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Party Pizzazz

Spicy Spaces

What's Hot in the Home

Home Decorating Trends

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New Durable Enviro-friendly Paint Solution For Wall Marks and Scuffs

Home décor tips

Your poor walls can sure take a beating, especially if you have children. First, they absorbed the pounding and scraping when you moved into your home. Then there were the smacks and slaps from the soccer and footballs, followed by the endless smearing of dirty, greasy hands.

Yet, fixing unsightly marks and surface imperfections on your walls doesn't have to be the ordeal that you think it's going to be. Some of the better paint products these days can actually do the job by themselves.

"You need to choose a paint that has a track record for durability," says Dominique Pépin, member of the Color Marketing

Group and Senior Brand Manager at Sico Paints. "But most of all choose one that gives you the maximum impact according to the use of the room. Our silky gloss Sico Shantung paint is not only easy to apply, its rich finish is actually washable as well as scrubbable."

Pépin explains that Sico Shantung is specifically designed for the home's high-traffic areas. Beautifully durable, it retains its fresh look even with repeated

washing. And starting this year, this and all paint products from the Sico Design line are now VOC (volatile organic compound) emission-free formulated.

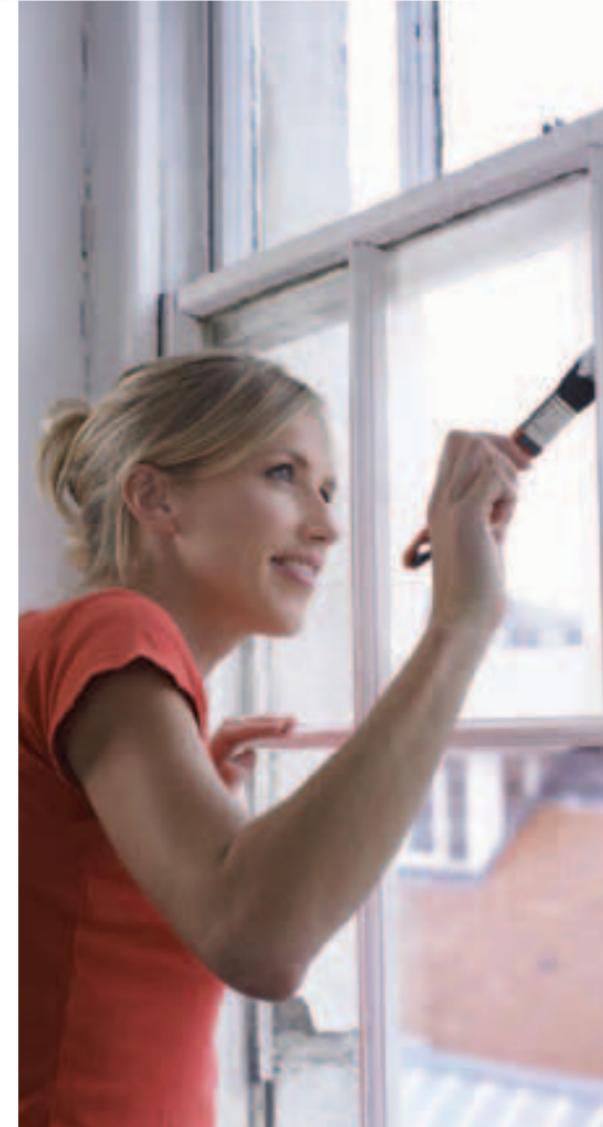
VOCs are atmospheric pollutants that, among other things, contribute to the formation of smog. They evaporate at room

temperature and react in sunlight to help form ground-level ozone, an integral component of smog and a harmful pollutant. Smog can cause respiratory complications, skin and eye irritation, headaches, nausea, tightness of chest, coughing, muscle weakness, and more serious ailments and diseases.

"While recent legislation requires paint companies to lower the VOC levels in their products, Sico has taken the lead in completely eliminating VOCs in the formulas of our Design line products to reinforce our commitment to the environment and to Canadian consumers, who are increasingly seeking out green alternatives," said Pépin.

Available in all of Sico's design finishes - including Cashmere, Chamois, and Shantung - the new zero-VOC paint is high in performance, so consumers do not have to compromise on quality when making environmentally-responsible paint choices, she explained.

