

Profiles of **SUCCESS** in Home Design

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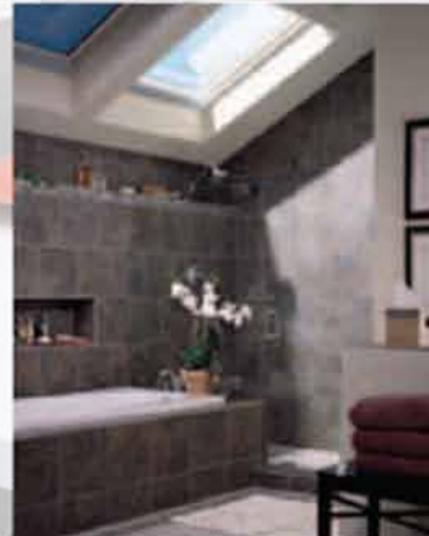
Enjoy Your Patio
Modern Vanities
A Swimming Pool
Update Your Cabinets
Flip the Lighting Switch
Returning to Authenticity

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People Returning to Authenticity

People want the real deal rather than an imitation. Handcrafted items, natural foods, and other products that provide comfort and charm are in demand. And it appears many people aren't afraid to pay a premium to be pampered. How else can you explain drinking \$4 lattes every day?

We want authenticity in our food, relationships, the stores at which we shop, and even our TV programs. We also want natural, long-lasting building products that bring warmth and creature comforts to our dwellings. Hardwood or pine floors are preferred over linoleum; ceramic tile bath tubs or showers versus fiberglass inserts; and granite countertops instead of laminate. Windows and patio doors also offer us choices in authenticity: wood versus man-made materials; all-metal or bronze handles and locks rather than brass plated. These "luxuries" also help sell a home faster and for more money because buyers see value in them.

"When people are building a home for the last time, what they really crave are authentic materials," said Richard Sammons, AIA, architect with Fairfax & Sammons Architects in New York. "They want something real, nothing fake. Natural materials age well," he continued. "Most modern materials

like PVC tend to get dirty rather than weather beautifully like wood or brick. There are certain reasons why things were done the way they were — it works." Historic buildings and today's authentic homes incorporate products with more subtleties and dimension than their faux counterparts. Clapboard siding is thicker than vinyl siding and has a slight bead on the end that prevents splintering. Real brick has discolorations and texture unlike brick veneers. Wood windows have sloped sills and stepped profiles that bring character to

a home's design. They also often have thicker, sturdier frames and sashes. It's hard to beat the look and character of true wood windows," said Jeff Williams, senior brand manager-architectural marketing, of Weather Shield Windows & Doors, a leading window manufacturer. "Wood windows offer interior and exterior traditional design qualities, structural integrity, and authenticity." Windows can be made from a variety of wood species, including pine, maple, and oak, mahogany, cherry or alder, creating a custom-made look for

a home's interior. Now you can match windows to the rest of the woodwork in your home — those built-in cherry bookshelves can butt right up to the cherry windows without disrupting the interior design or sight lines. Wood windows need regular maintenance to protect them over time. Manufacturers can cover the exterior frame and sash with extruded aluminum cladding to reduce the need for this maintenance while preserving the exterior and interior character of wood windows. This thin layer of high-gauge aluminum bonds tightly to the outside

window frame, keeping out the weather that deteriorates the wood. Many manufacturers pre-finish this aluminum cladding in virtually any color in a durable, baked-on finish that will last. "Aluminum clad windows keep all the desirable features of all-wood windows while cutting down on maintenance," Williams said. "Today's busy homeowners don't have to compromise authenticity to have low maintenance windows and patio doors." One of the best features of wood is its sustainability. In the event of a mishap, broken glass can be re-glazed in wood

windows. Nicks and scratches can be filled and sanded. That's not the case with many man-made material types. In many circumstances, if a window of material other than wood is damaged, it has to be replaced. Wood windows and other natural building products contribute to the authenticity of our homes. If we're not authentic at home, where can we be? To learn more about wood windows and doors, visit Weather Shield's Web site at weathershield.com, or the Window and Door Manufacturers Association Web site at www.wdma.com. MS



Windows can be made from a variety of wood species to create a custom-made look for a home's interior.

Update Your Kitchen Cabinets Without Losing Your Shirt

Your cabinets are the focal point of your kitchen. They set the style and create the mood. When you want to update that style or are just ready for a “new look,” you have two choices – remodeling or refinishing.

According to Remodeling Magazine, the average cost to remodel an upscale kitchen is over \$68,000. For a mid-range job the average cost is roughly \$43,000. For most people, these costs are too high and discouraging.

