



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Naming a Style Is Not a **Brief**

Japandi, minimalist, biophilic: the words travel badly. The seven variables that control an interior, the mismatch that wastes rounds, and a sheet to fill in.

START HERE

The reference looked right. The room does not.

Interiors fail differently from buildings. An exterior that is wrong is usually wrong in its geometry, and you can point at it. An interior that is wrong is often geometrically correct and wrong in its **counts** — too many materials in view, too much contrast, too much on the surfaces, light arriving from the wrong side at the wrong temperature.

None of that is in the word Scandinavian. All of it is decided by somebody, whether or not you were part of the decision.

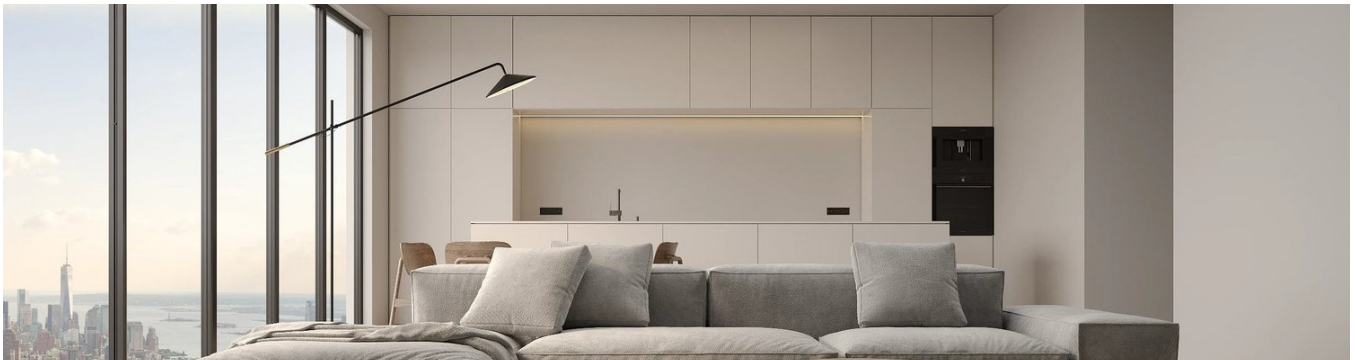
What the style word fixes

Roughly the palette family, roughly the furniture era, and a general level of ornament. That is genuinely useful and it is where most briefs stop.

What it leaves open

How many materials may appear at once. How dark the darkest thing is. How high the furniture sits under the ceiling. How much visible stuff is allowed. Whether variety comes from texture or pattern. Warm light or cool, from one window or four. And which three objects actually carry the look.

Two rooms can share a style name, a palette and a furniture list and still look nothing alike, because those seven decisions went differently. They are also the cheapest things in the world to agree in advance and among the most expensive to change once a scene is built and lit.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

The seven controlling variables

Each of these can be written as a number, a count or a choice between three named options. That is what makes them briefable, and what makes the result checkable when it arrives.

VARIABLE	WHAT IT CONTROLS	STATE IT AS
Palette, and how many materials are allowed	More than any other variable, this separates calm from busy. It is not which materials — it is how many are visible from one camera position.	A number. Three, four, six. Then list them: wall, floor, large soft surface, timber, metal, one accent.
Contrast level	Whether the room reads as soft and even or graphic and sharp. Identical furniture in identical colours changes character entirely with contrast.	Low, mid or high — plus the darkest thing in the room and the lightest. Those two objects define the range.
Height relationships	Ceiling height against furniture height. Low seating under a high ceiling reads as one style; standard seating in the same room reads as another.	Ceiling height, seat height low or standard, and the tallest object allowed to stand against a wall.
Density of visible stuff	The single fastest way to break a pared-back style, and the fastest way to make a warm one feel like a showroom.	A count. Objects permitted on a surface. Worktop clear or lived-in. Books, plants and cables shown or put away.
Texture versus pattern	Where visual interest comes from. Weave, grain, plaster and roughness, or print, figure and repeat. Leading with both usually reads as neither.	Pick one to lead and say so. Name two or three textures, or name the pattern and where it is allowed to appear.
Light temperature and direction	The variable most often left to chance and most often responsible for the room feeling wrong. It sets mood before any object is noticed.	Warm, neutral or cool. Time of day. Which side the daylight comes from, whether lamps are on, and whether the ceiling light is on at all.
The three objects that carry it	Almost every interior style is legible from a handful of items. Get those right and simplifications elsewhere pass unnoticed.	Name three, specifically. A chair, a light, a vessel — not a category, an actual thing you can point at.