Sico Shantung is made with a technology using self-coalescing and crosslinking polymers. This means it's great for high-traffic rooms like playrooms and children's bedrooms. Pépin especially recommends it for hallways, doors and trims. More tips and advice on colour and décor trends is available at sico.ca. N/C



What's Hot In The Home

by Mary Dobson,

*W*hat's popular one year becomes old hat next year. In fashion, in movies, in food, in music and, of course, in home decor. As a decorator and home economist and frequent guest on Citytv's CityLine, I need to keep up to date with the trends. It's a part of my job that I really enjoy, because I love the excitement of what is new and I love turning people on to what is fresh and new in the marketplace.

What's different this year? The big story is that, at last, after years of being a minority issue, environmental awareness has moved into the mainstream. In home decor, it shows in our choice of colours and in our choice of materials. One of these styles is called Eco Chic.

Colours are gentle and forgiving, the purest white, the palest lemon, the most brilliant chartreuse. Materials are close to nature - raw wood in all its glory, stone, mother of pearl, hand crafted textiles. Colours and materials unite in patterns that replicate botanical forms, artwork recreates the natural world. In window fashions look for fabrics created from grasses, reeds and bamboo. I think of a simple roller shade that filters light through homespun yarns.

Another change is that people now stay home for many of the experiences they used to go out for. Movie night happens in home theatres. Big screens, access to media over satellite and internet connections, means that home is more important than ever. This importance is expressed in Classic Creations, a look that has always been in style, a look built around the idea of heirloom furniture, and lush fabrics.

Colours are nostalgic - burgundy, plum, jade, gold and spice. The star fabrics are Dupioni silks, and in the windows are Roman shades, in the traditional luxurious style. Levolor has introduced a wide range of exclusive fabrics, not just for Romans but also for roller shades.

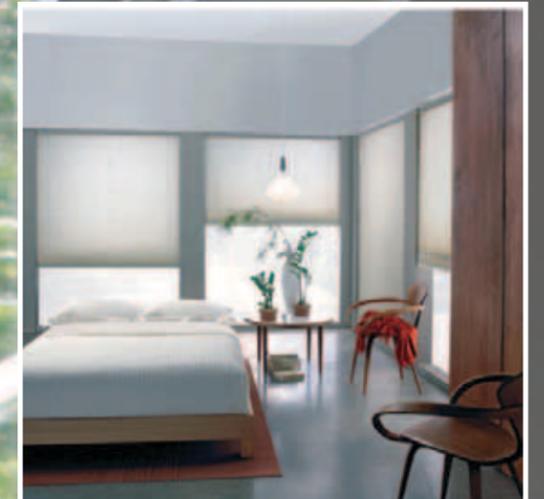
Metro Mod

Lastly, another home-centred trend, but one for people living a full life in a small space. This year, in North America, there will for the first time more single-person households than traditional family units. Even if you don't live in an urban loft, you'll live as if you did, in Metro Mod style. It's a look that doesn't need a lot of money to put together, though some may splurge on upscale appliances and chic designer furniture.

Colours are warmer and vegetal in tone from last year's urban style; mauve, turquoise, pumpkin and bronze. Dark undertones create a dusty look. Levolor selections include cellular shades, faux and real woods, Paneltrac and others in new colours, styles and sizes with control options. N/C

You can get a closer look online at www.levolor.ca.

Lovely to look at, and good for the planet. Eco Chic styling combines Asian serenity with natural materials and natural light filtered through Levolor cellular blinds.





Ceramic Tile Style Guide

Floors are one of the first things people recognize when entering a home. Whether it's to make sure they're not wearing shoes in a "no shoe" zone or if they are just making a mental note about a bare floor that's especially appealing, a home's floors can make quite an impression. One increasingly popular flooring option many homeowners are choosing is ceramic tiling. While homeowners used to lean toward conservative tile styles and colors, nowadays more and more people are choosing to spice things up with bold tile colors. Such a shift does not even bear mention of the numerous styles of ceramic tiles, which can make the decision process all the more involved. For those hoping to make the best decision possible, the following informative style guide should help make the decision process a bit easier.

Glazed tiles - A mixture of clays pressed into shape, glazed tiles are the most standard type of ceramic tile. The glaze is what's applied to the top of the tile before being baked on. Though they're best used on walls, glazed tiles can be and frequently are used for flooring as well. Just make sure the finish you use isn't too slippery and won't scratch easily, something glazed tiles have been known to do when used on countertops.

Quarry tile - Though this is a broad classification, quarry tile is distinct in both color and in that it is never glazed. Typically deep red in color, quarry tile is a mixture of clays that's especially suitable for interior floors thanks to its porous nature. While they can be

left unsealed, unsealed tiles have been known to stain, so sealing is recommended.

