Standout from Your Neighbors with Monogrammed Outdoor Decor by Justin Karmie

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When most people think monograms, they think of wedding dÃ©cor, of towels and LL Bean backpacks and all things preppy. Monograms are typically associated with the "preppy" style made famous by stores like Abercrombie and Fitch and J.Crew, but ever since J.Crew revamped itself and started selling like crazy, preppy style has come back into vogue. No longer reserved for schoolgirls and uptight old women, monograms are back in a big way! Have we lost you already? Wondering what, exactly, a monogram is? A monogram is a motif made by overlapping or combining two or more letters (usually an individual or a family's initials) to create one symbol. They're often used by married couples, as well as companies, and also by individuals, and generally, become recognizable, much like logos - especially in the vein of company use. Monograms are not to be confused with cyphers, which is a series of uncombined initials (ie, A.B.C.), as often seen on LL Bean backpacks perched upon tiny children as they head to school in the morning.

Wondering about the history of the monogram? Monograms go back a long ways - they first appeared on coins, as early as 350BC. The earliest known examples of monograms come in the form of Greek cities that would issue the coins. These coins featured the first two letters of the city's name - a far cry from the monograms we know today, which often feature initials, or company names. Monograms have long been used in the place of traditional signatures by artists and craftsmen on sculptures, paintings, and more. One famous example of this is the monogram of artists Albrecht Durer, whose monogram, which he used as a signature, included an "A" that looked more like a small house, with a D underneath it.

Following the Greek coin usage of the monogram, there's also the Christian usage of the symbolic formation. For centuries, Christians have used monograms in the name of Jesus Christ to represent their god without actually writing out his name. Perhaps more popular, however, are royal monograms, which have been used in kingdoms for centuries as well. These monograms tend to appear on coins, and are often displayed in the form of a crown. In the past, Great Britain, Russia, Sweden and many German states have used monograms on coins to display their royalty, and today, multiple Danish coins show the monogram of Margrethe II.

Let's get back to current times. These days, monograms are more commonly appropriated by individuals and families looking to customize things they own - from towels to bathrobes, sheets to pillowcases, jackets to backpacks. The traditional three letter monogram, which features the initials of an individual's first, last and middle name, can these days be sewn or pasted onto just about anything. Companies like the Company Store, Pottery Barn, J.Crew, Lands End and more offer monogramming services, and often, you can get your goodies monogrammed free of charge. It's a real perk, especially for those who like that their goods are differentiated from others, made special just for them.

Wondering how you can incorporate monograms into your daily life? Maybe you've already done the towels, and you've got the notecards and the backpacks and more - but you're still craving more monograms! Enter the outdoor dÃ©cor. That's right; why not bring the monogramming into the great outdoors? You've got a spectacularly manicured lawn with incredible landscaping, so why not make it shin and truly make it one of a kind? With monogramming, you can transform your outdoor dÃ©cor to help it stand out from that of your neighbors. Consider this: there's no need for a cookie-cutter back yard when you've got the option to monogram. Why not monogram your bird-feeder, your large umbrellas that help dapple the sunlight in the pool area? Building a new pool? Go ahead and add a monogram on the bottom, so that you'll never forget how hard you worked to save up for this amazing luxury. If this seems like too much commitment for you, go simple: monogram your sunhat,

and the cushions of your outdoor furniture. This way, if they get wrecked by winter's wrath, or blow away in a bad storm, you can easily replace them, monogram and all. Additionally, since monograms add some extra spice, you can stay classic with your color schemes and design - consider blue and white striped cushions with a small black monogram on the side. Classic, timeless and chic - and 100% yours. Set your outdoor dÃ©cor apart from the rest, and add your monogram! This customized look is perfect for design, both indoors and out, and it's a great way to customize things you already own. Whether you're ordering new or reworking something you already own, monogramming adds that special touch to your things.

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