



“California Chic” is Alive and Well in Montecito

Here are some ways to pull off the effortless cool look that’s synonymous with the California lifestyle

If you already live in Montecito or just about any of the [communities in or around Santa Barbara](#), there’s a good chance you’re already embracing “California Chic.” It comes easy for those of us who live here. Others may be envious of our breezy way of living. We naturally have an effortless style that inspires decorators and architects.

Read: [2019 Home Décor Trends: 6 Will Be Hot This Year](#)

Follow these tips from expert designers who call the Golden State home:

Indoor/Outdoor Lifestyle

"The classic tried and true concept of California living centers around the notion of bringing the outdoors in; of creating interiors that emphasize, respect and engage the most alluring aspects of the California climate and landscape," says Greg Roth, head designer at Home Front Build, an architecture, design and building firm based in Los Angeles. He adds, "Think sunlit vistas, bright blue skies, neutral sand tones, lush green gardens and fresh air."



Roth goes on to say the color green is a must in California. Choose any green, from bright chartreuse or rich, deep olive, green. Use green as an accent color, or go bold and have your favorite green hue be your focal point. The bottom line: green keeps us connected to Mother Earth in both subtle and obvious ways. Roth says pairing green with luscious tonal neutrals or richly hued woods creates a warmly inviting and comforting setting.

Read: [What is the Color of the Year for 2019?](#)

Connection Context



To really create the indoor/outdoor lifestyle known as California Chic, you also have to consider the connection between your house and its surroundings for context. For those of us who live in Montecito, that context is both the ocean and our surrounding mountains.

"Colors from nature are predominant within a California-inspired interior. Blues, greens, tans and beiges, etcetera," explains San Francisco-based designer, Michael Friedes. "The look and feel is on the clean,

contemporary side. Even when an interior is more traditional, I design more of a 'New Traditional' aesthetic. Again, because of our weather and sense of the outdoors, it is a disconnect to have a lot of big, dark or heavy-looking rooms or pieces for a California interior in general."

Friedes goes on to discuss California landscaping. He says it's all about being sustainable and using native plantings. Nearly all of my listings have walls of windows to bring the lush landscape inside the home. Water features are always a welcome addition in the garden. So is an outdoor kitchen. Actually, I'd say an outdoor kitchen for those of us lucky enough to call Montecito home, is a must here.

Read: [Lotusland: One of the World's 10 Best Gardens](#)

Take Glam Out to Play

Living here offers homeowners an organic, effortless feel. That feel is the heart of California Chic. The look is enhanced with casual layers that are both modern and elevated. Keep the words effortless and inviting in mind when decorating. Think about creating an inviting feel where you and your visitors just want to hang out on the comfy furniture all day long.

"Windows are essential elements in a California-chic closet, since we have views and sun," says Lisa Adams of L.A. Closet Design in Los Angeles. "For a recent project, we designed a closet with a laidback feel that included a branchy and organic light fixture. Even the design was less traditional and formal: more contemporary, with simple base and ceiling trims rather than ornate crown molding. For another project, we did whitewashed cabinets with vertical grooves: simple in the design and yet very James Perse meets Malibu chic."

Read: [Top Residential Architects in Montecito and Santa Barbara History](#)

Go Natural to Create Indoor/Outdoor Flow

What you want to do is create a natural flow from indoors to outdoors. An example of this would be using the same pendants over the indoor and outdoor dining tables, and fabrics that echo each other.

"We use furniture with clean lines and evocative personalities and always include one or two statement pieces in each room, whether kilims, artwork or features that use natural elements like leather or rattan, to bring a handmade quality to the space," explains Designer Kimba Hills, owner of Rumba furniture in Santa Monica. "Whatever we use has to be resilient. Our clients are not interested in high-maintenance spaces and want all the components to weather the elements gracefully."

Read: [Outdoor Trends Perfect for the Santa Barbara Lifestyle](#)

The Somerset Estate

I have so many examples of California Chic listed on my [comprehensive website](#). One of my favorites is the [Somerset Estate](#), pictured in this blog. This amazing property embraces every lifestyle, taste, and family or personal situation. Built in 1918 in Montecito's elite "Golden

Quadrangle," it is now a fine example of superior 21st century workmanship and conveniences while honoring early 20th century charm and class.

The soaring vaulted ceiling offers an open and inviting space with plenty of windows and French doors, and amazing mountain views. The grounds of Somerset Estate are special; not just due to provenance, but also considering their maturity, the continuity of their care, and the symphony of complementarity at play between the gardens' elements. From the lengthy hedgerow at the entrance to the estate, to the abundant display of flora and precisely sculpted hedges within the property's borders, landscape magic is present and thriving here.

The sparkling pool and spa, intimate seating areas and walking paths, delightful gazebo, and even the built-in cooking area with its top-of-the-line grill, are all highlighted and defined by the perfectly placed and impeccably maintained flora surrounding them.

Now you know how to embrace California Chic. Ready to put these ideas to use in a new home in Montecito, Hope Ranch or any of Santa Barbara's upscale communities? If yes, then please call at 1 (805) 886-9378 or email me at Cristal@montecito-estate.com. I'll happily add your listing to my portfolio of fine homes in the area and find your new dream home for your family.