Mosaic tile - Unlike glazed tiles where the color does not go all the way through, mosaic tiles are made with color pigments so the color does go all the way through, meaning a chipped or cracked tile won't have the top color and then the inside color revealed on the crack. Mosaic tiles are also useful for just about any surface, as they're hard to chip or crack as well as stain-proof and resistant to moisture.

Premium tiles or look alikes - Though not ceramic, slate, marble, granite, and limestone can all be used to make beautiful tiles by simply cutting them into thin pieces

and installing them just as you would a ceramic tile. However, these can be expensive, and thanks to that you'll want an experienced professional to install them. For those with limited budgets but a desire for elegance, ceramic materials resembling marble, granite or limestone are available at significantly cheaper prices. These materials, though you'll know they're look-alikes, won't give themselves away either, as they're just as durable and aesthetically appealing as the real thing. FH069245

CAPTION: Whether patterned or not, tile floors can go a long way in determining how the interior of your home looks.

First Impressions: The Fabric of Good Design

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.” “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



Hot Home Decorating Trends

Want to get a feel for what's hot in the world of home decor these days? All you have to do is visit a couple of model homes in your community and take a good look around. You're sure to recognize a recurring theme.

The cabinets you saw in the high-end kitchen closely resemble the furniture in the adjoining breakfast nook, and the ceiling molding in the dining room matches perfectly as well. These days, designers are going out of their way to

carry a single theme throughout the entire house. It's a design trend called unification.

A good example of this practice can be found at fashion and lifestyle expert Robert Verdi's Luxe Laboratory, an innovative venue for displaying the best of today's luxury brands for the home. The lab, situated inside a stunning 3,400 square foot loft on the 13th floor of an art deco building on West 30th Street in Manhattan, features a collection of luxury brands -- displayed in

context -- to create a seamless total experience that stimulates the style senses.

From the moment you walk through the door, you're transformed into a space that's *Deja New* -- characteristic of a new French look with touches of old world flair. There's oversized furniture and big chandeliers. The kitchen is organized and contemporary without being sterile. The cabinetry is being used as a template for what is truly a great room. The library

mimics the cabinetry in the kitchen with the same style and finish.

"I wanted the space to be consistent, with a natural flow from one room to the next. No one wants their home to feel like a showroom so the cabinetry in this space unifies the design theme and connects with the rest of the decor," says Verdi.

Vince Achey, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry, the brand of cabinets chosen for the Luxe Laboratory, agrees with Verdi's assessment. "Custom cabinetry is the only way to utilize every inch of space and make storage easy, convenient and accessible as well as beautiful. We know our customer has specific storage needs and we try to accommodate them in every way

possible, with designs that are smart and functional." In the kitchen, some of the most popular custom applications people are requesting include decorative storage houses for toasters and other appliances, built-in spice racks, pull-out drawers and cutting boards that fit right into the counter.

In the library or family room, homeowners have the option of continuing the look by installing matching custom bookshelves/cabinets that offer ample storage space. They may cover all four walls and/or reach from the ground to ceiling. Whatever the homeowner wants.

Matching cabinets above the washer/dryer in the laundry room allow the homeowner to store detergent, dryer sheets and stain remover out of sight so the room has a clean look.

They may also want to add a pull down iron or folding shelf that can be pulled out when it's time to fold laundry, then put back when they're done. "The possibilities with custom cabinetry are truly endless," says Achey.

No matter what your dream home looks like, functional, customized storage solutions will make all the difference. To learn more about the benefits of custom cabinetry, and get an idea of the looks and materials available, log on to www.plainfancycabinetry.com. Click on "Find Your Style" to choose the cabinetry design theme that's perfect for your home.

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Create Pizzazz For Your Party With Painted Tablescapes

Move over Martha, now we can do it ourselves. "Pizzazzing", or adding personal flair to your own table setting is as easy as ... setting the table.

With a little paint and a lot of fun, you can inspire yourself to create your own magical, memorable tablescapes for festive dinners, luncheons and holiday brunches.

Envision your family and friend's faces when greeted by the unique beauty of a fabulous hand painted tablecloth and dishware to compliment that special occasion. Impress them with your own style, whether it is urban chic, sophisticated elegance, or modern retro. Even the most discerning diners will be in awe of the professional results obtained through this easy painting process.

