

TRENDS IN PAINT AND INTERIOR DESIGN



Colours Toning Down. But Boundaries Being Broken

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In many ways, interior paint and design trends reflect the feelings most prevalent in our society. With uncertain economic conditions worldwide and concern for the environment, there will be a tendency towards toned-down, more secure colours in the year ahead.

Yet, the way these colours are applied and combined will reach new, extraordinary heights, says Dominique Pépin, marketing manager for Sico paints and a chair holder of the international forecaster, Colour Marketing Group.

“It has been a succession of bad news in past years, so people will be more attracted to secure colours because they can last long in your home décor and they make you feel good ... but they won’t be boring colours. They will be very complex and rich.”

FRESH COLOUR TRENDS

Neutrals – colour-infused neutrals, that is – will remain the top sellers looking forward, she says. The leading neutral tones right now, and looking forward, are deeply gray inspired, ranging from cool and warm grays to industrial, charcoal grays. The movement is away from neutral beiges, but there still exists a preference for complex beiges, she says, but bronzed with yellow or towards earthy and tan browns. Nature-inspired greens work as neutrals too along with a variety of whites that provide a contemporary backdrop.

Along with calming neutrals dominating during uncertain times, there’s also a growing trend towards more vibrant, futuristic, and environmental colours, she says, representing optimism for the future.

Ongoing interest in environmental sustainability continues to make shades of green popular choices, says the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute. Hues of fern, palm, pine, and sage create a sense of outdoor friendliness, along with clear blue aqua or shades that represent sunrise or sunset, such as dusty purple, bronze metallics, and rosy red. A wide array of strong, deep purples, and pinks are back as well, Pépin says.

The desire to stay healthy – and for fresh,

ented way these colours are coming together. “With technology, all colours can be mixed together in ways you wouldn’t think of. There are really no more boundaries.”

She attributes the change to the World Wide Web, hi-tech gadgets, and virtual technologies which are blurring the line between reality and fantasy and giving rise to “endless possibilities” and “unexpected combinations.”

Looking forward to 2009 and beyond, consumers will begin combining neutrals, darks, and vibrant colours in a number of interesting ways to create any type of home environment. For example, vibrant greens, blues, or yellows can be combined with dark, industrial tones for a sophisticated, yet tranquil, feel; soft florals with lively colours for an eclectic looking room; or chalky whites, offset by strong purples and dark slate, for a futuristic yet romantic quality.

Michael Sanders, creative director for SceneCaster, an online home design tool, agrees that technology is spurring a whole new way of renovation and colour planning. Launched just last year, the site has already attracted two million registered users and is exploding in popularity because of its accessibility through social media sites such as Facebook.

The online community allows anyone to create and share detailed 3D scenes – down to square footage and exact dimensions – of any room in a home, through digital pictures and millions of 3D decorating options.

The site’s versatility and level of realism makes it a legitimate planning tool for any-



locally grown fruits and vegetables – is inspiring a range of vibrant colours. Bright citrus yellows, mango, and spicy orange, along with pumpkin orange and apple red as fall-inspired tones, are being used to provide a pop of colour in a child’s bedroom, kitchen, or in closets and pantry areas.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Another important emerging trend to take note of, Pépin says, is the unpreced-

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one's home renovation, Sanders says, or simply as a way to generate layout ideas. And because it's a worldwide community, an endless range of decorating styles and concepts are available to any user in any country – which will drive a more diverse range of consumer preferences looking forward, he says.

PLAYING IT SAFE?

As creative director, Sanders says he has a good sense of home renovation trends across the globe. Compared to Europe and Asia, Canadian homeowners remain somewhat conservative, but riskier than Americans, in colour selection and renovation preferences.

And that desire to play it safe is not likely to change soon, given the volatile markets and fear of recession. Although, there's been a surge in contemporary design trends in recent years, consumers in North America may revert back to more traditional styles and smaller scale renovations because they make better long-term, financial sense.

"When there's economic troubles, people tend to play it safe and shift back to more traditional stuff – putting in paneling, moldings, ceiling medallions, or investing in the architectural oomph of a house," he says. "Traditional styles generally tend to last longer and hold up better over time."

CONTEMPORARY KITCHEN & BATH

For now, however, Felicia Gimza, owner and interior design consultant at The Expert Touch Interiors, is seeing a greater tendency towards contemporary styled renovations and expects that to carry on into the next year.

Particularly, European-influenced kitchen renovations, with less cupboards and more open shelving, stainless steel, and colourful cabinetry, are leading the charge. "Traditional Canadian and American kitchens, with lots of wood, moulding, and that country feel we're used to, are falling by the wayside," Gimza says.

In bathrooms, especially master baths, homeowners are choosing more luxury and technology, she says. Televisions, fireplaces, and an array of furniture pieces, such as cushy chairs, are becoming common components.

Comfort and the spa phenomenon are

popular notions too. Gimza says big soaker tubs are being installed more often, along with showerheads with multiple jets or massaging abilities, or over-sized rainfall showerheads.

OPEN CONCEPT HOMES

As open-concept home designs dominate into the foreseeable future, kitchens will continue to have that casual, open air feel. That trend applies to all aspects of a home, as kitchens will open up more into multi-functional great rooms. Typical living room concepts are fading, she says, as homeowners want less formal, more casual entertainment spaces.

Open concept homes also mean consumers are focusing on one or two main colours for their walls, rather than multiple colours in multiple rooms. This movement, however, doesn't mean less variation on walls. Feature walls or accent walls are an increasingly popular design option these days, and evolving, Gimza says.

Great places for accent walls are behind fireplaces, behind beds, or behind toilets and sinks in a bathroom, she says. Accent walls typically act as a focal point in a room, highlighting, for example, an unusually shaped wall, dramatic artwork, or the best furniture. Feature walls are a great way to add a touch of colour, but the secret is to subtly complement a room's surroundings.

WALLPAPER'S BACK

Applying wallpaper is now a more popular way of accenting a wall. Malcolm Cooper, creative director, Blue Mountain Wallcoverings, says that wallpaper has experienced a re-emergence within the last year or so, especially with younger audiences.

"Wallpaper has been sort of overlooked over the last couple of generations, but now it's easy to apply, and it's seen as much more of a statement, almost like artwork on the wall," Cooper says.

For some time now, the perception has been that wallpaper is difficult to put up and especially difficult to take off. Paint has been more accepted because of its ease of application, but that's changing, says Cooper, thanks to new non-woven-based advancements.

Non-woven substrate fibres prevent tearing, allowing entire sheets to be removed easily in a single sweep, and no longer causing damage to underlying walls. The breathable, eco-friendly material can come pre-pasted and needs only to be wet to go up. It also appears more seamless giving the appearance of one continuous material and dries in hours, not days.

The material represents a huge step for the industry, he says, because it means wallpaper doesn't have to be thought of as permanent or inflexible compared to paint. It can now easily come down if a homeowner becomes dissatisfied with it.

Black and white and damask patterns are still established trends in wallpaper, but there's a leading movement towards more large print graphics, silhouettes, and bold colours. Flocked paper, a raised surface that looks and feels like velvet, is becoming quite popular, and reminiscent of the '70s. Retro wall imagery and personalized scenes can be incorporated into wallcoverings and are making a comeback as well, Cooper says. ◻

