

[style guide]

DISCOVER **URBAN PRAIRIE** STYLE BY OSWALD HOMES

“Tradition reinterpreted”

The Urban Prairie design style owes much to iconic architect and Prairie School founder Frank Lloyd Wright, whose ‘organic architecture’ pioneered the earthy, pared-back, free-flowing designs that continue to resonate with us year after year.

Turning his back on the lavish, highly decorative ‘old Europe’ architecture that dominated America in the late 1800s, the pioneer of Modernism looked to the Midwest prairie for inspiration. Discovering a yearning for the simplicity of the landscape and its modest dwellings, he promoted a style of architecture that not only evoked the wide-open grasslands, but also illustrated his belief that a building should be a ‘product of its place, purpose and time’. It was a philosophy that arguably influenced subsequent architectural idioms, including the ‘less is more’ of the Minimalists and the ‘form follows function’ of the Bauhaus movement.

The designs of Lloyd Wright and his fellow Prairie School architects were also in tune with the Arts and Crafts Movement that began in Britain around 1880 and quickly spread across Europe and into America. Pioneering a spirit of reform, they emphasised the value of quality in both design and materials.



URBAN PRAIRIE



Making it our own

Grounded, confident, earthy and enduring, the Urban Prairie style is perfect for tree-lined boulevards in leafy suburbs close to the city. Parks and open spaces abound, and homes settle comfortably into their environment. Decorative panels and columns in brick or stone still feature strongly, but today they contrast with light-coloured sections of wall that add a contemporary freshness. The style's signature deep roof overhangs, cantilevered sections and extended eaves provide shade from the summer sun, while the slate roofs of old have been swapped for contemporary dark-coloured roof tiles and the traditional stucco has been replaced with modern render.



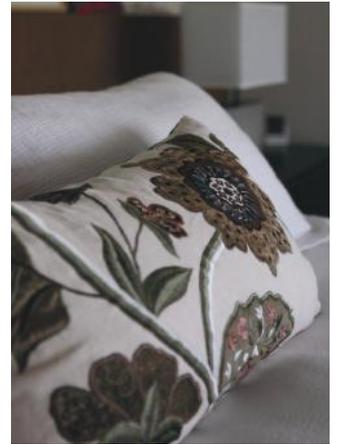
Design details

The iconic Prairie-style homes built in the early 1900s typically had a low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, robust horizontal lines, a central chimney and an open floor plan. 'Ribbons' of glazing and 'light screens', typically featuring geometric art-glass patterns, were another defining feature. Walls were sometimes angled, creating a greater sense of grounding and connection with the earth. Today we're taking inspiration from the original iconic architecture to create a lighter, more contemporary take on the style. Horizontal lines are still accentuated, often with corbelling and contrasting bands of dark and light. Windows are typically fewer and far bigger, yet they still echo the authentic ribbon-like forms. Ceilings are high, rooms are flooded with natural light, and spaces connect seamlessly with the outdoors where beautifully landscaped gardens make the most of a large block. Statement porches reach out to welcome visitors in, and huge wrought iron gates add impact and an extra sense of grandeur from the street.



Finishing touches

Elements used on the outside move happily indoors inside, with timber, leather, stone and glass highlighting large-scale open-plan spaces, volume and an easy flow from inside to out. Features may be in natural, simple materials, but they're used to stunning effect, with exposed timber beams, stone pillars, thick mantel-pieces and tree-stump tables. Urban Prairie interiors are essentially simple, yet oh-so-stylish, channelling high-end hotels, luxury resorts and alpine retreats. Touchable textiles include deep-pile rugs and luxurious throws that are soft and downy, while the colour palette embraces warm chocolate-browns and soft white and gold. Beautifully designed built-in furniture, including dining nooks and window seats, combines form and function.



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- Bay Leather Republic, Osborne Park, bayleather.com.au
- Empire Homewares, worldofempire.com.au

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