



EASY WAYS To Brighten Rooms IN WINTER

HILDRETH POINTS OUT THAT SCENTS can also brighten a room: Potted citrus trees in his sunroom add a crisp scent throughout the winter, but candles and diffusers can do the same. The designer Jo Malone has an orange blossom candle that he says is perfect for brightening a room with a fresh citrus scent.

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When home designer and builder **Marnie Oursler** talks with clients about building their dream homes along the Delaware coast, their No. 1 request is having bright spaces with lots of natural light. But at this time of year, it can feel like that brightness and light is in short supply in most any home. The sparkly holiday decorations have been put away, and the daylight hours are still way too brief. Fortunately, there are plenty of things you can "do in a single day to hedge against the winter doldrums," says Washington, D.C.-based interior design-

er **Josh Hildreth**. We've asked Oursler, Hildreth and interior designer **Jessica Wachtel** of **GTM Architects** in Bethesda, Maryland, for advice on easy decor changes that will brighten up any room. **Light from below** Hildreth suggests taking a cue from the design style of Nordic countries, where winter days are short: Try painting wooden floors white or cream, or bleaching them to a light shade of brown. "When you use sort of a wonderful cream color or white on a floor," Hildreth says, "everything put against it pops." Even heavy, dark wooden furniture will feel more contemporary and less formal. Also, Hildreth says, if you have

heavy rugs or layered rugs on the floor, consider removing some of them. Although we tend in winter to want to warm our floors, having more bare floor can help open up the space and make it feel fresher and brighter. Oursler and Wachtel also suggest swapping out dark rugs for lighter and brighter ones. It's an easy change with big impact. **Maximise your light** We think of adding warmer, heavier curtains in winter, Wachtel says, but removing heavy draperies will let in more natural light. Also, she says, consider using brighter light bulbs at this time of year, and perhaps even taking out a ceiling fixture that has just one bulb

and replacing it with one that has several bulbs. You can use a dimmer to make sure the room doesn't get too bright, but you'll be able to brighten the space as needed. Another practical trick: Add large mirrors to amplify natural light during the day and lamplight at night. Oursler made her office feel brighter by adding a large mirror trimmed to look like a window. It also gives a sense of connection to the outdoors. **Slipcovers and tablecloths** If your dining table has dark chairs or your sofa is dark, Oursler suggests slipcovers in a light shade. Hildreth says the same about covering a dark wood table: Since that dark table may dominate your

dining room, he says, "a wonderful heavy, light-colored linen tablecloth is a beautiful idea." The thickness of the fabric can still bring a sense of warmth, but the light color will open up the space. Along with light-colored solids, consider bright patterns. Hildreth says patterns like colorful houndstooth may be returning and are perfect for brightening a room at any time of year. **Add openness and lift** Rearranging furniture is an inexpensive way to give a room a different feel, Oursler says. "And you de-clutter at the same time. People don't realize how easy it is for a space to get cluttered. Once you de-

clutter, the space will feel brighter and bigger," she says. As you rearrange, consider whether any of your pieces could be replaced with something less dense and heavy. If you have a heavy coffee table or solid wooden end tables, Oursler says, consider switching to lighter pieces made of metal and glass. "You can find those relatively inexpensively, but they do make a big difference," she says. Also, she adds, make your space feel taller and more open by adding some wainscoting painted white about two-thirds of the way up a wall, and decorate above it by adding grasscloth or paintings in that space just below the ceiling. "Anything you

can do to elevate a space," she says, "will make a room feel brighter because it will feel bigger." **Citrus scents and candles** Hildreth points out that scents can also brighten a room: Potted citrus trees in his sunroom add a crisp scent throughout the winter, but candles and diffusers can do the same. The designer **Jo Malone** has an orange blossom candle that he says is perfect for brightening a room with a fresh citrus scent. And for a finishing touch, Hildreth suggests adding a few gorgeous coffee-table books filled with images of sun-filled spaces. A winter day will feel a lot brighter, he says, if you spend an hour getting lost in colorful images.

