



PHOTO: KATRINA LAMSON-JONSTON



PALE INTO SIGNIFICANCE

Jess Lavers on neutral linen sofas and the best soft furnishings for a grey palette

Is it a big mistake to go for a pale-coloured linen sofa in a busy household?

If you have your heart set on a pale linen sofa, then go for it – I am a firm believer in following your heart and it's important that we surround ourselves with things that give us joy and feed our spirit. You can always use a throw to cover the sofa seat if you have children climbing all over it. Just be certain you request stain guard treatment and opt for loose covers for ease of washing. I love the Danish designer Tine K, and her linen sofa collection strikes the perfect combination of effortless yet sophisticated style (£2,095 for a large sofa, designvintage.co.uk). Linen is such a relaxed fabric – it gives a really restful look and its casual style needs to be reflected in how you dress it with cushions and throws. For a refined and classical look, buy non-matching cushions in linen, such as Birdie Fortescue's pink floral and green stripe designs (£54.50, birdiefortescue.co.uk).



How can I best update a grey colour palette in our one-bed flat?

Grey is so versatile you can have complementary colours to lift the apartment. To bring life and texture, I use quirky soft furnishings, artwork and accessories. Melodi Home does stunning lampshades in a range of Ikat fabrics, block coloured Irish linen and rustic hessian (libertylondon.com). Add any natural rug by Tate & Darby – I am mad about their yellow chevron jute rug (£195, tateanddarby.com) but the Moroccan Beni Ourain rugs (from £250) are equally covetable. Mix in some fun accessories from Ben Pentreath (Alphabet Brush Pots are lovely, £40 pentreath-hall.com) and finish the scheme off with some quirky artwork such as the red Love print – just £5 from etsy.com. For a finishing touch, treat yourself to Soho Home cushions – I love Raval and Logan (£60, sohohome.com).

■ Check out Jess Lavers' London design studio, jesslaversdesign.com
INTERVIEW BY LARA SARGENT

TIPS FOR YOUR TOMES

I've got a huge stash of books I can't bear to part with - do you have ideas for an at-home library?

As Plato famously said: 'A house that has a library in it has a soul.' Books totally transform houses into homes that have more heart, character and warmth. I love arranging books with special objects in between and styling shelves so they become a real feature.

For a budget library, I would buy

an Ikea unit (Liatorp, £195, for classic, Gersby, £21, for modern, ikea.com) and paint it in a strong colour like Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe (£66 for 2.5L, farrow-ball.com). Alternatively, pick a corner of the room and fit it out with a corner-shelving unit. Don't be afraid to take the shelves all the way up to the ceiling. Dress the corner with a comfortable reading chair, standard lamp and possibly even a drinks trolley so you sip your martini while reading Ian Fleming. Cosy.



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