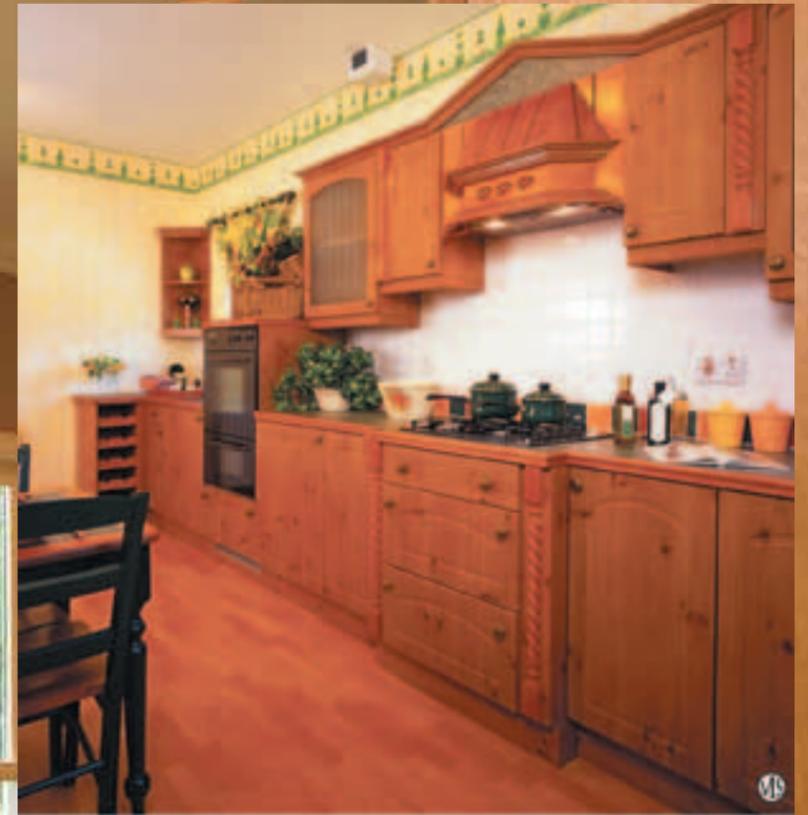
However, there is a more cost-effective method according to Eric Chaimberg of Swing Paints, “If your kitchen is in good condition, you can simply transform it by refinishing your cabinets and changing the countertops. This is the most economical solution for anyone looking for an updated look. Plus, refinishing also means a minimal disruption to your daily life with less mess and no damage to your walls and floors.

Twenty years ago, if you wanted a professionally stained finish for your cabinets, you either had to be a professional yourself or look to hire one. Today there are finishing gels that even a novice do-it-yourselfer can easily apply with outstanding results. There is no mixing needed, no matching, just straight out of the can. And, if you choose a similar or darker colour as your existing cabinets, you won't even have to strip them down

to the bare wood.

Chaimberg recommends Circa 1850 Stain'n Varnish, a unique product that combines the penetration of a wood stain with the protective qualities of a hand rubbed varnish — all in one easy to use gel.

“You no longer have to stain your wood, wait till it dries, then apply the finish,” said Chaimberg. “You can now do both in one quick and easy step. The first coat is simply



wiped on with a rag. There's no need to sand, simply let it dry 12-24 hours.”

Applying additional hand-rubbed coats will deepen the colour and add more protection, added Chaimberg. “Or you can use Circa 1850 Antique Paste Varnish as the second coat to get the added protection without changing the colour.”

Because Circa1850 Stain'n Varnish is a gel, it can be applied to any type of cabinet surface: wood, plastic, metal, masonite, composite, etc. In fact, it is the best way to give non-wood surfaces, such as embossed composite doors, the look of real wood.

Besides ease of use and a consistent finish, Circa 1850 Stain'n Varnish can also offer a new colour dimension to the finishing spectrum with grain highlighting. “You can take any kind of wood — oak, cherry, whatever — and finish it in forest green, emerald and steel blue or even black cherry,” added Chaimberg. “That's something you just can't do with anything else. And because it is transparent, a thin coat of a contrasting colour over an existing colour can be used to give wood an antique, distressed, or faux-finish.” For more information or tips on finishing your cabinets visit www.circa1850.com. SW

First Impressions: The Fabric of Good Design



Designers suggest that you'll enjoy for years fabrics and furnishings reminiscent of fine period design. A simulated 18th-century pattern on the comforter — Ashton Peony from The Age of Exploration introduced by Waverly in collaboration with Williamsburg — reverses to Peyton Ikat and is punctuated by a sham and bedskirt in Palmer Stripe.