VR May Not Help Form Strong Visual Memories: Study

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have found that virtual reality (VR)—a computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment usually experienced using head mounted displays (HMDs)—may interfere with visual memory, a finding that may lead to better application of the technology. According to the study, published in the *Journal Frontiers in Psychology*, HMDs, commonly used to experience VR, move the images to match the movement of the user, creating a sense of realism and enhanced immersion. The scientists, including those from Toyohashi University of Technology in Japan, conducted an experiment using HMDs and examined the effects of VR on memory. As part of the study, participants visited a museum virtually, and looked at paintings, following which their memories of the paintings were tested. One group viewed images linked to their movements on an HMD (ac-



tive VR group), and a second group watched another person's VR video on a display (passive). Under active VR, the participants could look around at the surroundings themselves, but under passive VR, the participants could not look around, the scientists said. On comparing the memory test results of the two groups, the scientists found that the active VR group performed poorly than the passive one. Based on the findings, the researchers said, VR may interfere

with visual memory due to the way it moves images in conjunction with user movement. They speculate that the enhanced sense of realism and immersion created by the ability to look around freely, tires the brain and consequently prevents the formation of visual memory. In further studies, the research team hopes to find out why visual memory is hindered when the participants can look around freely in VR.

Oscar 2020: 'Joker' Leads Nominations With 11 Nods, 'Parasite' Creates History

Press Trust Of India

LOS ANGELES: "Joker" trumped critically-acclaimed titles to emerge as the front-runner at the 92nd Academy Award nominations with the Joaquin Phoenix-starrer leading the pack with 11 nods. For the second spot, there was a tie among three most talked-about movies of the year: Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood", Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman" and Sam Mendes' "1917" with 10 nominations. Bong Joon Ho-helmed "Parasite", the most buzzed international movie of the year, scripted history by becoming the first South Korean film to bag a best picture nomination. The film, which earned six nods, was also recognised in the international feature film, director and original screenplay categories. Another foreign language title that claimed spot in category other than international feature was Spanish film "Pain and Glory". The Pedro Almodovar-directed movie earned Antonio Banderas the best actor nod. "Joker", which earned praise for Phoenix's role as a man's descent into madness and divided many for its portrayal of gun violence, dominated not just the main categories but also the technical nominations. Some of the key categories where the film bagged nods are best picture, actor, director for Todd Phillips, original score and adapted screenplay. "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood", Tarantino's love letter to Hollywood of 1969, will give tough competition to "Joker". The film bagged 10 nominations including a surprise nod for Leonardo DiCaprio in the best actor list and the predictable best supporting actor for Brad Pitt. It is also nominated for best director and best original screenplay. Adam Driver ("Marriage Story") and Jonathan Pryce ("The Two Popes") are also vying for the best actor Oscar. Scorsese, who had grabbed headlines for his anti-Marvel comments, has also received a lot of love from Academy voters for his reflective gangster drama "The Irishman", including the best film, best director and the dual nods in the best supporting actor category for Al Pac-



ino and Joe Pesci. Tom Hanks ("A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood") and Anthony Hopkins ("The Two Popes") completes the best supporting list. British war drama continued its lucky streak from Golden Globes and Baftas to Oscars by matching nominations of Tarantino and Scorsese's movies. Mendes is in the race for best director. Lack of diversity has been a thorny issue for Hollywood awards but unlike Bafta, Oscars tried to somewhat balance the scales by nominating Banderas and Cynthia Erivo in best acting categories ("Harriet"), and best picture nod to Greta Gerwig's "Little Women". Gerwig, however, was snubbed in the all-male best director category but the film managed a nod in best adapted screenplay, best actress for Saoirse Ronan and best supporting actress nod for Florence Pugh. While Rene Zellweger ("Judy"), Scarlett Johansson ("Marriage Story") were predictable choices, Charlize Theron ("Bombshell") and Erivo were surprise nominees for best actress. Laura Dern, who bagged Golden Globe for best supporting actress, is a favourite at Oscars as well. She will fight it out with her "Marriage Story" co-star Johansson ("Jojo Rabbit"), Pugh, Margot Robbie ("Bombshell") and Kathy Bates ("Richard Jewell"). Apart from "Parasite" and "Pain and Glory", the international feature

