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PERSONAL TOUCH

Interior designer Kishani Perera believes homes should say something about their owners, writes SARAH MARINOS

My place: Trinkets and pieces collected while traveling are key to adding personality. (LEAN RANDAZZI)

No expense had been spared in building and decorating one \$8 million house in Beverly Hills. But when Los Angeles interior designer Kishani Perera walked into the luxury home, she knew instantly that something was missing. Personality.

"It was a beautiful house - but boring," says Perera, who recently visited Melbourne to speak at the Décor + Design International seminar series.

"They had expensive white sofas and expensive furniture throughout, but everything looked like it was from a showroom."

Perera's answer to injecting some personality and points of difference was to raid a local flea market. She found an old Chinese coffee table, had it refinished in electric blue and placed it between the pristine white

sofas, and had pillows made in interesting fabrics. These small touches instantly added colour, texture and points of difference to the once all-white space.

"Your home should be a place you love and feel rested and happy in. If it doesn't have touches that make it yours, your home suffers," Perera says. "It lacks anything that means something to you. Creating a home with personality is about adding layers of accessories, textures and colours that make it more personal to you."

So what are Perera's tips?

Think about what you need from a space - does it need to be child-friendly or dog-friendly? Do you want it to be light and bright or moody? Look for images that grab your attention. Pull those images together and you will see the common themes that appeal to you.





Look and touch: Common colour threads and a mixture of textures work well to show off individuality, Perera says. (JIAN RANDAZZO)



Get the blues: A Chinese coffee table rescued from a flea market and painted bright blue is now a star feature of the Californian house.

Keep it real: Interior designer Kishani Perera (left). (JIAN RANDAZZO)

Do a basic floor plan. You can then work out what items of furniture need to go where, what wall space you have, and what space is left for extra items. When you shop, you'll know instantly if something that catches your eye will fit.

Don't underestimate the power of knock-knocks to create interest.

"Include things your parents have passed down to you, and inexpensive trinkets from your travels. They create a story that's personal to you," Perera says.

"Don't use too many but create small vignettes - a stack of books on a coffee table, maybe a tray with trinkets of varying heights. Separate photos into small groups around a room."

Keep common colour threads throughout the home and make one of them neutral - beige, light grey, white or black. "Then bring in pops of colour but use no more than three colours in a room," Perera says.

Add texture to a room with an interesting rug. Pillows and vintage lamps with customised lampshades are easy ways to bring texture to a space. But, as with using patterns, don't overdo it.

"Have one prominent texture or pattern in a room and let that shine," Perera says.

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