

The Rise of 'Grandmillennial' Style

Devotees love wicker, chintz and needlepoint—but don't call them stuffy.

HB BY EMMA BAZILIAN SEP 5, 2019



Somewhere in the homogenized ether that is Millennial Instagram, lurking among the Monstera plants and pool floats, the #friyays and #OOTDs, the Kardashian-adjacent hairstylists and ads for detox tea, you may have noticed a markedly different kind of influencer popping up with increasing frequency. Maybe you've scrolled past an image she posted of her favorite Sister Parish room. Or you saw a photo of her dining table, expertly set with block-printed napkins and fluffy white hydrangeas. Maybe you've even caught a glimpse of *her*, sitting on a garden bench in Sag Harbor or Charleston, somehow fresh-faced despite the fact that it's 89 degrees outside and she's wearing a long-sleeved, floral maxi dress.



Let's call her a grandmillennial.

Ranging in age from mid-20s to late-30s, grandmillennials have an affinity for design trends considered by mainstream culture to be “stuffy” or “outdated”—Laura Ashley prints, ruffles, embroidered linens. Unlike that of the late-aughts hipster, their taste for the antiquated isn’t ironic; it’s less twee than timeless. And although there’s a good bit of shared DNA with prep culture, the two terms aren’t entirely interchangeable; the grandmillennial is less [Lilly Pulitzer](#), more faded [D. Porthault](#).



“I think a ‘grandmillennial’ is really a ‘New Traditionalist’—someone who has an appreciation for the past,” explains Manhattan-based interior designer [Ariel Okin](#), 28. “It’s someone who references the work of legendary designers like [Billy Baldwin](#) and [Nancy Lancaster](#) and [Albert Hadley](#), who realizes the staying power of good, well-edited design while putting their own fresh spin on it to make it feel updated and

unique.”

ARE YOU A GRANDMILLENNIAL? TAKE OUR QUIZ TO FIND OUT.

“When you’re scrolling through Instagram, everything starts to look the same—there are so many bright, white-painted rooms,” says [Nan Philip](#), a 25-year-old design publicist who pens the blog [Simply Elegant](#). “What I love about an old-school, layered—some might say cluttered—esthetic is that it actually lets you show your personality. When someone walks into my apartment, I want them to get a sense of who I am and what I collect and where I’ve traveled, not just that I’m on-trend.”



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Dallas-based designer [Amy Berry](#) says she’s seeing more and more of her own young clientele returning to old-school design. “After watching everybody do neutral, transitional rooms for so long, we’ve had several younger clients come to us in the past year asking for things like chintz and treillage and bright colors, and I’m thrilled about it,” says Berry, who opened her own shop, [Amy Berry Home](#), last December. “It’s been surprising to see the types of things our twenty- and thirty-something customers are going crazy for—Fermoie pleated lamp shades, botanical prints, framed Gracie wallcovering panels we can’t keep in stock.”

While grandmillennials point to social media as a cause of the design monotony they're seeking to upend, it's also true that those same platforms have played a crucial role in helping the movement grow and flourish. Consider the recent renaissance of needlepointing—one of the granniest of all hobbies—among the IG set.



CHAUNCEY BOOTHBY When Connecticut-based [Chauncey Boothby](#) revamped her family's summer house in Maine, she kept its old-world charm fully intact. [FRANCOIS GAGNE](#)



“Growing up in Florida, I had a lot of friends who needlepointed, but it was hard to find things to needlepoint that weren’t florals or geometrics,” recalls [Lycette Designs](#) founder Jessica Chaney, 28. Shortly after graduating college, she started painting her own canvases with cheeky phrases (“I Am Not For Everyone,” “Ducking Autocorrect”) and reinterpretations of classic motifs (Staffordshire dogs and ginger jars), and [posting them](#) on Instagram. “Whenever I shared a project on Instagram, I’d get so many other young people reaching out and asking me where to buy my canvases or how to get started with needlepointing,” Chaney says.



Within a few short months, Lycette Designs had exploded, and last year, Chaney opened a needlepoint shop in Palm Beach. “People love needlepoint because it lets you create something really one-of-a-kind and beautiful, but it’s also therapeutic,” she says. “A lot of customers come in because they want to get off their phones.” And, she laughs, “it’s not just millennials—I have grandmas who are totally addicted to technology and use needlepoint as a way to disconnect!”

“I remember when I first came across the Lycette Designs Instagram and I was like, ‘oh my gosh, someone that’s young and cool who needlepoints!’” says [Rudy Saunders](#), 26, a designer in New York who works for legendary decorator [Carleton Varney](#) at the equally legendary [Dorothy Draper & Company](#). “I’ve always been happy to do my own thing, but it’s also fun to find and connect with people who have a similar love of eclecticism and antiques and colorful prints. It’s refreshing to know that it’s okay to like classic design.”

But maybe the ultimate appeal of the grandmillennial aesthetic lies in the fact that, for the stressed out twenty- and thirty-somethings of the world, that cozy chintz chair at your grandmother’s house represents a much-needed respite. “It’s a look that really evokes ‘home’ for me, that’s not really a trend because it never goes out of style,” says Okin.

“This might sound like I’m wearing rose-colored glasses,” Saunders adds, “but there’s so much negativity in the world today—who doesn’t want to be surrounded by pretty, happy, comfortable things?”

Shop Grandmillennial Style

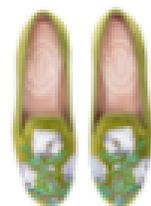


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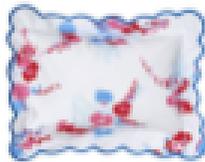


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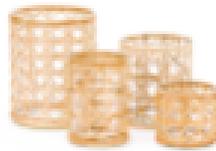


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