glue or Mod Podge on the lower 2/3 of an egg, then wrap the foil around the egg, with the fringed edge at the bottom, wider end of the egg.

4) Brushing on more glue as needed, press the foil tightly against the egg, overlapping the cut pieces at the bottom. At the top, squeeze the foil together and twist it tightly. Cut off the excess.

5) Once the egg is entirely covered in foil, peel some off to create the appearance of a candy egg that's been partially unwrapped. - AP

HOLIDAY DECORATING

A few tips for modern takes on Easter decor

By **Kim Cook**
The Associated Press

Fuzzy chicks and cute bunnies are part of the pastel pantheon of Easter decor, and their charm helps define the look of the season.

But for those who prefer celebrating with a modern aesthetic, there are many attractive decor options that are a tad less cute and a tad more contemporary. Some reference Easter's traditional color palette in new ways, while others put a modern twist on the holiday's iconic elements.

Pottery Barn has realistic speckled and robin's eggs that would make pretty filler for tabletop bowls and vases. There are luster-finished glass eggs here, too, in soft yellow, pink and blue that would look smart on a gray or navy tablecloth or sleek lacquered console. Mercury-glass pillar candle holders are rendered in an interesting new shimmery pale blue. And there's an elegant silver-plated cake server embossed with

a rabbit motif. (potterybarn.com)

Oregon-based designers Jason and Cara Hibbs hand-draw, then screen-print rabbit images on organic flour sack cotton tea towels. The charming result would make a great hostess gift. (ohlittlerabbit.etsy.com)

Canadian textile artist Cristina Larsen crafts winsome stuffed felted bunnies and chicks in a rainbow of hues that have a terrific design-y vibe.

"I use merino wool to make all my felt. I dye the colors and stitch every toy by hand," she says. While Larsen calls them "toys," they'd be equally at home as artsy Easter decor. (textileplatypus.etsy.com)

The key to a modern Easter look is simple, according to Kevin Sharkey, executive creative director for Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia: "It's about a controlled color palette."

Easter candies can be used to create a graphic tablescape. Fill plain glass cylinders or apothecary jars with single or multi-colored

jellybeans for a colorblock effect. Consider adding a pillar candle, or place a smaller plant or vase inside a bigger container and fill the spaces in between with confections.

"Buy a bunch of the same style chocolate rabbit in different sizes and arrange them going down the center of the table like a runner," Sharkey suggests.

Or fill a low tray with colorful Peeps, another classic Easter treat that happens to be one of Sharkey's favorites. Last year, he says, Stewart's daughter, Alexis, gave him "a gift box full of every color Peep they make. I brought it into the office and everyone was taking pictures of it because it was so cool to look at."

There are some other clever decorating ideas on Stewart's website for those with a slightly crafty hand, like studding wreaths and Styrofoam balls with dozens of pussy willow catkins.

Use eggs in interesting ways. You'll find instructions at Martha Stewart.com on how to make deco-



POTTERY BARN

Blue Mercury glass brings in an iconic hue of the Easter season in a fresh way.

rative eggs and wreaths that have a tailored look, using muted paint and trims. Metallic paint and glitter-coated eggs amp up the wow factor. There are tips on using eggshells and egg cups as vases for diminutive bouquets of lily of the valley or pansies.

A range of fresh spring hues and clean, simple style elements will take your Easter decor from sweet to sublime.