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Layers are a fail-safe way to add a cozy quality to a room, as seen in this bedding ensemble from Sfera's 1891 collection, available at York Wallcoverings design center.



Warm up your dwelling space this winter *by Daina Savage*

Get Cozy

Photography by
*Donovan Roberts
Witmer*

In winter's coldest, darkest days, the urge to get cozy is undeniable. We reach for throws, nestle in plush pillows and eiderdowns, and surround ourselves in comforts.

But while your grandmother's idea of cozy may have meant an abundance of precious doilies, crocheted afghans, calico prints, and tiny knick-knacks, today's designers create a warm feeling with sumptuous

layers of color, texture, and lighting.

"Historically, to make a cozy room, people think small and dark with heavy fabrics and a lot of things in the space," says designer Timothy M. Weishaar of INTERIORS in Harrisburg. "But that thinking has changed in room design. Now people want fresh and simple—it's cozy with a contemporary twist."

The result is an uncluttered, clean framework that exudes a richness you just want to sink into.

These are rooms to live in, luxuriously.

"A lot of people have the perception that cozy equals a cocoon—enveloped and wrapped up," says Weishaar. "I think that's more a frame of reference. You should choose color and textures that make you feel good, not heavy and smothered."

Designer Jessica Etter of York Wallcoverings Home Design Center has her own take on creating a comfortable, cozy feeling in a room.

"I recommend people follow a 3-LS rule: lighting, layers, and life," she says.

LIGHTING

Switching out a single overhead light for multiple floor, table and accent lamps makes a world of difference in creating a cozy mood in a room.

"Lighting is key to create warmth, even if your color palette doesn't include warm colors," says Etter. "Light just softens a room."

She suggests completely eliminating an overhead fixture, or at least employing track lighting or recessed lights on a dimmer.

Use both floor and table lamps to add different levels of ambient and task lighting interest, as well as decorative features on their own.

Add accent lighting to highlight artwork, potted plants, and other features.

"I like to use can lights behind furniture pieces and in dead corners," she says. "Spot lighting and focus lighting really make elements in your space stand out."

Bringing in multiple light sources allows homeowners to use lower watt bulbs to create a warmer glow, rather than relying on a single harsh overhead fixture. Although 40- to 60-watt incandescent bulbs give the coziest feel, improvements in compact fluorescents are yielding a softer, warmer light than in the past.

"I think cozy is about atmosphere and creating a mood," says Weishaar.

LAYERS

After achieving layers of lighting, the next step in creating a modern nest is to layer the room's surfaces with textures.

"Look at the floor, walls, windows, and ceiling first," recommends Etter.

One of the easiest and most affordable ways to instantly change a room is to start with paint color. Weishaar urges homeowners to take the leap and use a saturated color.

"More and more people are brave enough to try it, especially after seeing the difference it

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makes in their friends' homes," he says. "The trends right now are warm neutrals. Chocolate brown and yellow-green are really hot."

Darker colors create more intimate, inviting spaces and help bring large rooms down to a more human scale.

"Color is one thing; texture is another," says Weishaar. "Whenever we have lots of texture, a room is more inviting and a lot more interesting."

That's why Etter loves to use the latest textured wallpaper designs to add layers of texture to walls and even ceilings.

"Something like a large starburst in the center of a ceiling can give a special effect, or a texture that gives a tin ceiling look can really add dimension to a ceiling," she says.

Wallpaper textures—from sand, leaves, or glass beads in the paper—to embellishments like patterns of Swarovski crystals and metal studs, add layers of interest to a room.

Layering a floor means employing area rugs to create conversation spaces by pulling together furniture groupings, or to highlight special pieces. Plus plush rugs just feel cozy to bare feet. Both Etter and Weishaar like the dimension and drama a zebra-printed rug creates.

Windows get a layering treatment as well, with shades or blinds set off by rich fabric draperies.

Once the surfaces are layered, look at the bones of the room, investing in lasting furniture pieces and reupholstering when needed.