When choosing fabrics for your home, are first impressions best?

“Your first instinct is an important factor when selecting any furnishings,” says Robyn Singer, co-owner of Interior Concepts, New York City, “but not an absolute rule. If you like the colors and texture of a fabric, but are not sure of the pattern, try living with a large piece. Should the design’s visual weight and color fit, the fabric will most likely enhance the space.”

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“When a room is already decorated,” notes Patricia Wood of Patricia Wood & Co., Harbor Springs, Michigan, “color is the most important consideration. The impact of the new pattern on others is immaterial if the color is off.” Colors in a

collection like The Age of Exploration, introduced by Waverly for Williamsburg, provide a comprehensive choice — raspberry, porcelain and paprika to mist/espresso.

Both designers find that most people soon tire of trendy, short-sighted, wild styles. But some patterns intrigue home decorators for years.

“Long-lasting patterns are usually based on period design,” says Singer, noting Arts & Crafts, Victorian or 18th-century styles as examples. Wood agrees. “If you’re not sure what good design is, examine antique patterns in books and museums,” she suggests. The Age of Exploration collection celebrates 18th-century decorative arts with patterns such as Portsmouth Pineapple, showcasing a fruit that represents a symbol of hospitality, or Geddy House Damask, inspired by

a brocade from the Colonial Williamsburg archives. Brands, such as Waverly, coordinate patterns in fabric collections and home fashions for you. Wood explains how pattern mixing works. “Coordinating stripes and checks finish and frame a primary pattern on a pillow, comforter or upholstered piece and help relate all the motifs in a room.” However, she warns, “If you’re doing it yourself, take care to alternate pattern scale.” Enhance a grand floral with a mini check and moderate plaid, for example. Singer points out that coordinates can also sharpen or diminish the drama of a bold pattern.

She adds, “Remember that rooms need a certain flow between them, so make sure you carry through the patterns in your home, accordingly.” For more information about Waverly, visit www.waverly.com MS

Five Easy Acrylic Block Home Renovation Projects

1 Eager to change the mood of your kitchen or add more privacy to your bathroom? The experts at Hy-Lite Products have compiled five easy remodeling projects that can both change the look of your home and add more value to your property.

Made from durable blocks and pre-fabricated into frames at the manufacturer, acrylic block products come ready for fast and easy installation. The obscure blocks allow in natural sunlight, but prevent full views so that privacy is guaranteed.

2 Replace a fixed, non-operating window with an easy-to-operate crank-out casement or awning window. These windows allow natural air flow into your home while protecting your privacy.

3 Use panels of acrylic blocks to create room dividers that can provide private areas for home offices, studying, crafts projects or a home gym.

4 Gain more privacy in your bathroom by installing a large acrylic block picture window over your bathtub area. The obscurity of the blocks prevents people from seeing into the bathroom but still allows light to brighten your bathroom.

5 Increase the flow of light throughout your home by adding acrylic block door inserts into interior doors. Captured light flows through these stylish inserts to brighten the home while

the obscurity of the blocks offers privacy in every room.

Replace your outdated shower with a contemporary styled walk-in shower. Sturdy acrylic block radius shower walls provide support and privacy. The obscure blocks allow light into the shower but prevent people from seeing in. The no-threshold shower eliminates trip hazards and makes access to the shower easy.

Stylish block patterns for renovation projects using Hy-Lite acrylic blocks include clear wave, cross rib and frosted wave. Choose from

clear, frosted, pale green, blue, rose or peach colored blocks. A specially-developed caulk between the blocks resists mold and mildew, making the pieces ideal for use in high humidity areas of the home.

Low maintenance acrylic block windows, panels and partitions are strong and durable. Special interior and exterior glazing tightly seals both sides of each unit, making it energy efficient and perfect for use in showers. For more information visit www.Hy-Lite.com. MS

This picture window made of acrylic blocks allows light to flow into the bathroom while protecting the privacy of homeowners.



Choosing Your Dining Room Table

by: Eugene Allee

When you are shopping for a dining room table to fit with your preexisting furniture, there are some important things you should look for and keep in mind. These tips are great for narrowing down your selection and helping you decide on things such as design, colors, practical or not practical, and much more. Maybe you are looking for a formal table to go in your formal dining room. Perhaps you want a regular table that will fit by the window in the kitchen. A table can be used for so many things, and you will want to consider all that there is to consider about your table before you take the plunge and purchase the first one that you see. Whether you are buying all new furniture, or just wanting to give your dining room a face-lift with a new table, these tips will help keep you on track.

