

Interior Design Trends
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When I think about decorating trends today, several things come to mind. I see more and more people staying in their homes longer and investing in upgrading what they have and to make their home adapt to their changing lifestyle. Clients are replacing windows, trim, baseboards and adding cove moldings to the ceiling. They are removing carpet and exposing or installing hardwood floors. Faux paint finishes on the walls are replacing wallpapers, especially in bathrooms.

In the past most clients were decidedly traditional: Queen Ann, cherry wood, polished and purposeful *or* very contemporary: modern, clean lines, austere *or* country collectable: cluttered, cutesy and charming. Now I enjoy working with clients wanting to mix the best of all these styles. Antiques, collectables and mid-century modern working together and creating an eclectic look can be enjoyed in a timeless and less trendy way.

Today's biggest trend is more than a passing fad. The buzz of building green, eco friendly, sustainable design is everywhere you turn. T V programs, newspapers, magazines, books, conferences and expo centers are all devoting time, energy and space to the idea: *You* can make a difference in how to live your everyday life and how it impacts the planet you live on. As you become more aware of the environment, look around your home, do you see areas that need attention? What will be your next remodeling project? How will you proceed, knowing that when you upgrade, it will produce waste and things you no longer need? Where will the debris go? And the items you select to replace the worn out, no longer needed, where will they come from? How are they made? What resources are used to produce the item? This is the first step to being green. That is: *To become aware.*

For example: You have grown tired of your dated 1970's kitchen. The hardware is pitted; there is a build-up of scum or missing finish on the cabinets, some of the drawers are don't close properly, the counter tops are scratched and stained. Cabinets can easily be repurposed. Meaning they could become extra storage in the basement, garage or craft room. Another option is to add wood veneers to existing "boxes" along with new doors, drawers, and hardware to create an updated look for a fraction of the cost of new cabinets. Local non-profits, such as Building Hope, will take your unwanted, but salvageable cabinets (and other building materials). You are doing your part to keep your cabinets out of the land fill, helping a non-profit and getting a tax write off for doing it!

Recycled content paper, glass or granite chips incorporated into a concrete like binder, are popular options for countertops. Use low or no VOC (volatile organic

compounds-bad for your health) paints and finishes. Renewable or sustainable flooring: cork, bamboo, or linoleum are becoming more available and priced competitively with traditional vinyl options. Replace inefficient appliances with Energy Star Appliances, standards set by the US Department of Energy. "If just one in 10 homes used Energy Star qualified appliances, the change would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees". WOW!!

REMEMBER TO: REUSE, REDUCE AND RECYCLE

- Ask yourself: "Could someone else need this or uses this?" Before you throw it away
- Purchase quality, long lasting, durable products and appliances
- Look for recycled or sustainable content products: flooring, countertops, fabrics, wallpaper
- Request FSC-Forest Stewardship Council wood and paper products, This is a nonprofit organization that certifies the products produced are from responsibly managed forests
- Buy locally. How much fossil fuel is used to get the product to you?
- Consider adaptive reuse – Antiques, re-upholster furniture, repurposed items
- Use lighting and natural light more efficiently. Turn lights off when you aren't using them. Use compact florescent bulbs, LED (light emitting diodes), dimmer switches on incandescent bulbs or install light tubes
- Use low or no VOC paints and finishes
- Turn off and/or unplug appliances and computers when not in use. They are phantom energy eaters
- Use earth friendly /non-toxic cleaning products
- Bring fresh air into your home or business
- Buy carbon offsets, contribute to groups that plant trees or invest in renewable energy-a voluntary tax to make up for the fossil fuels we consume

Interior design trends today are easily incorporated into our everyday living. Weather it is to repurpose an existing piece of furniture or to bring fresh air and natural light into your home. By becoming more *eco-friendly*, you are doing your part to reduce energy consumption and your carbon footprint. This in turn reduces global warming, conserves our finite natural resources and saves you money by using less energy. When choosing to work with Erin O'Brien and Erin Designs, LLC, together you can create beautiful, healthier, greener places to live and work.