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Beyond the Beige

Tips for choosing a neutral palette

By Andrea Coleman

Andrea Coleman is principal of Fine Finishes Design Inc. With almost two decades of reno and design experience, her full-service firm services clientele throughout the GTA, Ontario. The growing boutique design firm is known for creating stylish, harmonious, livable environments www.finefinishes.com

Every year, we seem to get caught up in the colour of the year. In the last decade alone, we have cycled through Pantone's ultra violet, greenery, rosequartz, serenity (a shade of periwinkle blue), mar-sala, emerald, tangerine and more. This year, the hot hue is living coral. While colour trends are fun to follow, they often change on a dime and can quickly date a home's style. The lovers of neutral hues may be on to something.

Many of us are naturally drawn to neutrals when decorating our home. It's the safe option – preferred when listing a home for sale due to its wide appeal, and when choosing big-ticket items for the home that will not soon be replaced, such as floors. These are expensive to replace when a trend has come and gone, so this is where neutral selections work best.



Designer Pick

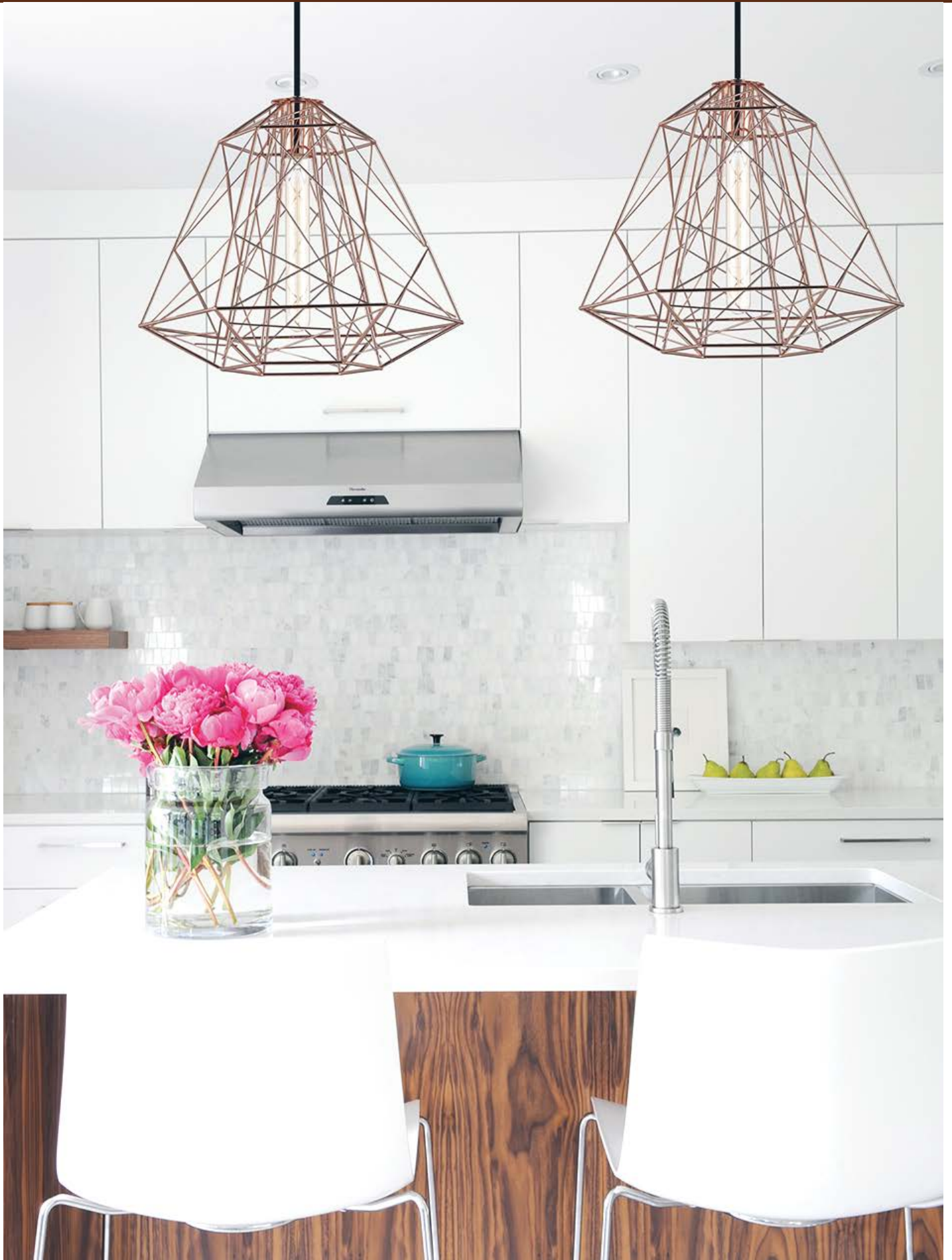
Neutral that suits any style of home “Freshcut” Fuzion-flooring.com

Now, contrary to popular belief, neutral does not equate to boring. Here are some ways to liven up a neutral palette.

Material

The typically soft, gentle tones appearing in nature are about as neutral as you can get. For floors, wood and stone are my go-to material, adding subtle colour and texture to a space without compromising a neutral aes-







thetic. I like to think of wood and stone as the jeans of the wardrobe – dress them up, dress them down; they go with everything.

Stone veneer has risen in popularity, delivering a look comparable to real stone but at a fraction of the price and weight. You'll find an amazing array of stone veneer products on the market, from marble to more cost-effective stone veneer products from companies like EARTH Coverings.

Pattern

In the absence of colour, shape and pattern are a wonderful way to make your interiors pop. A neutral colour palette can be offset by a bold, geometric pattern to attract the eye and make a lasting impression. The hexagon reigns supreme in 2019, and is a popular choice for tiles in kitchens and bathrooms, seen in backsplashes, showers and floors. The hot honeycomb motif can be found in a range of materials.

Metals

Metal is a neutral element in and of itself, whether you prefer classic chrome or stainless steel, or whether you lean toward a more trendy gold finish. A great way to boost your neutral decor is by mixing your metals within it. The combination of silver and gold instantly adds unexpected interest. Just be sure to match your finish – polished, brushed, satin or matte. Pick one and stick with it.

Hudson Valley is one company that offers a wide range of lighting options such as this contemporary pendant style that combines bold geometry with a trendy metal to modernize this neutral, white-on-white kitchen, and it pairs beautifully with stainless steel.

When it comes to trending colours each year, let your home's details speak to the trends. "Soft" elements such as window coverings, cushions, artwork and accessories can be changed out easily.