

My good friend often deploys a quirky parlour game when she's entertaining new guests: she asks everyone to define their décor esthetic. On the rare occasion, she's been met with alarmed silence, but more often than not, a writerly round of one-upmanship follows.

"Bohemian science-lab."

"Victorian funeral-parlour chic."

"Bordello meets natural history museum."

"1980s stockbroker party pad."

In our home, where my partner and I have combined massive book collections, we call our vibe "Hipster bookshop hygge."

Recognized interior design styles, which have decidedly more serious names, run the gamut from minimalist and Hollywood regency to bohemian and mid-century modern. The popularity of these styles are constantly in flux, and they evolve with the times. While most people's homes do not fall within one specific, well-defined style, there are looks that one may gravitate to and use for inspiration.

Here are three trends that offer a little something for everyone: the bold more-is-more of maximalism, the natural minimalism of Scandi rustic, and the quaint appeal of cottagecore.

LIVING LARGE

If the internet is anything to go by, the embrace of the maximalism trend can be placed squarely at the feet of Marie Kondo. Tired of minimalism and decluttering, many are embracing the sea change in the world of interiors and leaning into maximalism. The ornate look encourages personalizing your space in the boldest way possible.

As the name suggests, maximalism is a highly stylized type of décor that experiments with materiality, colour, form, texture and layering. It is a strikingly visual style, with an old-world feel that makes abundant use of patterns, excessive — but curated — collections and saturated colours.

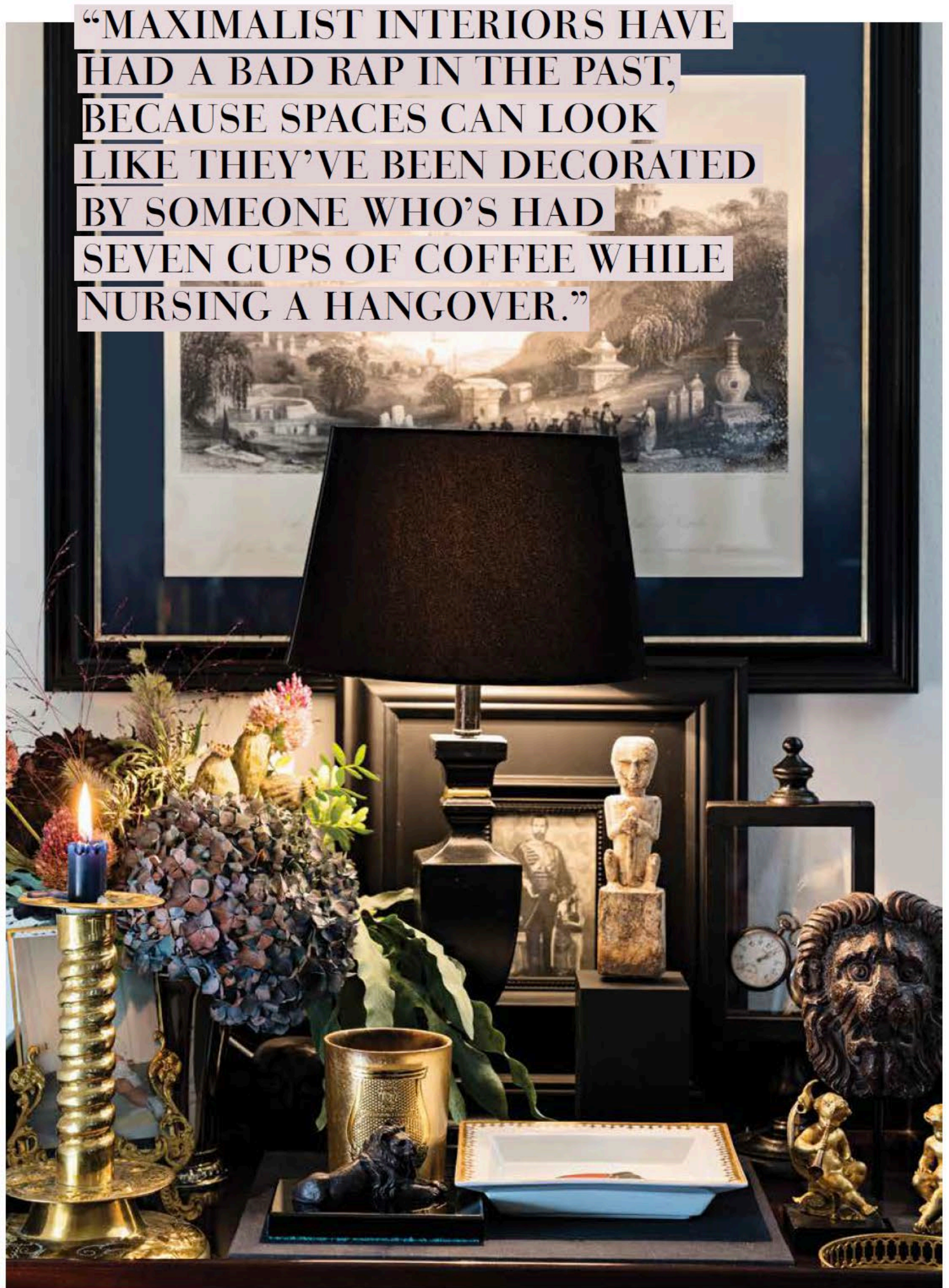
"It's curating elements in the right order and in the right proportion," says Victoria-based interior designer Iván Meade, who describes many of his own projects as maximalist. "It's creating a sense of rhythm and scale."

He cautions that eclecticism and maximalism are not the same things. While eclecticism, which mixes and matches different elements, can be maximalist, maximalism is highly curated and may not be eclectic.

A common misconception around maximalism is that it's just glorified clutter. While it does embrace the use of excess, it's meant to be done in a mindful, curated method.

"Maximalist interiors have had a bad rap in the past, because spaces can look like they've been decorated by someone who's had seven cups of coffee while nursing a hangover: chaotic and messy with overwhelming thoughtlessness and disarray that feels jarring

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and not at all serene," writes international design influencer Abigail Ahern in her recent book *Everything: A Maximalist Style Guide*. "Yet it doesn't have to be that way. I'm championing a new kind of maximalism. One that — when you get it right — feels considered, curated and magical."

She describes maximalism as "a highly stylized type of décor, and it holds comfort at its very centre. It's a full-on sensory experience that lifts your spirits and provides inspiration in a way that minimalism just can't."

To bring the maximalist esthetic into your own décor, it's important to tap into your own personal sense of style. Be sure to include rich, bold colours; layers of texture; the repetitive use of patterns (such as florals, abstract and

animal prints); unique statement pieces; vignettes of items, such as statues, artwork and books.

"A great starting point is your colour palette," Meade says. "That will add continuity to your space, and you can bring it in through wall treatments, textures and fabrics."

He also believes the maximalist look is a wonderful way to use some of Victoria's specialized artisans.

"From Victoria Lampshade, who creates beautiful bespoke lampshades, to the plaster expert who can install unique ornamental elements, such as cornices, these are the ways we add different layers to make the space more special," Meade says. "At the end of the day, it's the combination of these small details that make a maximalist space so memorable."