

WINTER

home styles



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- Home decor trends for 2009
- Mini-makeover tips for your bath
- How to decorate for a good night's sleep
- Tips that brighten your dinner bash

Top 10 home decor trends for 2009

(ARA) — More and more Americans today are looking at their homes as a place of refuge in a stressful world of challenges and economic instability. Instead of going out to dinner or social events, they're cooing with their families. Now, more than ever, their homes need to be restful and soothing, yet stylish at the same time.

Interior designers and industry experts across the country have noted this trend as well, along with an increased focus on cost-consciousness as homeowners become more selective about how their money is spent.

Here are their top 10 home decor trends for 2009:

1. Color your world

Colors will literally be across the spectrum next year. On their Web site, the Pantone Color Institute forecasts lively colors and sophisticated, grounded hues with Fuchsia Red, Salmon Rose, Palace Blue, Lavender, Rose Dust and Vibrant Green predicted to be popular.

Andrea Volff, American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), believes strongly in "transforming an ordinary home into a living oasis" using neutrals, especially warm and cool grays, along with bold accent pieces. Deep shades of blue are in demand by customers of Jan Hubbard, ASID, and Candice Mathers, Allied Member of ASID, with Hubbard also noting a draw to spice, bison, toast and green/gold tones to create a warm ambience. On a brighter note, both Mathers and Susan Pantaleo, ASID, see yellow emerging as a very versatile color. Popping up in every shade from Sunlight to Dijon Mustard, Pantaleo



lauds yellow's attention-getting appeal and ability to add life to any room.

2. Light up your life

Because residential interiors are incorporating more intense paint colors — not only as accent walls, but throughout an entire room — more light is needed to properly illuminate a room. According to Jeff Dross, senior product manager of Kichler Lighting, lighting manufacturers will introduce chandeliers with more arms or multiple lights per arm, as well as pendants and wall-mounted fixtures that accept higher-wattage bulbs.

3. We've got you covered

Wall murals will continue

to be in high demand in 2009, according to Todd Imholte, president of www.MuralsYourWay.com a leader in the production of decorative wall murals for more than 35 years. "Wall murals are a very cost-effective way to completely transform the look of a room," says Imholte. "We recently introduced 90 new mural designs including bold graphic patterns, contemporary designs and murals inspired by nature such as birch trees and bamboo." Murals Your Way offers a gallery of more than 5,000 images, as well as the ability to personalize an existing gallery image or create a custom mural from a personal photo or artwork.

4. Establishing a pattern

In a press release distributed earlier this year,

Michelle Lamb — co-founder and chairman of Marketing Directions, Inc. and senior editor of "The Trend Curve" — stated that patterns are being constantly updated and reinvented. Some ways to keep them fresh include combining classic and contemporary styles in one piece; utilizing tiny, country patterns that include cable or patchwork; and trying distinctive materials, like foil, or embellishments that cluster and layer upon each other.

5. Comfort is key

Volff sees 2009 as being the year of comfort, with furniture that is comfortable and functional, yet still elegant. More and more people are interested in creating a personal refuge that is chic, peaceful, inviting and easy to maintain so that they can relax

and unwind at the end of a busy day in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

6. Wood is good

According to Kathy Peterson — celebrity design expert and co-host of Lifetime TV's "The Balancing Act" — wood flooring is blending into an eclectic mix of wood tones. She also forecasts hardwood wall coverings (wood, resin, metals) with seamless panels of custom designs becoming focal points of a room. Dross echoes the popularity of wood throughout the home, seeing floors, walls, ceilings (beadboard) and furniture incorporating wood at their center.

7. Shining stars

Metals will continue to shine next year, according to Lamb. She envisions them being translated into modern metallic finishes and textures that create a sense of visual excitement and high energy. Particularly noteworthy are platinum, dark silver, rose golds and copper, and colorful metallics.

8. Hooray for hollywood

Carmen Natschke — editor of "The Decorating Diva" — sees a revival of "Hollywood Regency." According to her Web site, this style is "glamorous, classy and elegant, composed of an eclectic mix of styles like Neo-Classical,

Asian, Baroque and Art Deco; sumptuous and luxury fabrics, shimmering finishes, mirrored furniture, chinoiserie, bamboo and lacquered furniture; bold color, clean lines and beautiful symmetry."