"Keep the foundation simple with clean



Designer Jessica Etter appoints a rectangle coffee table with a round mirror and tall, blue decorative glass to create a layered focal point.



lines to allow changes with the seasons," says Etter. "If these are more neutral and monochromatic, you can switch out accent pieces throughout the year."

She said an emerging trend is to change bedding ensembles four times a year instead of just in spring and fall.

Good bones make for easy transitions.

"In the winter we like to have more around us: more pictures on the wall, more accessories in the room," says Weishaar. "When spring comes, you can turn a cozy room into one that's cool and breezy simply by editing these elements."

After the room is anchored with great foundation pieces, it's time to accent.

But beware of equating cozy with cluttered.

"Keep your decorating more open with a few key pieces," says Etter. "Layer, but be cautious about the scale. Oversized can give a dramatic look."

As an example, Etter explains how to layer a rectangular coffee table by using a large round mirror as a tray on top, then



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choosing three strong vertical lines with bold vases to add height and width.

Etter suggests limiting accents in master and guest bedrooms to a range of 4 to 6 strong pieces, mixing traditional items with more modern looks.

"Consider the scale, color, and depth of a room," she says. "And don't forget that you can add things like medallions to ceilings and drop-down hanging accessories to liven up corners."

Top it all off with textiles.

"I think down-filled pillows really bring an air of luxury to a space for not a lot of money," says Weishaar.

Opulent throws and plush pillows are great ways to cozy a space and to accent with color, says Etter, whose favorite color palette of the moment is "a strong combination of browns, turquoise, and gold metallics."

What's key, says Weishaar, is to use all-natural fibers: "They just feel better."

"I like to mix different natural fabrics with different textures in a room," he says. "Cotton is a very cozy, tactile fabric; silk and linen give an entirely different feel."



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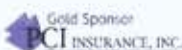


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According to Interiors' designer Timothy Weishaar, cozy is not a particular style, it's a feeling that can be achieved with classic or contemporary looks.



Opulent throws and plush pillows are great ways to create a cozy living space.

LIFE

Add life to a room by adding flora and fauna.

"Bring the outdoors in," says Etter. "Add greenery, fresh or silk; reference nature with leaves, feathers, seashells, cork, and animal prints."

Make a room your own by adding your personality.

"Have it reflect your life and your lifestyle," says Etter. "Have photos of friends and family, showcase your collections and memorabilia from your travels, show off your style and taste."

And finally, live in your room.

"A showpiece can look cold," says Etter. "Rooms feel more welcoming when they look lived in." **SS**

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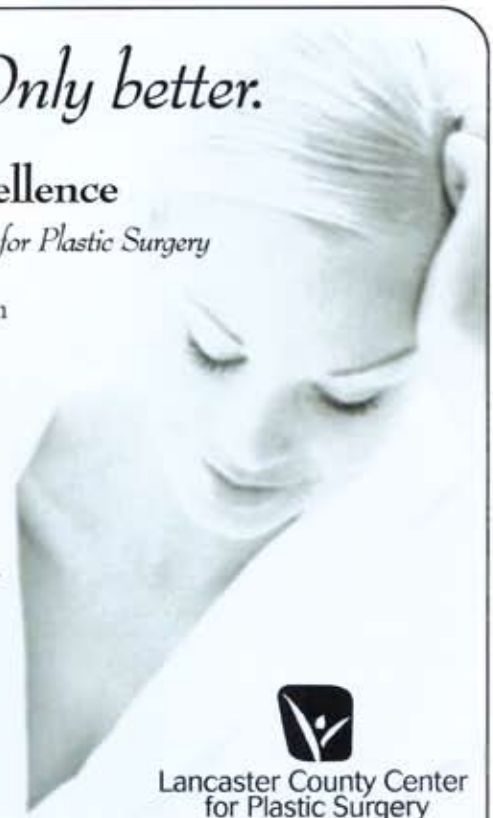
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