

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE OF THE MOMENT

smart curves

A NEW WAVE OF INTERIORS IS WELCOMING SOFT LINES AND GENTLE SWEEPS
THAT SMOOTH OVER THE FORMALITY OF STRAIGHT-EDGED DESIGN

FEATURE Keith Flanagan



The spaces we occupy tend to be orthogonal by design – homes are often boxes and rectangles. But in the world of interior architecture, curves are making moves, softening right angles and bringing sculptural lines to straightforward layouts.

Curves are not new – we’ve all seen indoor arches and columns, after all. But a certain fluidity, especially when it comes to interior walls, is increasingly drawn to contemporary design, countering standard blueprints dominated by straight lines (which are often easier and cheaper to construct) with rounder, cosier forms.

‘Because organic shapes and roundness soften interiors, they are associated with a contemporary style that often breaks with classic styles such as Haussmannian,’ says Paris’ Florence Jallet of Batiik Studio, noting her city’s ubiquitous architectural style. These softer layouts aren’t just about aesthetics – wall curvatures look good because they feel good, wrapping us in the types of soothing lines and shapes we find in nature. This, according to many designers, can have an impact on our wellbeing.

‘As someone who values the role of design in promoting wellness, I believe that incorporating a curved element into a space can have a profound impact on our state of mind,’ says Maggie Mo, co-founder of Hong Kong’s Starz Pasha. ‘It’s no secret that spending time in natural surroundings can help us feel calm and rejuvenated.’

Straight lines aren’t out – they are certainly in demand – but a curve or two can round them out beautifully. Take a look at how this softer approach is making waves in interior architecture. ➤

1 SHAPE UP

Shaking up the Haussmann style of an apartment in Paris, Batiik Studio created an all-out intervention: a new curvilinear wall runs from the entrance to the kitchen. ‘It breaks the rhythm of the flat and creates perspectives through the views from the living rooms,’ says co-founder Florence Jallet, noting the intention to open up the space. ‘It provides privacy for the kitchen seating area by enveloping it – we wanted it to feel intimate and comfortable.’

GET THE LOOK Project by Batiik Studio

2 PRETTY PENNY

Inspired in part by the quarter round (a shape found in woodworking that is a quarter of a circle, and often used for moulding), architects applied bulbous architectural features throughout this apartment in Madrid, including curving corridors. While the end result appears seamless, it was by no means priceless. ‘Any curved surface, in general, whatever the material, is going to have a

higher price than a linear or faceted solution,’ notes architect Gonzalo del Val, a gentle warning that such elements are complex and certainly luxuries.

GET THE LOOK Project by Estudio Gonzalo del Val and Toni Gelabert – Arquitecte

3 TURN A CORNER

Soft curves unify a tricky layout that had four different angles to create this sanctuary-like Hong Kong apartment. ‘We decided to smooth out the angles with one fluid, curvaceous wall,’ says Jay Leung, co-founder of Starz Pasha. A beige palette brings cohesion to various architectural surfaces. ‘If you’re considering featuring curved walls in your space, a helpful tip is to use the same material and colour pattern on the wall, shelves and doors,’ adds Maggie Mo, design director. ‘This creates a unified appearance that ties the room together and emphasises the beauty of the curve.’

GET THE LOOK Project by Starz Pasha



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PHOTOGRAPHS (4) JAMES McDONALD



4 SUITE LINES

When it comes to comfort, home interiors are increasingly inspired by hospitality design. And as architects borrow sumptuous details from top-notch hotels, you'll find plenty of inspiration from the recent redesign of this Claridge's suite by London's Bryan O'Sullivan Studio, where soft curves flank the entryway. 'There is something about the curved wall here that adds an immediate sense of calm to the room, as soon as you enter,' says Bryan. 'The soft, rounded edges offer a different flow to the room in comparison to an angular wall. It feels inviting, yet elegant and contemporary.'

GET THE LOOK Project by Bryan O'Sullivan Studio

5 SOFT TOUCH

Working with an existing round floor plan (complete with a central patio), architects leaned into the curved layout by using a soft lime wash - bringing an extra-smooth look to the walls - while a unique floorboard pattern matches the circular flow. 'The lime walls helped us enhance the artisan expression of the curves and the wooden floorboards follow the icosahedral cutting of the windows that surround the patio,' says architect Iker Ochotorena, founder of Madrid's OOAA studio.

GET THE LOOK Project by OOAA ➤



HUMAN NATURE

Inspired by the home's owner, a dancer and choreographer, architect Raúl Almenara designed a layout that spirals – or, shall we say, twirls. Walls curve around a central shower as if performing a pirouette, creating a radial rhythm throughout the home. To add dimension without interrupting the curvilinear path, Raúl covered the walls with small fluted ceramic tiles. 'The use of the curve leads us to work with continuous or small-format materials,' he says. 'Large format would facet the curve on various faces, breaking the fluidity.'

GET THE LOOK Project by Raúl Almenara

PHOTOGRAPHS (HUMAN NATURE) ASIER RUA; (GO ROUND) YEVHENII AVRAMENKO

GO ROUND

While designers often introduce curves by way of furniture and decor, this renovation took a permanent stand. Reaching to the ceiling, a rounded timber wardrobe creates a voluminous feel in the main bedroom while mirroring an arched doorway just around the bend. According to the architect, Yevheniia Dubrovskia, the curved unit softly partitions two zones within the same room and creates visual interest by 'mixing up the flow' of straight-lined interiors. The built-in unit required plenty of floor space to float, but it also didn't require reworking existing interior walls - a clever way to cut corners, no doubt.

GET THE LOOK Project by
Yevheniia Dubrovskia