9. Embrace the outdoors

Seamless transitions from indoor to outdoor space are envisioned by Pantaleo, who says the most successful outdoor spaces will be an extension of the home's interior style and color scheme. Using nature as a backdrop, she suggests pulling colors from adjacent rooms to maintain a visual connection. She also recommends accessorizing gourmet cook centers and plasma televisions with weather-resistant chandeliers, rugs and artwork to create a cozy, appealing and relaxed ambience.

10. Go green

Eco-friendly products will continue to be in demand by today's energy-conscious and environmentally-aware consumers. McKinley Adams, Allied member of ASID, predicts consumers will be interested in sustainable building materials that may cost a bit more up front, but will save money in the long run.

He also sees a surge of interest in vintage furnishings for inside the home, while Mathers anticipates increased use of brass cloth and natural Sisal finishes.

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Lowering home-lighting costs

(NAPSI) — Taking a few steps to cut the cost of lighting your home could be a bright idea. In fact, about 20 percent of most Americans' electricity bill goes toward lighting the home, according to the U.S. Energy Star Web site.

That means a few simple tips could save you some green:

Time to save

Using automatic timers on lamps helps ensure the lights are out when no one's home. You can find the timers, which simply plug into the

wall and have sockets that lamps plug into — at most hardware stores for less than \$10.

Get back to nature

Find ways to use natural light in your home. For instance, adding an Energy Star-qualified ODL Tubular Skylight in a room lets sunshine in and could help cut energy costs. ODL also offers a Solar Powered Dimmer for the skylight, which requires no hard wiring.

The dimmer provides complete control over the amount of natural light you allow into the home and lets homeowners

install skylights in new areas of the house — such as bedrooms, living rooms, nurseries and media rooms — where an abundance of light isn't always ideal. The three-button remote control gives the user control over the dimmer. The shade dimmer is powered by rechargeable batteries, which are charged by an attached solar panel located in the skylight tube. The dimmer also provides two LED night-lights that the user can turn on and off with the remote.

You can purchase a combination kit that includes the dimmer and a 10-inch tubu-

lar skylight to give you energy-efficient, cost-reducing light control, day or night.

Better bulbs

Energy Star-qualified lightbulbs require about 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and they last up to 10 times longer. Plus, homeowners could save about \$30 in electricity costs over each bulb's lifetime.

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Stretching your family's Dollar around the home

(NAPSI) — If you're tired of seeing your hard-earned cash eaten up by rising household expenses, remember the saying "Sometimes you have to spend money to save money." Making a few wise purchases now can fatten your pocketbook in the long term — from adjusting heating and cooling systems to switching to soft water so your washing machine and clothing will last longer.

The typical U.S. family spends \$1,600 per year on home utility bills, with 45 percent of the bill going to heating and cooling, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Ensure your home has an energy-efficient system. Programmable thermostats alone can slice 5 to 30 percent off heating/cooling costs.

Did you know that the type of water you use can impact how long your washing machine will last? The American Water Works Association found that washing machines using "hard" water wear out up to 30 percent faster than machines using

soft water. Hard water also causes the clothes to wear out 15 percent faster than if they were washed in softened water.

Investing in a water softening unit will reduce wear and tear on both your washer and your clothing by reducing the "hard" minerals in a home's water system. Inside the softener, salt pellets are used to charge thousands of tiny resin beads with sodium ions. As hard water moves over the beads, the minerals are replaced with sodium ions, creating "soft" water. Using a high-quality salt product such as Diamond Crystal® water-conditioning salt and keeping the salt level at least half full will ensure optimum efficiency.

And speaking of water, about 90 percent of the energy used for washing clothes is from heating the water. Use special laundry detergents made for cold water. If you switch to an Energy Star-rated washer, you can clean clothes using 50 percent less energy than a standard washer.

In the bath, look for fixtures that bear the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense® label. You can save as much as 4,000 gallons of water per year by installing a water-conserving toilet, and some showerhead models allow you to save more than 8,000 gallons of water per year.

Using new lighting technologies can also reduce your

home's lighting energy use by 50 to 75 percent.

Compact fluorescent bulbs are four times more efficient, and outdoor lights with photocells or motion sensors also save energy.

You can learn more from the experts at the U.S. Department of Energy at www.eere.energy.gov and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov.

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