

Expert advice

Ten stylish and sensible design trends you'll want to bring home

COMPILED BY KYM WOLFE

COMPARED TO THE FICKLE world of fashion, home and décor trends evolve at glacial speed. Still, each season new trends do emerge and influence the way we decorate our homes and style our environments. And trends aren't only about a new look; they also highlight advances in technology and materials and reflect the way we live our lives.

In the spirit of David Letterman's much-loved Top Ten lists, London area industry experts share their predictions as to what will be hot in home décor in the coming year. Certain themes will continue from previous years, with some gaining momentum

as they become more widely accepted. Still others will explode onto the scene as fresh, inventive options for today's home and design enthusiasts. All of them will be woven together seamlessly by the thread of personalization and comfort.



Bathrooms

Trend prediction by Stacey Haan of Kitchen and Bath Emporium

Update a tired bathroom with streamlined fixtures and quartz or granite countertops. Wall-mounted faucets with a polished nickel finish add a soft, warm tinge to complement natural, earth-tone wall colours. This year's look is simple and uncluttered and favours square lines, from the freestanding boxy bathtub to the rectangular sink. Undermount sinks in the main bathroom and ensuite are both eye pleasing and practical. For the powder room try a raised rectangular flat sink. Even toilets have moved to a sleeker look. The newest products are one-piece, with enclosed or skirted traps, some defined by squared edges.

Patios and Decks

Trend prediction by Dana Graydon of Patio Palace

With more people vacationing at home, creating comfortable outdoor living space continues to be a growing trend. Conversation circles, clustered around gas fireplaces or firebowl tables, have people relaxing outdoors late into the evening. Outdoor kitchens continue to be popular, some incorporating wood ovens, sinks and refrigerators. "Four seasons" and "zero maintenance" are the buzzwords for outdoor furniture. Seating is made from materials that will stand up to the elements, like vinyl wicker and Sunbrella fabrics that won't fade in the sun and won't hold water when they are left out in the rain. Bright, playful cushion colours promote a Caribbean feeling. Cast iron dining sets that can accommodate eight or more diners are extremely popular for backyard entertaining. Better still, with their durable build they can also be left outdoors year-round.

Accessories

Trend predictions by Joseph Branco of Quantum

Bring a fresh spark to your living space—both inside the home and on the patio—with metal wall art, chrome sculpture and pottery pieces in bright neutral colours. Wall art in the shape of leaves, butterflies or flowers and made of matted brown metal add visual depth and texture to any room. Chrome, crystals and materials that are shiny and reflective are popular again this year, with chandeliers adding flash and whimsy to powder rooms, bedrooms and dressing rooms. Pottery, a perennially popular accessory, features brighter hues like sky blue. The bright colours reflect an optimistic attitude, as people opt for upbeat yet affordable ways to create positive energy flow in their home, both indoors and out.

Renovations

Trend predictions by Pat Molloy of Duo Construction

With the economy making people more cautious with their spending and the tendency to do more cocooning, most home renovations this season will involve small and practical projects aimed at making living space more comfortable and functional. Designs are trending away from formal finishes like crown mouldings, favouring to simple styling with clean lines instead. There is a continued interest in using earth-friendly and sustainable products, and consumers are interested in hearing about new options. Look to flooring and countertops made from Marmoleum, which is a hardy yet compostable material, recycled blue jean insulation made from salvaged materials and green roofing options.



Design



Floors

Trend prediction by Dave Holden of Floor Source

Durable, easily maintained and environmentally friendly are this year's flooring favourites. With distressed hardwood, there are no worries about scratches or other imperfections. Look for a resurging interest in carpeting as stain resistant products like Mohawk's Smart Strand are used to create a warm cozy feeling with no worries about spills. Using renewably sourced polymer and corn sugar, Smart Strand carpets are not only earth-friendly, they also stand up well to wear and tear and won't discolour, even when cleaned with bleach. Look for deep earthy colours like chocolate brown and dark greys that are practical as well as pretty.



Dining Room

Trend prediction by Sydney MacLean of Home by Rural Roots

A versatile classic-urban mix with clean lines and an uncluttered look define this year's dining room décor. Keep the traditional dining table, but swap the seating for trendy chairs or an upholstered bench. Keep the parsons chairs but cover them in colourful fabric. Wrap the chandelier in a semi-transparent shade. Pair a new dining table with a rustic sideboard. Eliminate the hutch and hang a mirror or artwork over the buffet. While traditional Oriental area rugs are still popular, contemporary carpet designs are also in vogue. Match monochromatic dining sets with strong colours and patterns underfoot, but offset colourful upholstery with a tone-on-tone area rug.

Home Furnishings

Trend predictions by Rae Ann Ladouceur of Dining Fine Furniture

A simple, calming and uncluttered home is this year's antidote to a busy outside world. Scaled down furniture—like smaller but taller tables with bar-height chairs—is a good fit for those downsizing to a condo or simply wanting to create a more open feel in the home. Look for fewer but higher-quality accessory and accent pieces. Use dramatic colours like eggplant or lime green for chairs, sofas and loveseats to add flair to your living space. Fabric drapes are regaining popularity, but in simple styles with clean lines, no swags or fussy design elements. Medium- to high-end furniture is a must-have for home office space, bringing a professional feel even to a converted spare bedroom.



Paint and Wallpaper

Trend predictions by Jennifer Westholm of Color Company

In large rooms walls will be painted in taupes, warm earth tones and other neutral colours, accented by a darker coloured or wallpapered accent wall. People are playing it safe with wall colours, using them as a backdrop or canvas for eye-catching fabrics, artwork and accessories. Smaller, closed-off rooms or kitchens with limited wall space will be the places to play with bold wall colours. Wallpaper will be mainly used for in nooks, powder rooms and smaller areas. Bold patterned, textured or paintable wallpaper will add some interest to the finished look. A continued interest in the environment has brought new low-VOC emission paints to market at a variety of price points.

Design



Kitchens

Trend predictions by Sarah Van Zeumeren of Casey's Creative Kitchens

Clean lines, practical design and earth-friendly products are important to kitchen consumers this season. Bamboo and lyptus wood cabinets finished with 100% water-based finishes appeal to people who are environmentally conscious. Cabinet colours are light earth tones or white with a glaze finish, but islands will stand out with cabinetry in a darker shade. Maximize storage space with cabinets that stretch to the ceiling and pull out racks in corner units. Laminates continue to evolve, with the newest countertops sporting a profiled edged that looks like real granite. For appliances, look for and larger, taller refrigerators and cool-touch cooktops.



Organization

Trend predictions by Henry Nieman of Neiman Market Design

Eliminate furniture in the bedroom by optimizing clothes storage in your reach-in or walk-in closet, using built-in dressers and adjustable shelves. Laminate is replacing wire for shelving and shoe racks. There is a trend to converting a spare bedroom into a dressing room, complete with built-in hampers, bearing driven belt and tie racks, and drawers fitted with jewelry inserts. A newer addition is the built-in ironing board, which slides out of the way when not in use. Look for high end finishing touches like oil rubbed bronze rods and drawer pulls, crown moulding and colour washes for cabinetry.

