



Swinging style

'The main ground floor and communal areas feature natural wood flooring in a soft sandcastle tone, laid in a classic herringbone pattern reminiscent of Parisian apartments,' shares Claudia Baliyan, cofounder of Creating Homes in Dubai. Texture and tone play a key role throughout the space, with bold marble selections adding visual punctuation. 'We chose Cipollino Nuvolato for the fireplace, a striking stone that brings both refinement and a sense of quiet drama,' she adds. In the living room, this luxurious language continues: Open-plan and light-filled, it's designed to feel welcoming and relaxed, yet elevated by sculptural elements and a curated material palette. The result is a space that feels effortless but considered, playfully layered yet not overworked.

📍 creatinghomes.com

Feeling snug

'This space feels like a celebration – where lightness lives, music plays and inspiration breathes,' says Fariz Mamedov of FM Interiors. It began with a leftover piece of wallpaper, destined to be framed in the mini living room, until a serendipitous find shifted the narrative. 'We stumbled across a rug [of] a tiger tangled in palm branches. It was cartoonish, weird, even absurd – which made it perfect.' The tiger set the tone: playful, ironic, theatrical. A vine-like vintage floor lamp, bought by the client 25 years ago, was reintroduced for its effortless synergy. But it's the yellow wall that anchors the room. 'I painted just a section in a deep, sunlit yellow, like a beam of warmth pouring through a Kazakh archway,' Fariz explains. 'Not loud, just bold enough.'

farizmamedovinteriors.com ►



GET LIVING

From thoughtful material selections to clever use of texture, tone and lighting, we're snuggling up to these design choices

text CATHERINE MO



Classic, meet Contemporary

'Every choice in this living room was made to invite connection and calm,' says Leigh Misso, cofounder of interior design and architecture firm River Brook. The aim was to create a space that felt elevated yet welcoming. A custom plaster fireplace sets the visual tone, drawing the eye upward to exposed beams and the soft layering of natural textures throughout. 'We paired tailored linen upholstery with velvet club chairs to balance refinement with comfort, while the burlwood coffee table brings a grounded richness to the centre of the room.' For Leigh, it's the interplay of old and new that defines the space. 'The antique sideboards flanking the fireplace, paired with oversized ceramic lamps, add a collected, timeless feel and offer practical storage too. riverbrook.com

Tender moments

'From my very first visit to this Inanda, Sandton home, I remember walking into the living room and seeing the client's young daughter sitting on the floor, completely absorbed in her cartoons,' recalls Phumlani Thobane of Johannesburg-based Wythous Interiors. 'That simple, unfiltered moment made it clear: this wasn't just a lounge, it was a space of warmth, rhythm and connection.'

That image became the design's anchor. Every decision was made not just for aesthetics, but for memory and emotion; and comfort, flow and intimacy were layered into each corner to reflect the family's real life. If there's one element Phumlani insists on in every living room, it's lighting. Specifically, lamps. 'Floor, side or pendant, but never harsh task lighting. Lamps cast a sculptural glow that shifts with the day, softens the space and adds soul. They're the punctuation marks of a room's story: subtle, essential and quietly transformative.'

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An ode to history

When asked to reimagine this living space while honouring its heritage, Daniela de la Riva and Sara Rodriguez, cofounders of Guatemalan design firm Elemento, took the brief to heart. 'This room beautifully bridges history and contemporary design,' they explain. Restored wooden beams, salvaged from a 1930s hotel in Antigua, Guatemala, celebrate traditional craftsmanship, while crisp white walls spotlight the original 16th-century stonework and terracotta flooring. A sophisticated wallpaper by Arte Walls provides a canvas for subtle visual storytelling, and a restored family dining table finds new life as a coffee table. The result is a space where preservation meets modern sensibility: warm, layered and welcoming. Mission accomplished! @ @elemento.sd ■