While you are shopping for dining room tables, having a specific design in mind, which you are looking for will help you out a lot. This will help narrow down your search for that perfect table to set off your room and make it more comfortable. Keeping in mind the design feel you are planning for the room, whether it is modern, contemporary, antique or anything else. Try to stay away from designs you want to avoid.

You will find that dining room tables come in all colors of wood finishes. These colors range from pecan, oak, cherry and many more. Knowing the color of the wood finish you want before you begin your search is a good step in the right direction. If you have other wood pieces in the room, try sticking with the same color for the best overall effect. Maybe you want to choose the wood table and then the other pieces of furniture for the room. You can

do that as well. You will have a nice base piece, and can incorporate other pieces into the room, as you come across ones that you love. Maybe a matching china cabinet, or buffet for the empty wall under the window.

Do you know what size table you need? Because dining room tables come in so many sizes, from small to large, you really should take measurements of your space before shopping and know what size of table your room can accommodate. Besides, if you

fell in love with a table that is too large, it might break your heart having to return it to the store because you do not have enough room. Jot down your measurements, and be sure you take them with you when you shop.

Do you want a table that is practical or a “wow” factor in the room? Because dining room tables are so versatile, you will find while shopping there are many of both kinds. From the conversational piece, to the plain Jane table that is mostly for use.

Knowing the extreme you want your table beforehand is an excellent idea, and will keep you from looking at the “wow” tables, when you want practical instead.

Think about the uses you will get out of your new table. Because dining room tables can be used for more than just eating on, you may be thinking about a table that can come in handy for a poker game or board games with the family. Thinking about these things before you go shopping you will help you when you are looking around

for what you want. You will also go in knowing what you want in advance.

Glass top dining room tables can come in several designs and suit many needs. Decide ahead of time if a glass top table is something you find appealing. If not, you will know to avoid looking at those, and stick with the wood tops.

Because dining room tables are so versatile, and come in so many design ranges, unfortunately, so does the price. Know how much money you want to spend on your table before you go shopping. This way you can stay in your price range, and choose accordingly. If you set your budget ahead of time, and you stick with it, you will feel good knowing you did.

If you prefer wood over metal, or metal over wood, then shopping for the appropriate style of table won't be so hard. Because dining room tables come in both, you are given a nice variety to choose from. If most of the pieces in the room are metal, stick with metal and go with the theme. Besides, you don't want your new table to stick out like a sore thumb.

If you have small children and or pets, this could effect which dining room tables you have to choose from. With small children and pets in your home, avoid tables that have sharp corners and that can be broken or scratched easily. You want your children and pets to feel comfortable in your home, so taking these things into consideration before hand might save you from worrying about them injuring themselves later.

Dining room tables are great pieces of furniture. They are versatile, affordable, gorgeous, practical and numerous. Deciding which one to buy is just as much fun as it is shopping for one. When you go shopping knowing what you are looking for ahead of time, it makes finding the perfect one so much easier. Taking all of the above points into consideration before you begin your hunt, will help you narrow down your selection and make a good choice for your dining room.

Modern Vanities and Other Bathroom Furniture

by: Osmundo Bernabe

Over the last decade or so, bathrooms have evolved from functional rooms to sanctuaries within our homes. As a result, there has been a boom of options for every aspect of the bathroom from the cabinetry to the toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, and more. The entire bathroom has evolved and it is truly a beautiful thing.

The vanities of days long past were excellent places for women to prepare for the day; offering one convenient place where women could brush or comb their hair, apply makeup, or even dress. The vanity was a focal point for the bedroom or washroom and had a very specific yet important purpose. This, of course, holds true for the vanities of today. However, today's vanities aren't reserved for women alone.

Vanities are no longer simple staples of a room; today's vanities are often incorporated into the overall design of the room. People tend to choose bathroom designs that are not only functional and practical but beautiful as well. Bathrooms are no longer the red-headed stepchildren of design there are designers that make their fortunes alone on bathrooms.

People want bathrooms that reflect their personal styles or encourage a particular mood or atmosphere. When selecting your bathroom vanity, keep

in mind the overall design you are hoping to achieve within the room and make sure the vanity you select will either accommodate or enhance that general theme.

When choosing furniture for your bathroom there are a few things you absolutely must consider and the first and foremost among those is space. How much us-

able floor space is your bathroom really going to have? It might be best to go with minimal furniture if you are short on space and opt for shelves and things that do not require a great amount of actual floor space.

