



MORE-IN

PROPERTY PLUS

The colour, texture, grain quality, strength and beauty of furniture depend on the kind of timber used, says Teja Lele Desai

Wood may have been around for centuries, but it continues to remain a staple of interior design. Whether it is old or new, refinished or salvaged, wood adds a natural and warm touch to any home – be it traditional, casual, chic, country or modern – and opens up a plethora of decorating possibilities.

What kind? Whatever your style may be, there's bound to be a type of wood that appeals to you. Choose one that best suits your lifestyle and décor. Don't forget to check that your carpenter's giving you solid wood, and not a veneer or a less expensive variety that he has stained.

Light or dark

The basic rule of colour works with wood – lighter woods create the feeling of a bigger space while dark woods eat up a small space. Using dark woods with dark furniture will swallow up your room. Try to use a mix to create a variety of interest points. Parul Mittal, director marketing and design of Greenlam Industries, feels that dark shades, albeit classy, “fare better if you're going for a bold look, but if you're looking for a calm and a more collected outlook, blonde wood is what you're looking for”.

So why should one go light? “In the age of minimalism, people are beginning to realise that less is more. Lighter shades of wood, be it ash, red oak, white oak, bamboo, birch or maple, give you a better canvas to express yourself. It is much easier to build up on the lighter shades than it is on a darker one,” says Mittal.

Light wood makes every room look bigger, brighter and more open. Blonde wood also hides scratches and scars better. And the best reason of them all – it also looks cleaner even if you don't mop for a few days.

Contrast it right

Mittal says lighter woods can be used in flooring to set off dark walls and furniture. This is ideal for living rooms and helps define spaces. “Using lighter floors against darker walls highlights the architectural details and highlights of the both the flooring and the walls,” she says. You can also lighten up by using blonde wood to complement other elements in your space. “Usually seen in kitchens, this way of planning a room tends to tie the entire room together. Using a similar stain of wood for the counter-tops and the furniture helps create a uniform theme for the entire room.”

Other woods

The colour, texture, grain quality, strength and beauty of furniture depend on the kind of wood used.

While a variety of softwoods are available, hardwoods are preferred for their durability. For furniture that stays for keeps, nothing works better than mahogany (a fine grained hardwood with a beautiful reddish brown colour), teak (a hardwood that's moisture resistant and weathers warping, cracking and decay), walnut (a chocolate brown hardwood with a wonderful grain) and rosewood (a furniture favourite, it has a strong reddish brown colour with close grain).

While the simplest way to bring wood into your home is to opt for wooden furniture, there are other sneaky ways you can adopt. Consider adding accents, small pieces that add to the whole. Accents can include the floor, walls, furniture, doors and windows, window dressings and artefacts.