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Articles

Designs for a new decade

(ARA) - During unsettling economic times, people tend to get "back to basics" by cocooning more with their families, avoiding high-ticket expenditures and looking for ways to repurpose and re-use existing items. Next year's home decorating trends clearly reflect this comfort-focused and cost-conscious mentality by emphasizing soothing color palettes, natural materials, environmentally friendly products, and "old made new again" furnishings, wall murals and textiles.

Leading trend experts and interior designers across the country offer these top home decor trends for 2010:

Color our world

Ask almost any designer, and you'll hear that gray is the "new brown." According to Kenneth Ludwig of Kenneth Ludwig Home Furnishings, Ltd., gray mixes well with brown, taupe, light lilac, light green and yellow, and many wood furnishes now have a gray wash or gray undertone added to them. He also predicts the resilience of such strong hues as bright orange, bright green and magenta.

Designer Andrea Volf sees color being used to bring comfort, harmony and serenity home. She envisions silver gray, lilac, purples and off-white being especially popular in 2010. Inspired by the fashion industry, Jessica Henn of Crusiet Corporation also notes endless possibilities of metallic bronze, gold and silver accented with berry rich colors like plum and red-based purples for interior designs.

Let there be light

For the past few years, consumers have opted for ultra energy-efficient LED lighting as a way to save money on energy-related costs and make their homes more environmentally friendly. LED lighting will continue to build in momentum, according to Jeff Dross, senior product manager of Kichler Lighting, whose LED under-cabinet fixtures and LED rail lights will take "being green" to a higher, more stylish level.

Dross also sees homeowners making big statements with simple changes, by investing in eye-catching lighting fixtures such as elongated linear chandeliers that complement rectangle-shaped dining room tables, kitchen islands and the long farmhouse kitchen tables currently in vogue.

Add "wow" to walls

Due to their versatility and affordability, wall murals will continue to be a popular way to transform the look and feel of any room in the house. Todd Imholte, president of www.MuralsYourWay.com, has seen a surge in orders over the past year, fueled by economic conditions that have inspired consumers to use decorative wall murals as a cost-effective way to give their living areas a fresh look. These relatively small changes can make huge, personal statements in living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and home offices. Imholte envisions bold geometric patterns, edgy, urban graphics and Asian-inspired prints being especially hot in 2010, with nature and travel scenes remaining perennial favorites.



The fabric of our lives

Textiles will take their cues from natural materials such as felt, cork and even tree bark, predicts Henn. Pattern on pattern will be increasingly popular, with homeowners intentionally mismatching products to allow endless possibilities of blends and textures. Mary Lou Kalmus of Designing Edge, also sees more fabrics combining durability with style - once relegated to crushable chenille and fragile silks - as they become more available in manmade and natural fabrics for use in upholstery and drapery-weight materials.

Fabrics will host a "big party" of large graphic prints and floral patterns this year, adds design expert, TV host/spokesperson and best-selling author Kathy Peterson. She sees dark navy backgrounds mixed with bold patterns in lavender, mint green and sea foam, as well as plum backgrounds mixed with strong floral patterns in red and pink. Turquoise mixed with tangerine will also be trendy.

Fun, functional furniture

Linda Navara of LMR Designs sees furniture being comfortable and functional, yet elegant - reflecting consumers' continued need for a refuge in which to relax and escape their busy lives. Furnishings will be a more eclectic mix of neo-classic, Asian and art deco styles, by incorporating mirrored furniture, chinoiserie, bamboo, and vintage furniture. Ludwig also sees a juxtaposition of old-world formal and casual lifestyle with refurbished European overstuffed club chairs, arm chairs, two-seater settees and ottomans showing up everywhere from cottages and country homes to urban lofts.

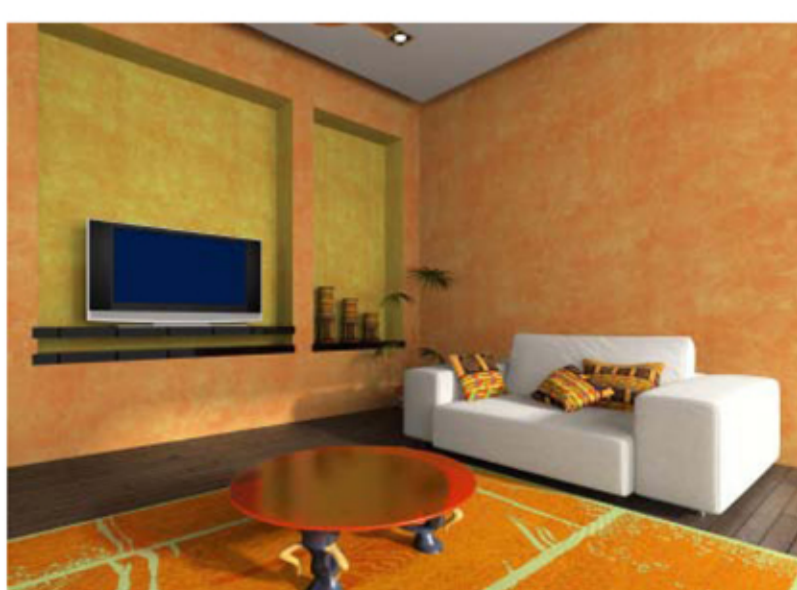
Transitional to contemporary collections will still dominate in 2010, according to Adele Lampert of Page One Interiors. Maple and alder will remain popular cost-efficient wood choices, with bamboo appealing to environmentally-conscious consumers. Clean lines and classic style will be in; excessive ornamentation will be out.

Go for the green

Unlike Kermit the Frog's song, it is easy being green as more and more Americans are turning to eco-friendly design options. Everything has been going "eco" as more attention is drawn to "green" products, adds Kalmus. She envisions design leaning toward nature in the use of sustainable products such as bamboo, as well as fresh products introduced using recycled glass, reclaimed wood and manufacturing byproducts. Henn also sees a trend toward "eco luxury," blending sophisticated products with environmental benefits to create an air of elegant sustainability.

Au naturel

Ludwig predicts increased interest in repurposing items found in nature, such as using bleached-out branches as art sculptures, an old worn tree stump as a coffee table base or a console table and teak branches assembled as a screen or room divider. He also foresees baskets, bowls and planters made from blocks or chunks of unusual woods.



Radical rugs

Echoing the trend in fabrics, Peterson envisions rugs inspired with outrageously large graphics and bold combinations of colors such as aqua, lime, medium greens and white. Due to the ongoing popularity of hardwood floors, Dross also sees a comeback in area rugs, with heavily patterned rugs with bold prints and geometric patterns becoming the focus point of many living rooms.

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