



What's hot?

Urban chic is changing. No longer dominated by cool minimalism, city apartments are warming up as homeowners look for more personalised living spaces





Preceding pages: Dark wenge wood furniture, antique sculptures, and furnishings in warm tones create an eclectic look in this city penthouse.

Above: Oriental touches include bamboo flooring and patterned silk cushions.

Right: A silk-covered bench stool enhances the gallery feel of the entrance. The wall has a Porters Duchess satin finish.



In recent years, the predictable response to decorating an urban penthouse apartment has been to create a sleek, minimalist space where any colour is OK, so long as it's white, and where the most dominant materials are timber and steel.

Today, that desire for an uncluttered interior is still there, but the austere minimalism is giving way to more personalised living spaces. Apartment interiors are warming up with darker neutrals and warm tones that create a sense of intimacy.

This penthouse apartment is a good example of the trend. Interior designer Noela Coffey says the owners wanted to move away from the



monochromatic look, but the apartment still needed to have a stylised, city look.

“The owners also wanted the interior to have a Australian feel, with a slight Oriental flavour – reflecting their respective backgrounds.”

Warm colours were specified throughout the interior, and the existing grey carpet was replaced with bamboo flooring.

“We also repainted the walls in an off-white shade to provide a backdrop for the furniture and the owners’ collection of oriental artefacts,” says Coffey. “These include two antique samurai swords, which are mounted on an antique Oriental



Above: Despite its warm colourways, the apartment has a sleek, contemporary feel. Designer Noela Coffey says the furnishings were planned to maximise the expansive view. Translucent blinds in the living area are operated by a remote control, and are invisible when not in use.

Left: The uncluttered look extends to the kitchen.



Above: Warm red tones add a sensuous feel to the master bedroom. Both the curtains and bedspread are in the same fabric, which has a shot-silk effect. A simply styled timber veneer headboard retains the streamlined look.

sofa table in front of a mirrored panel at one end of the dining table."

One wall in the open-plan living area is painted with a Porters distemper. The green-toned, textured finish helps to warm the room visually, and provides a backdrop for a large plasma screen.

Other materials adding warmth include a cabernet-red, shag-pile rug, and a paprika sofa, which features a heavily textured, woven fabric. This is contrasted by cushions in Oriental silks and tassels. Further textural contrast is provided by two wicker-back chairs in a dark wenge colour. These chairs, in front of the floor-to-ceiling

windows, have cutouts in the backs, which allow the owners to see through to the view beyond.

Coffey says many items, such as the antique bronze candle holders, were chosen for their sculptural lines.

"Interiors are moving towards more eclectic looks that add personality to living spaces," she says. "This is also reflected in the warmer colourways and earth tones, which are particularly well suited to the Australian climate."

The warm tones in this apartment extend to the master ensuite. Here, a rust-red Mokum Lumiere fabric was specified for the bedspread and



Interior designer: Noela Coffey, Mageia Design (Sydney)
Developer: Lend Lease
Lighting: Diffuse Lighting
Flooring: BT Bamboo Flooring
Living room blinds: Bayliss
Living room rug: Designer Rugs
Lounge chaise: Colby Furniture
Lounge suite fabric: Sangria Paprika from Maxwell Rogers Fabrics
Living room furniture: Wicker chairs from Garner Agencies
Dining suite, buffet, coffee table, bedroom furniture and bathroom vanity: Designed by Noela Coffey, custom made by Ursula Furniture
Oriental antique console and stools: Orient House
Splashback: Bisazza Tiles
Oven and dishwasher: Smeg
Refrigerator: Samsung
Bed linen: Sheridan
Bedroom curtains and bedspread: Lumiere from Mokum Textiles
Silk ottoman and cushions: Cetec Australia
Artwork: Marilou Palazon
Antique candle holders and accessories: Laura Kincade
Outdoor furniture: Cotswold Furniture Collection

Photography by
 Tyrone Branigan

curtains. This material looks like shot silk, but won't shrink or stretch, which makes it well suited to the climate, says Coffey.

"Again, the Oriental link comes through in the silk inserts and tassels on the cushions, the choice of lighting, and the commissioned art works."

But while the decor adds visual warmth to the apartment, Coffey says it has not been at the expense of urban chic.

"This is still a very contemporary living space, which maximises modern technology to provide the sort of lifestyle apartment owners are looking for today," she says.



Left: A cantilevered timber vanity is paired with modern fittings in the master ensuite. Decorative candle holders echo the tile pattern and reinforce the Oriental flavour of the interior.