

PRESS RELEASE

Modern rustic

01 October 2014, Johannesburg: Country style is gaining momentum as increasingly more people turn to a simpler way of living as a reprieve from their hectic technology-filled urban lifestyles. However, contrary to popular opinion, this style is not reserved for big open pastures and idyllic farmland settings – it can also perfectly complement the most contemporary of city homes. Ryan Beattie, from leading seating manufacturer, Alpine Lounge, talks us through this aesthetic and explains how to dabble with a rustic and refined country-style look in your home.

What defines the core aesthetic of the modern rustic look?

“Over the decades, the country look has evolved to incorporate more modern styles, adapting to the urban environment, without losing touch with its roots,” says Ryan. Here’s his take on the key elements that express this rustic revival:

- **Wood:** Without a doubt, wood epitomises the rustic home – it keeps the look firmly entrenched in nature and is reminiscent of many rustic activities. Traditionally homes would have exposed wooden beam ceilings, wide plank floors and a scattering of wooden furniture pieces and accessories – and the modern home is not different, it is just executed with a more refined finish.
- **Leather:** Homes with country flair tend to have lots of heavy leather seating scattered around the various living areas. Whether boasting traditional or contemporary design lines, the strong genuine leather reference keeps the décor firmly rooted to nature. It also adds a certain timeless elegance and an inviting sense of comfort to the spaces it graces.
- **Soft lighting:** Candles, lanterns and low-lighting create a cozy atmosphere that harks back to the days of no electricity.
- **Metal:** Hardwearing industrial elements nod to the practical pared-down nature of a rustic farmhouse. For this reason, many of Alpine Lounge’s sofas boast metal finishes – whether it is metal feet of the sofa, or metal stud detailing.
- **Neutrals:** Think browns, off-white, rust, cream and grey to inspire a rustic sense of calm. Dashes of dark red, a country classic, creates a feeling of natural richness and gives focus to the space.
- **Personal artifacts:** A country home is filled with memories from current and previous generations. You will often find unique collections and loads of old photographs that speak to this sense of heritage. For a more modern rustic appeal, these collections must be kept to a minimum, displayed in an organized fashion, and old pieces can be juxtaposed with new, streamlined items for a more dramatic overall appeal.

- **Comfort:** The rustic country cottage has always been a place of peace and quite, and since there's not a lot of external stimulation, the surroundings tend to focus on casual comfort. This concept of standing as a retreat from the fast paced urban lifestyle is similarly duplicated in modern rustic décor – it's all about creating a sense of luxurious comfort, an inviting and warm place where you can relax and unwind – think plush seating and bedding, a steaming cup of coffee, cozy nooks in the sun for reading, a roaring fireplace, and thick woolen socks.

Various ways to add country appeal

1. Introduce layers of natural, unprinted materials, such as linen, burlap, wool, hessian, and animal skins. “A modern leathern couch with minimalist lines can easily be given the country touch with the addition of linen scatter cushions, a sheepskin and a handmade throw,” suggests Ryan.
2. Light a fire, add candles to the space, and turn down the dimmer switch for a snug atmosphere that will make people want to sit around and chat for hours. “It's all about giving the space a cosy, warm and inviting atmosphere, so make sure the seating you choose is comfortable as possible. For this reason, motion seating is a great choice,” explains Ryan.
3. Incorporate raw unvarnished wood in structural and decorative elements throughout your space. “A wall clad in salvaged wood makes for an affordable statement headboard or feature wall, whilst a set of old worn wooden stools and chairs balance a slick contemporary kitchen,” notes Ryan.
4. Be sure to brighten the space up with lots of natural light, pale neutral walls, limited embellishments and sheer curtains to ensure that they abundance of wood and leather doesn't become overwhelming and heavy. “Nothing can brings the outdoors inside quite like being able to view an appealing outdoor scene from inside – think large expanses of windows, and seamless fold-a-side doors for a modern rustic aesthetic,” says Ryan.
5. Make sure your underfoot experience is warm and soft with animal furs and worn Persian or Kelim rugs layered over large jute, sea grass, or sisal carpets, or wooden flooring. “Rugs help define open-plan spaces, creating rooms within rooms,” points out Ryan, who goes on to add: “When layering rugs, it's best to place an organically-shaped animal skin over a more structured rug, allowing the contrast in form to complement one another.”
6. Curate collections of your favourite items and display natural curiosities. It tells a story and adds layers of personality. “Taxidermy and bleached animal skulls may not be everybody's cup of tea, but it can make a striking display in a modern rustic home. Alternatively, natural prints, arresting modern prints or photography of natural scenes or animals, and interesting artifacts found on walks, such as shells, pebbles, and so on, can be used to create interesting displays,” notes Ryan.

7. “Whether you’re hand-picking them yourself or buying them at the supermarket, arrange your flowers loosely in a ceramic jug or glass bottle, giving it a casual just-picked look,” suggests Ryan.
8. Be sure to make the details count by bringing in elements evocative of the outdoors. “A stone-clad fire surround, leather poufs, or an antler coat hook for example, can all add to a modern woodland scheme,” Ryan concludes.

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