



inside story

Going global

Eclectic is the buzz word for 2008, writes **STEPHEN LACEY.**



Wild card Coco Republic captures the modern safari look (above); a panel of Florence Broadhurst wallpaper (left) makes a colourful statement propped against a fireplace.

At last Australia is recognising its place within Asia. With the Beijing Olympics looming, interest in all things Chinese is going to be huge, the experts say, and this will be reflected in the colours and patterns we use around our homes.

Asian inspiration

"We'll be seeing a contemporary take on an Asian aesthetic," says Edwina Hirst, lecturer at the International School of Colour and Design. "Lacquered reds will figure largely, as will Chinese mustard yellow. These will be used as accent colours in fabrics or perhaps on a signature chair."

We haven't seen the last of Florence Broadhurst either, with interest expected to grow in her legendary Asian-inspired wallpaper prints, particularly when used as wall panels or framed as affordable art.

What about feature walls? "If they scream, 'Hey, look at me I'm a coloured wall', they are tasteless," Hirst says. "Design nowadays is about flow and unity, rather than contrast."

Expect to see metallics used in feature walls, especially subtle silver and pewter. Gold will also be popular, in keeping with the Asian aesthetic.

Metallics not only hint at Asia, they also capture the look of luxury and glamour that has emerged in recent years as a reaction to minimalism.

Andrea Lucena-Orr, colour and communications manager with Dulux Australia, also believes that yellow will figure largely in 2008, especially as an accent colour.

"This is the first yellow we've seen in an interior forecast for many years," she says. "It will be used in unusual combinations, such as with a sepia green and an aqua blue."

Electric blue is expected to be another popular accent colour but it won't be paired with canary yellow like it was in the '80s. "Today's blues are teamed with off-white and also with grey, because it's such a strong colour it can only be used sparingly," she warns.

Bring the earth inside

Both Hirst and Lucena-Orr see a major interest in environmental sustainability making an impact, especially with growing demand for paints that have low VOCs (volatile organic compounds). "Dulux now has a product called EnvirO2, which has low VOC," Lucena-Orr says. "And certainly all the water-based paints on the market today are a lot friendlier than the old solvent-based paints. We also have water-based enamels such as Dulux Aquanamel."

Environmental awareness will also be reflected in the colour palette, which Lucena-Orr says will include earthy colours such as yellow-greens, stone and mid-browns, but the look will definitely be more natural chic than natural Nimbin. Despite the trends, white and off-white remain the most popular paint colour, accounting for more than 85 per cent of Dulux's sales.

Focus on the world

In the past we used to show off the visa stamps in our passports to boast of our world travels. In 2008, we'll be using our homes for the same purpose, according to Senija Lukacevic of Focus Design.

"Design is going in a very global direction and creating the sense of a very well-travelled individual," she says. "Interiors will feature lots of eclectic pieces collected from your journeys. Things like atlases, world globes, rhino horn chandeliers. If you can't actually be bothered to jump on a plane and fly halfway around the planet, you can always pretend."

The key word here, according to Lukacevic is 'eclectic'. Your interior might feature an antique French chandelier over a modern dining room table, and an African carving in the corner.

Lukacevic says Coco Republic has always



Key pieces Classics such as the Noguchi coffee table (below and left) never date; modern favourites are animal prints (above) and dramatic designer lights (right).

