

Shabby Chic Web Site Copy (for Web Design and Development II Class)

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Home Page

If you like old lace tablecloths, soft floral fabrics, light painted furniture, and colorful fresh flowers, then your decorating style is most likely Shabby Chic. The term Shabby Chic was coined in the 1980's to reflect a "shabby" yet "chic" design style. The term gained recognition only recently, with the formation of Rachel Ashwell's company of the same name.

Shabby Chic is similar to cottage style decorating, and essentially centers around creating a comfortable, casual look. In Shabby Chic design, you'll find vintage accessories, pastels, and furnishings either chosen for their age or distressed to achieve such an appearance. The dominating colors in this look are white, pink, and green.

Join me as we explore some of the most popular elements in Shabby Chic design. Click on a section in the menu above to get started!

Furniture

Shabby Chic is characteristic of comfort. Therefore, sofas in this style are usually soft, plush, and deepseated. They are light-colored and often slip-covered to convey a sense of comfort and simplicity. In this decorating style, you'll often find sofas with cushions made of down and feather backing.

Metal furniture is also popular in Shabby Chic decorating – especially metal shelves, stands, and tables. Peeling paint and rusted sections only add to the appeal.

Finally, who can forget white, painted wooden furniture? This is a key piece to any Shabby Chic home. Many people collect furniture pieces from flea markets, garage sales, and even their attics; they then spray them with white paint, sand off the corners, and roughen up the surface to achieve a Shabby Chic look. A great thing about Shabby Chic is that it involves creativity and resourcefulness. When you visit a Shabby Chic home, you may find a sturdy old wooden chair in the corner holding a vase of flowers. You may also find an old picnic bench serving as a coffee table. Remarkably, Shabby Chic uses things which are old and worn to achieve a look of elegance.

Bedding

When you see a Shabby Chic bedroom, you may be reminded of the bedding your grandmother used to have. The fabrics are soft and plush, and you feel like you could just sink into the bed. Shabby Chic bedding almost always includes linen. Poplin, chintz, and cotton are also popular, as these are also soft to the touch. Like other Shabby Chic furnishings, the bedding is often white and incorporates bleached and faded pastels such as pinks, yellows and blues.

People often create their own bedding with fabrics from around the house or with vintage-looking fabrics. Fabrics can be made to look worn, faded, and soft by staining them with a brew of tea; this gives them even more of a domestic touch.

The idea is to spread comfort throughout the entire area. Quilts are a perfect way of doing this, as are patterned comforters. Bed ruffles or pleats, crisp sheets, and lots of pillows will just add to the look.

Lighting

Lighting is a key ingredient in Shabby Chic design. Large glass doors and windows are great to have, as they welcome a good deal of natural light into the room. In addition, there are a variety of Shabby Chic fixtures you can use in your home. The goal is to create the same type of romantic lighting characteristic of beach houses, cottages, nurseries, and sunrooms.

Shabby Chic lamps are often made with wood, wrought iron or brass posts and lightly colored shades, often painted with pastel floral patterns. Chandeliers are also popular for creating a soft, romantic ambience. Especially popular are chandeliers with hanging glass crystals with a variety of sizes, styles, and cuts. Often, trims of rusted vintage lace and beads are added to accentuate this look.

Perhaps the simplest way to create shabby chic lighting is with candles. The candles used for this design are generally light in color. While any type of candle can be used, you'll often see candleholders sporting dangling crystals and wrought iron candle stands.

Accessories

There are certain accessories which are staples of Shabby Chic design. One of them is fresh flowers. Big handfuls of pink roses in china vases are a common sight in many Shabby Chic households. Many people display fresh flowers throughout their homes, even if it's just laying them down in threes or fours on the dressing table or window sill. This gives the home a fresh ambience filled with romance.

Something else you are bound to find in a Shabby Chic home is a tea set. This design style has revived the tradition of afternoon tea, with the serving vessels as a decorated centerpiece. You'll find tea pots, tea cups, and matching creamers and sugar bowls made with beautiful vintage china, often decorated with English rose patterns – a staple of Shabby Chic style. Displaying a tea set on the dining table or in a glass showcase in the living room just accentuates the feeling of warmth and companionship that is characteristic of this style.

Finally, who can forget the wallpaper? Acting as a background canvas for your room, wallpaper goes a long way in creating the atmosphere and showing your style. You'll often find walls painted with cream or ivory, sporting textured wallpaper. Shabby Chic wallpaper is characterized by a variety of light colors displayed in panels, rose designs, or other delicate patterns.