

JAN/FEB 2023

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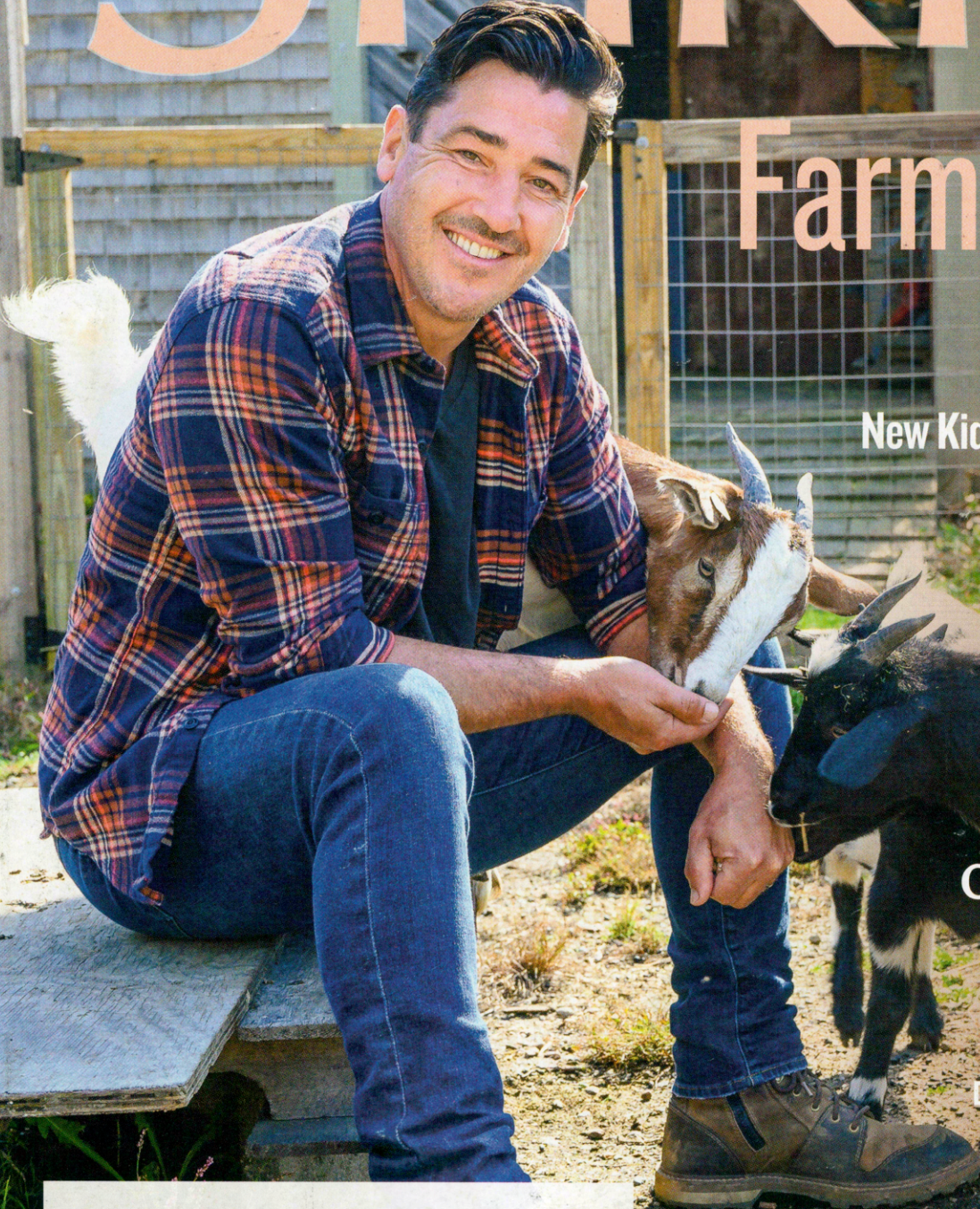
Home &
Design
Fresh looks for 2023

Rainbow
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Comforts of *Home*

Fresh looks from leading local LGBTQA+ design professionals



We asked design professionals at six top Boston-area firms what they love, what their clients want and what they'll never, ever do.

All agree: People are craving comfort.

Organic shapes, textural finishes and moody hues are replacing crisp lines, polished surfaces and cool colors. This particular iteration of comfort is refined, tactile and atmospheric. Not overly casual or haphazard, nor rigidly defined.

Homeowners are interested in rooms that nourish their souls and sustain the way they live. They want interiors that offer a warm embrace. Rooms where they can work, lounge and gather. Homes need to be functional, but they also must be distinct.

In Boston and all around New England, that's easy to come by.

Explore our interviews with top talent to learn where they're finding inspiration, and how they're translating these ideas into uniquely personal, reach-out-and-touch-me designs.

[CONTINUES 48]



PHOTO Jared Kuzia

Hanwen 'Evan' Bai

Founder, Hanwen Interiors, Boston

hanwen-interiors.com

How would you describe your design aesthetic?

Asian inspired modern; warm minimal; close to the earth.

What colors are you loving?

Soft white and earth tones for the base with sage or olive as an accent color, and a splash of black to anchor it. I think there's been a lean toward earthy tones for sure. Green was a color of the year from the paint companies for

2022, but for next year they're projecting rosier, brighter colors. I really like the earthy greens. We're not chasing the trends, but I'm sure I'm being influenced by them. There's no way I'm immune to it; it's subliminal.

What materials are you currently drawn to?

Definitely natural materials. For furniture, lots of wood. I'm starting to gravitate towards darker woods like walnut. I'm

interested in travertine with a matte finish. Terrazzo is everywhere, but I don't love it. For fabrics, linen, wool, and light-colored leather with a modern luxurious feel. And green plants; it's always nice to have nature in the home.

What's piquing your interest in design right now?

Marrying Western and Eastern design, like how Japandi [Japanese + Scandinavian] designs combine wabi sabi and hygge philosophies in a modern way. I'm excited about blurring the boundaries of different aesthetics.



YES OR NO?

ZELLIGE TILE? Y N

Yes, it's a more interesting alternative to subway tile.

PICK ONE

- OAK
- WALNUT

Both!

PICK ONE

- BRASS
- NICKEL
- BLACK
- CHROME

Matte black!

What's a look you're dying to do?

I'm dying to do a full blown wabi sabi look with earthy tones, a highly curated materials palette, and clean furniture lines. I want to create rooms that elicit a giant exhale.

What will we never catch you incorporating into a room?

Subway tiles. There's nothing wrong with them, there are just so many more options out there with personality. I cannot imagine going with such a vanilla look. It's a squandered opportunity.

What are clients asking for lately?

Moodier spaces instead of bright and airy ones, and more

masculine, sophisticated living spaces.

What do you do if a client insists on incorporating a trendy look that you think won't stand the test of time?

I ask them what about the look that resonates so I can dissect it. Is it the overall feeling it evokes, or the material, or the color? I unpack it a bit. I combine that with the practical functionality they need, then propose timeless options. I pull apart those threads and weave them back together in a different way. My clients have been pretty open minded.

Who are your design idols?

NORM Architects in Denmark. The studio takes a modernist approach that combines a Western and Eastern aesthetic. I love everything they do, from architecture to interiors to furniture design.

Hanwen Interiors donates 10% of their profits to local nonprofit organizations supporting the LGBTQ+ community.