

Home Chic: Decorating with Style

India Mahdavi

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Tasteful spreads, with notes from India Mahdavi, adorn this book of ideas for style on a budget.

“Finding the perfect 30-dollar flea-market lamp for your Perriand table ... is the decorative equivalent of finding a pair of H&M dress pants to match your YSL tuxedo!” With exuberance, fashion analogies, and a global-inspired passion for textiles, color, and graphic patterns, Paris-based architect and designer India Mahdavi (with Soline Devos) gathers ideas for those who appreciate creating stylish surroundings on a modest budget in *Home Chic: Decorating with Style*.

Mahdavi, whose projects include private residences as well as restaurants and hotels in London, Paris, New York, Mexico City, and other cities, draws from several of these works along with her own home—presented here in tasteful spreads with accompanying notes. At times her tips carry no explanation (in the search for curtain rods, for example, one should say no to “rods in rustic wood, polished brass, or stainless steel,” and, of kitchen makeovers, “There are only two options, in my opinion, for anyone looking to create a new kitchen from scratch, or transform their existing units: (1) IKEA (where else?), and their Abstrakt range ... (2) ask a carpenter to make new doors only and paint them with the gloss color of your choice.”

At other times, tips are accompanied by useful reasons (of hanging pictures, for example, one should consider the void around frames to see if the picture and empty space compete). Still, Mahdavi’s decisive, confident tone remains friendly, and there is little risk of making mistakes—she readily notes that readers may follow her rules, “break them, or pick your favorites and combine them with your own taste and color schemes.”

Home Chic invites leisurely sampling. It is a slender volume organized by concepts—“home’ at first sight,” “the beauty in the beast,” “a space of my own,” “mix to the max,” “successful accessories,” “quick fixes,” “hip to be square,” and “my city guide”—rather than by specific rooms and their functions. As a result, a topic such as bathroom remodeling is briefly touched on in one article, while bathroom decor is covered a few chapters later, but for those who don’t mind a nonlinear approach, ideas abound throughout.

Readers familiar with mood boards (collages of visual inspiration) will especially find that these pages serve as solid examples of an eclectic, contemporary style. Often favoring neutral wall colors with pops of bold whimsy (from animal print and her signature Bishop stool to silver-accented tile), Mahdavi’s rooms unfold as a series of artistic spaces. A list of international shopping resources complements the work along with a tour of recommended and treasured niches.

KAREN RIGBY (Summer 2013)

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