The other consideration is function. How much furniture, shelving, or cabinet space do you really need? If your bathroom is small,

can hair styling and makeup be done elsewhere? What absolutely must be kept in the bathroom and what absolutely can't be accomplished elsewhere? There are many modern vanities available to the discerning consumer be sure to choose one that will fit the room as well as the décor of the room you are trying to create.



Kick Your Compost Up A Notch

“Secret” Ingredient Transforms Compost into Gardening Powerhouse

It's a rare recipe that can't be improved with a little spice. That's true whether you're talking about elaborate meals prepared by gourmet chefs — or well-conditioned soil prepared by gardeners.

The most successful gardeners have discovered that using compost is a tried-and-true method for growing healthy plants. It doesn't matter whether it's cultivated in a bin made from chicken wire or plastic, or simply piled in a backyard heap; compost encourages lush, green growth, and provides both short- and long-term benefits to the soil.

What many people don't know is that it's possible to make compost even more effective. Traditional compost, made up of organic matter like lawn and garden debris and fruit and vegetable peelings, is a gardening workhorse. But when it's combined with peat moss — the “spice” in this recipe — compost transforms into a rich, dark and vibrant “black gold,” pumping up the beneficial properties of this already valuable horticultural helper. Add a one-inch layer of peat moss to every four inches of material you add to your compost bin. This speeds up the composting process, reducing odors in the process. The peat moss traps the foul-smelling material and turns it

into a beneficial nutrient that would escape without the peat moss.

Peat moss can also improve the effectiveness of compost when you add it to the garden. Spread one to two inches of both peat moss and compost over your garden, then dig it into the top six to eight inches of soil. The benefits of this combination reveal themselves both immediately and over time. It counteracts compost's tendency to compact, loosening the soil and allowing water and oxygen to flow to a plant's roots. And peat's higher acidity helps balance compost's low acidity, resulting in a pH level that works well for most plants. Also, because compost breaks down after

only a few months, the longer-lasting peat helps balance the faster-decomposing compost. The longer organic matter stays in the soil, the more good it does.

You'll also save time and money by cutting down on the amount of water and fertilizer a garden needs. Peat moss retains up to 20 times its weight in moisture, and releases water slowly as plants need it, so you won't need to water as frequently. It also releases nutrients into the soil over time, reducing the amount of fertilizer you'll need to use.

Using compost by itself is a proven gardening technique. But adding peat to the mix is the spice that will ensure

richer soil and improved growing conditions for healthier, happier plants — a kicked-up addition to any gardener's backyard recipe.

For more information about peat moss, visit www.peatmoss.com or e-mail the CSPMA at cspma@peatmoss.com.

The Canadian peat industry is committed to making peat moss a sustainable resource. Only one acre in every 6,000 is harvested, and when harvesting stops, the bogs are restored to functioning peatlands. For more information on peat and the environment, visit the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association's Web site at www.peatmoss.com. MS

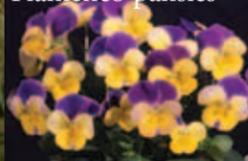


Dig one inch of both peat moss and compost into the garden for a healthy, nutrient-rich soil.



Pansies Create a Riot of Smiling Colorful Faces

Flamenco pansies



Big Shot pansies



For instant gratification and color and easy care, you can't go wrong with all the colors and varieties of pansies. They are easy to plant and can liven up an area that may need some great flower performers, such as around the base of a tree, or in front of your garden's green plants, or in a container.

Pansies that Fernlea Flowers have introduced from Europe throughout North America, adding new colors every year, include these three unique fanciful varieties:

Big Shot Pansies are the world's biggest pansies. They can be planted as soon as the soil is ready for digging. Also, Big Shots are hardy, as they will withstand, in those colder climates, the recurring frosts that are associ-

ated with early spring or fall weather. Colors range from white, wine, blue and yellow with a dark faced center.

Flamenco Pansies look like they are ready to dance up a storm with their ruffled petals and bright colors. Their colors range from Pastel and Grape Shades to Blue Lace, Garnet and Yellow.

Hot Chilly Pansies are a hardy and keen flower wanting to please you by blooming and lasting through the hottest and coldest temperatures. There are a wide variety of shades offered; all have exciting, contrasting faces in various shades of yellow and purple, pink, white and blue.

And remember, yellow pansies are the brightest color that you can see from a distance or for that dark corner in your garden that needs some livening up. They mix well with your early bloomers like tulips and daffodils. More information on garden layouts and mixing colors is available online at www.fernlea.com. MS