



Turn Your Living Room Into A Cozy Winter Refuge With Layered Lighting And Rich Brocades

To keep family and friends warm and happy during the colder months, make sure the living room is as cozy as can be.

Luca Piacentini
10/03/2019

Ah, the living room—oftentimes the place where homeowners spend the most quality time with family or take a much-needed weekend to relax. Now, with winter beginning to frost our fingertips, the time is ripe for making the family room as cozy as possible to ensure that it is primed for nights bundled up watching Netflix and eating snacks.

There are many factors that go into creating the coziness of any space, including color, layout, lighting and more. The award-winning Chicago interior designer Anthony Michael has become accustomed to the harsh Midwestern winters. During his 34 years of interior design work, he has developed a ton of expert tips to bring influential clients around the world a universal perspective and unsurpassed level of taste, attention, style and service.

“The living room is a very important place in the family home, especially in the winter,” Michael said. “I’ve always been enamored with how the design of a space can affect the mood. As the winter months come, I enjoy the challenges of creating a warm and healing space that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing.”

As opposed to the whites and light blues that Michael features in the color palette of a summer house, the winter calls for dark, autumnal colors such as pumpkin orange and curry yellows. For transitioning between the two seasons, Michael often uses flip covers to create multi-purpose furnishings.

“White muslin flip covers look great on the sofa and loveseat pillows in the summer,” said Michael. “To transition into the winter, I remove the flip covers to reveal beautiful, dark velvet upholstery or rich brocades that makes you want to cuddle up next to a fire. It can be helpful to utilize heavy, more woven material for pillows. Keep a warm, Hermes blanket draped over the arm of the sofa so you can easily grab it during those cozy movie nights.”

Another professional tip that Michael offers is the strategic use of scents. “While not everyone thinks of scents when it comes to interior design, a rich, scented candle adds a personality and heaviness to the room, especially in those fall months,” he said.

For cozy, winter-ready lighting, Michael recommends swapping LEDs and harsh overhead lighting for warm light sources such as muted lamps. “In the summer, I tend to go with dimmer and more diffused light, ensuring that the light does not come from one single source,” he said. “Winter lighting, on the other hand, is meant to be warm and enveloping. Just like a person wears layers in the winter to keep warm, a living room should feature layers of lighting—I like to overlap overhead, lamp and sconce lighting.”

“The arrangement of a living room can be just as vital as the materials, textures and colors used,” Michael said. “For example, a summer arrangement is about highlighting the outdoors and windows, bringing in a nice, airy feeling. As we transition into the winter, the design should bring attention away from the dreary weather outside and hone in on the cozy indoor space.”

One way Michael does this is by arranging the furniture to highlight a single interior focal point such as the television or fireplace. By positioning the room’s layout in such a way, Michael creates a confined, cozier atmosphere that promotes cuddling up on the couch and hunkering down.

“A great example of one of our cozy living room designs is from the North Shore Residence in Winnetka, Illinois,” said Michael. “The home features a beautiful family room, done in an English Tudor style with floral draperies, oriental rugs, a cozy fireplace arrangement and warm chandelier lighting.”

This winter, turn your living room into a life-giving room by upping the cozy factor and giving the family an escape from the cold.

