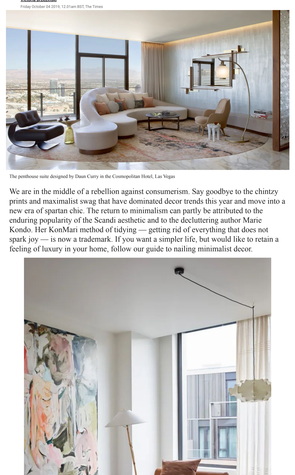
THE TIMES

Minimalist decor: a guide to pared-back chic

There's a move away from chintz towards minimalism — but it doesn't have to be grey or beige

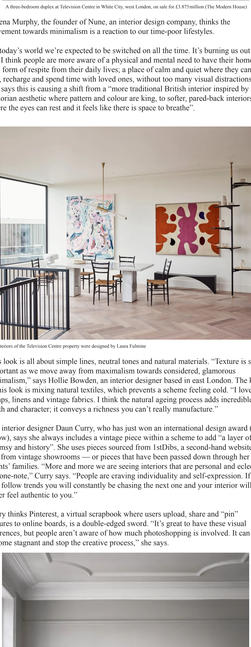
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The penthouse suite designed by Daun Curry in the Cosmopolitan Hotel, Las Vegas

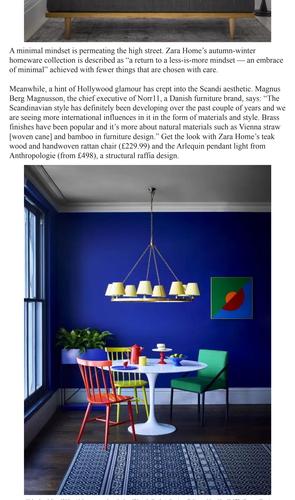
We are in the middle of a rebellion against consumerism. Say goodbye to the chintzy prints and maximalist swag that have dominated decor trends this year and move into a new era of spartan chic. The return to minimalism can partly be attributed to the enduring popularity of the Scandi aesthetic and to the decluttering author Marie Kondo. Her KonMari method of tidying — getting rid of everything that does not spark joy — is now a trademark. If you want a simpler life, but would like to retain a feeling of luxury in your home, follow our guide to nailing minimalist decor.



A three-bedroom duplex at Television Centre in White City, west London, on sale for £3.875million (The Modern House)

Sheena Murphy, the founder of Nune, an interior design company, thinks the movement towards minimalism is a reaction to our time-poor lifestyles.

"In today's world we're expected to be switched on all the time. It's burning us out and I think people are more aware of a physical and mental need to have their homes be a form of respite from their daily lives; a place of calm and quiet where they can be still, recharge and spend time with loved ones, without too many visual distractions." She says this is causing a shift from a "more traditional British interior inspired by a Victorian aesthetic where pattern and colour are king, to softer, pared-back interiors where the eyes can rest and it feels like there is space to breathe".



The interiors of the Television Centre property were designed by Laura Fulmine

This look is all about simple lines, neutral tones and natural materials. "Texture is so important as we move away from maximalism towards considered, glamorous minimalism," says Hollie Bowden, an interior designer based in east London. The key to this look is mixing natural textiles, which prevents a scheme feeling cold. "I love hemps, linens and vintage fabrics. I think the natural ageing process adds incredible depth and character; it conveys a richness you can't really manufacture."

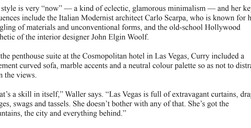
The interior designer Daun Curry, who has just won an international design award (see below), says she always includes a vintage piece within a scheme to add "a layer of whimsy and history". She uses pieces sourced from 1stDibs, a second-hand website, and from vintage showrooms — or pieces that have been passed down through her clients' families. "More and more we are seeing interiors that are personal and eclectic, not one-note," Curry says. "People are craving individuality and self-expression. If you follow trends you will constantly be chasing the next one and your interior will never feel authentic to you."

Curry thinks Pinterest, a virtual scrapbook where users upload, share and "pin" pictures to online boards, is a double-edged sword. "It's great to have these visual references, but people aren't aware of how much photoshopping is involved. It can become stagnant and stop the creative process," she says.



A minimal mindset is permeating the high street. Zara Home's autumn-winter homeware collection is described as "a return to a less-is-more mindset — an embrace of minimal" achieved with fewer things that are chosen with care.

Meanwhile, a hint of Hollywood glamour has crept into the Scandi aesthetic. Magnus Berg Magnusson, the chief executive of Norr11, a Danish furniture brand, says: "The Scandinavian style has definitely been developing over the past couple of years and we are seeing more international influences in it in the form of materials and style. Brass finishes have been popular and it's more about natural materials such as Vienna straw [woven cane] and bamboo in furniture design." Get the look with Zara Home's teak wood and handwoven rattan chair (£229.99) and the Arlequin pendant light from Anthropologie (from £498), a structural raffia design.



Halo chandelier, £595, with buttercup velvet shades, £28 each (Pooky); Saarinen Tulip marble table, £1,972 (Lorosa Shop)

Philippa Prinsloo, the head of design at John Lewis & Partners, says: "Coffee tables are ideal for achieving a modern luxe style that is practical and flexible. They can make a beautiful centre piece, with mixed materials and opulent tops, while offering an additional display and storage space for the room." The Emerson table from John Lewis & Partners has a two-tier design and inlaid brass detail, £279.20. "Sculptural pendants are replacing more traditional chandeliers, hard floors are softened with beautiful handmade rugs and subtle, Scandinavian-influenced furniture is being used as opposed to the more ornate designs of yesteryear," Prinsloo says. "Curved edges are increasing in popularity. From round mirrors to round tables, these softer shapes create a less rigid, more welcoming atmosphere."

Daun Curry's style — a kind of eclectic, glamorous minimalism — is very 'now'

'Restraint is the hardest thing to do'

New York-based Daun Curry has won the prestigious Andrew Martin International Interior Designer of the Year award. Widely regarded as "the Oscars of the design world", the awards have been held since 1996, when they were started by the interior designer Martin Waller, who founded his home furnishings brand Andrew Martin in 1978. Over the past two decades winners have included Nicky Haslam, Kelly Hoppen and Rose Uniacke.

"Daun's sophisticated quintessential city interiors are a million miles from her backwoods upbringing in rural north Florida," Waller says. "Her work is not shouty. It's very controlled, but original. It looks completely unforced and natural. Sometimes restraint is one of the hardest things a designer has to do."

Curry's win symbolises the beginning of the end for the maximal, print-heavy styles that have dominated interior trends in recent years.

Her style is very "now" — a kind of eclectic, glamorous minimalism — and her key influences include the Italian Modernist architect Carlo Scarpa, who is known for his mingling of materials and unconventional forms, and the old-school Hollywood aesthetic of the interior designer John Elgin Woolf.

For the penthouse suite at the Cosmopolitan hotel in Las Vegas, Curry included a statement curved sofa, marble accents and a neutral colour palette so as not to distract from the views.

"That's a skill in itself," Waller says. "Las Vegas is full of extravagant curtains, drapes, fringes, swags and tassels. She doesn't bother with any of that. She's got the mountains, the city and everything behind."