

## THE HOLLYWOOD REGENCY COCKTAIL

A splash of decadence, a jigger of Moderne, garnished with a slice of quirky

By Sarah Barker



I'm feeling a little Hollywood Regency lately, which I guess is better than feeling profoundly so. It started with an attraction to a chartreuse velvet tufted bench that I knew, in my heart of understated Danish modern hearts, to be hideous. The condition persisted, so I contacted the doctor, Stephanie Lake of Stephanie Lake Design, who is one of about seven people in the country with a PhD in Decorative Arts and Design History. She recognized the symptoms right away:

- decadent fabrics like velvet, silk, damask, fringe
- light-catching glass, crystal, gilt, silver and mirrors not just on the wall
- shiny lacquered furniture and objects
- elegant low-profile seating, often tufted, small and refined
- volatile mashup of neoclassicism, Art Deco, chinoiserie and 1930s Hollywood glamour
- theatrical color use ranging from black and white to sapphire, turquoise, emerald, coral, canary yellow, cerise and, yes, chartreuse
- a Greek key pattern, animal print and ceramic Foo dog in any combination indicates a Hollywood Regency overdose and should be treated with an emetic immediately

Lake says Hollywood Regency symptoms present after prolonged exposure to minimalism. The current outbreak of Hollywood Regency is the third such: the original started when the film industry of the 1930s efficiently disseminated the lifestyles of glamorous stars to a hungry public. William Haines, an actor-turned-designer, and designer Dorothy Draper defined the style. After the atomic austerity of the 1950s, the Rat Pack threw some swinging 1960s parties and Hollywood Regency showed up again. And

now this, following bouts of Arts and Crafts, mid-century modern and industrial asceticism. Famed designer Kelly Wearstler is the current doyenne of Hollywood Regency, with a string of gilded clients.

"Hollywood Regency appeals to someone with an audience," says Lake. She adds this gem: "Interiors are destiny: It impacts how we feel and act." So maybe people are entertaining in their homes because they have party furniture. They're serving cocktails and witty repartee, the sort of setting in which an over-the-top gold-framed mirror, a real Las Vegas type, hobnobs with blue-blood slipper chairs and the tension is lovely. Hollywood Regency is quirky and unexpected — a gilded antler sconce, for example. As the name implies (Hollywood glitz + neoclassic Regency), the style is about juxtapositions: an elegant, restrained chaise with a blindingly ornate chandelier.

The doctor's recommendation was to go slow, educate myself and buy only what I loved. "Change is good but evolving is better," Lake stresses. A little Hollywood Regency goes a long way, so start small with, say, an antiqued mirrored backsplash or a black and white tiled powder room. As with fashion, a high/low mix makes glam modern and nonchalant. She suggests combining a precious Hickory chair with a thrift store find you've lacquered within an inch of its life.

As for education, Lake recommends watching those old movies for the interiors, not the plot. Required browsing, if not outright buying, includes 1stdibs.com, Spinario Design (spinariodesign.com), H & B Gallery (handb-gallery.com), Holly Hunt (hollyhunt.com), Melrose Antiques in NE Minneapolis and Timelines on Snelling in St. Paul. ☼