film category includes French drama "Les Miserables", Polish movie "Corpus Christi" and North Macedonian "Honeyland". "Honeyland" also features in best documentary list. Original screenplay nominees are: "Marriage Story", "Parasite", "Once Upon a Time...", "1917" and surprise entry in Rian Johnson's "Knives Out". In adapted screenplay, "Little Women" is pitted against "The Irishman", "Joker Rabbit", "The Two Popes" and "Joker". Animated feature category includes "Toy Story 4", "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World", "Missing Link", "I Lost My Body" and "Klaus". Original score category has biggies in Alexandre Desplat ("Little Women"), John Williams ("Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker") along with Golden Globe winner Hildur Guðnadóttir ("Joker"), Randy Newman ("Marriage Story") and Thomas Newman ("1917"). Original song has nominees in "Into the Unknown" from "Frozen 2", "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" from "Rocketman", "Stand Up" from "Harriet", "I'm Standing With You" from "Breakthrough" and "I Can't Let You Throw Yourself Away" from "Toy Story 4". Documentary feature also includes "American Factory", "The Edge of Democracy", "For Sama" and "The Cave". Two Indian-Americans — Smriti Mundhra and Sami Khan — have bagged nomination in the docu-

mentary short category for "St Louis Superman". Their docu short will face off with "In the Absence", "Learning to Skateboard in a War Zone (If You're a Girl)", "Life Overtakes Me" and "Walk Run Cha-Cha". "The Irishman", "Ford vs Ferrari", "Parasite", "Joker" and "Jojo Rabbit" for editing Oscar, while best cinematography includes "1917", "Once Upon a Time...", "Joker" and "The Lighthouse". Visual Effects: "Avengers Endgame", "The Lion King", "Star Wars", "The Irishman" and "1917". Make Up: "Bombshell", "Joker", "Judy", "1917" and "Maleficent: Mistress of Evil" while Costume Design has period pieces "Once Upon a Time...", "Little Women", "Jojo Rabbit", "The Irishman" and "Joker". "1917" and "Joker" have bagged nominations for both sound mixing and editing. Space drama "Ad Astra" features in sound mixing list, while "Star Wars" for sound editing. "The Irishman", "Once Upon...", "Parasite", "Jojo Rabbit" and "1917" will compete in production design category. Best short (animated) has nominees in "Dcera (Daughter)", "Hair Love", "Kitbull", "Memorable" and "Sister", whereas in the live action segment top five are: "Brotherhood", "Neftali Football Clube", "Neighbors Window", "Saria" and "A Sister". The Oscars will air on February 9 and without a host again.

Tea And Coffee Can Slim You Down

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Your favourite hot caffeinated beverage may not just help you shake off the morning drowsiness but can also slim you down, according to a research from the University of Illinois. This study gives all the caffeine lovers a reason to rejoice and have a few extra servings of tea or coffee because, according to its findings, consumption of caffeine can potentially control weight gain and cholesterol levels by blunting the effects of a diet that's high in sugars and fats. Fox News reported that the study was carried out on rats who were fed a relatively unhealthy diet for four weeks in a row, which consisted of 40-45 percent carbohydrates and just 15 percent protein. In conjunction to this, the rats were administered a



tea containing phytochemicals, flavonoids, and amino acids. Caffeine dosages ranged from 65 to 135 milligrams per serving. The rats were also fed additional sources of caffeine. The final result of this experiment showed that the rats that were administered caffeine dropped a significant amount of body fat. The fat absorption went down by 22 per cent and weight gain slowed down by 16 per cent. "The consumption of caffeine from

(tea) or from other sources alleviated the negative impact of a high-fat, high-sucrose diet on body composition due to the modulation of certain lipogenic enzymes in both adipose tissue and the liver," said Elvira Gonzalez de Mejia, who co-authored this study. These findings can be scaled according to the human model to further explore the efficacy of caffeine-containing beverages, like coffee and tea, in aiding weight loss and cholesterol