Two of these do more work than the rest and are almost never briefed: **the material count and the light direction**. If you only settle two things before work starts, settle those.

STEP 02

Say it back to them

The most common waste in an interior project is not disagreement. It is a style word doing a job it cannot do: one person says it meaning a feeling, the other hears it as a specification. Both then proceed confidently in different directions.

THE WORD USED	CHECK WHETHER THEY ACTUALLY MEAN	THE VARIABLE IT BECOMES
Minimal	Empty, or simply uncluttered and carefully made. These are very different rooms and people rarely want the first one.	Density, and where the storage is.
Warm	A colour, or a light temperature, or a set of materials. Often the light, sometimes the timber, less often the walls.	Light temperature, then palette.
Cosy	Smaller, or darker, or lit low with soft textures. Usually the third, which can be done in a large bright room.	Light direction and height, texture.
Luxury	More ornament, or fewer and better materials with faultless finishes and quieter joints.	Material count, contrast, detail quality.
Natural	Plants, or a palette without synthetics, or visible daylight and imperfect surfaces.	Texture lead, palette, daylight.
Clean	The styling, or straight lines, or a low material count, or nothing on the worktops.	Density, then contrast.
Modern	A period, or simply not like their parents house. This word carries the least information of any in the list.	Ask again. Do not brief on it.

The fastest test there is

Put four images in front of them and ask two questions: **which one would you keep, and which one would you refuse?** The refusal is the more useful answer by a distance. People describe what they like in borrowed vocabulary and describe what they hate precisely, and a stated rejection is the only part of a brief that cannot be misread as a suggestion.

Then write the rejection down

One line at the bottom of the brief: it has failed if it comes back with _____. Grey and cold. Full of objects. Every lamp on. That single line prevents more wasted work than the rest of the document, because it is the only sentence that anyone can check an image against without knowing what was in your head.

STEP 03

The interior brief, on one page

ROOM AND PURPOSE _____ WHO USES IT _____
 STYLE WORD USED _____ IT MUST NOT BECOME _____

PALETTE wall _____ floor _____ large soft surface _____
 timber _____ metal _____ one accent _____
 MATERIALS VISIBLE AT ONCE: ____ (a number)

CONTRAST darkest thing in the room _____
 lightest thing _____ overall: low / mid / high

HEIGHTS ceiling ____ seating: low / standard ____
 tallest object allowed against a wall ____

DENSITY objects allowed on a surface ____
 worktops: clear / lived-in ____
 books ____ plants ____ cables: shown / hidden ____

SURFACE variety led by TEXTURE ____ or PATTERN ____ (pick one)
 textures named _____

LIGHT warm / neutral / cool ____ time of day ____
 daylight from _____ lamps on? ____
 ceiling light on? ____ visible fittings _____

THE THREE OBJECTS THAT CARRY IT 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

REFERENCES layout _____ material _____ light _____

IT HAS FAILED IF _____

Fill in the light block first

It takes a minute and it changes everything downstream.
 Two of those fields — which side the daylight comes from
 and whether the ceiling light is on — do more to the feel
 of a finished image than any furniture decision on the
 page above them.

One sheet per room

Density and light change room by room even when the
 style does not. A kitchen briefed on the living room sheet
 comes back as a living room with appliances in it, which
 is a real and surprisingly common outcome.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

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FRAME
STUDIO

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.