"Imagine your table setting as a blank canvas ready to invite the colors and styles of your celebration" says Luce Robitaille, marketing director of Pébéo, a French art paint manufacturer. Start with a plain white table cloth and dishware; decorate them with your own color palette, style and panache. A glittery gold holiday design (as pictured) is particularly adaptable to New Year's Eve, a wedding or an anniversary celebration. With easy to use, heat set, Porcelaine 150 china paints by Pébéo, you can create a set of festive holiday dishes in your own home in a single evening. Simply paint any piece of white china, allow it to dry 24 hours and bake in a kitchen oven at 300 degrees for 30 minutes. If you don't like it, wash it off before baking and start over. Once baked, the design is permanent, microwave safe and dishwasher resistant.

Even non-artists can create a high priced, trendy designer look, for pennies a piece, with these specialized paints and markers for decorating dishes, glasses, fabric and more. To adorn champagne glasses, use Vitrea 160 paints and markers made specifically for transparent surfaces. Even the utensils may be embellished to create the pizzazz your party deserves, and your friends will envy.

Designer fabrics are created as easily, with Setacolor fabric paints that are heat set with an iron. Paint sophisticated scroll patterns, muted urban sheik designs or traditional holiday fare as the backdrop for coordinating dishware, glassware, napkins and even utensils. Details for this project can be found at www.creatorsocolor.com/project and more creative design ideas and information are available at www.pebeo.com. Party Planners everywhere, make haste to try this do-it-yourself technique.

Whether Thanksgiving, Christmas, a birthday or holiday celebration, your table can be perfectly coiffed to present the perfect atmosphere for your entertaining enjoyment.



Spice Up Your Space With Scents

*W*ant to boost your brainpower, control your appetite, revitalize your sex life? Snuggle (www.homebasics.ca) shows you the secret may just be scents.

Proponents of aromatherapy believe that natural essences can reduce stress, stimulate your mind and improve your mood. And with so many new home-fragrance products on the market today, you can give every room an aroma of its own. So follow your nose - and this guide - to use scents to spice up your living space.

Candles come in a host of shapes, colours, and sizes (not to mention aromas) - and the array of decorative holders is almost as vast. They're perfect for the living room, bedroom

or bath. You'll even find kitchen-savvy candles that help dispel cooking odours. Just be sure to trim the wicks to a quarter of an inch every time you light them (a longer wick can make the flame dangerously high) and never leave candles burning unattended.

Incense cones or sticks impart intense aromas. Look for unique incense burners made of wood, brass or other materials that suit a room's décor. For a sense of magic and mystery, try a smoking bottle - it emits mesmerizing swirls of sweet-smelling smoke. And if you've got a teen or tween lobbying to light candles in her room, you might want to compromise with incense - it's a safer alternative, since it burns without a flame.

Potpourri These mixtures of dried flower petals and spices impart a delicate fragrance and are best for scenting small areas. Try scooping some into a glass jar or bowl and setting it next to the commode. Or sew a handful into a small piece of fabric, like a handkerchief, to scent dresser drawers or closets.

Essential Oils A form of fragrance derived from plants, the oils are highly concentrated - a few drops go a long way. Disperse their scent in decorative oil warmers (the oil goes into a basin and is heated by a candle underneath) or try a clay car diffuser. Hang it from the rearview mirror and add a trickle of oil to infuse your auto with aromatherapy.

Scented Drawer Liners and padded hangers fill your closets and dressers with just a hint of fragrance. Don't worry: The oil dries quickly and won't rub off on clothes. And Snuggle dryer sheets are a fabulous, inexpensive way to scent closets dressers. Place individual sheets at the bottom of drawers, a laundry bag or a hamper and inside suitcase to prevent musty odours. N/C

Window Roof Window, and Skylight Selection Basics

Homeowners are sometimes reluctant to cut a hole in a perfectly good roof. They don't question cutting dozens of holes in the walls for windows and doors, and more holes in the roof for chimneys, ventilation fans or plumbing vent pipes. So what's so scary about a hole for a skylight?

According to Joe Patrick, senior product manager with VELUX America, the primary concern homeowners express about skylights is a fear of leaks.

"That was sometimes a valid concern with older, poorly made or improperly installed skylights," Patrick says, "but modern skylights with pre-engineered flashing kits from leading manufacturers, just like qual-

ity windows and exterior doors, are totally dependable when properly installed."

And just what's the difference in a window, a roof window, and a skylight? There are many different types and styles of windows but they are all installed in, and parallel to, walls.

Skylights are pretty much windows by another name that are installed on, and parallel to, roofs. They can be flashed as dependably as anything else that goes on a roof. Some of them are fixed (don't open) while others vent inside air through interior vent flaps or by opening slightly.

Roof windows are venting units, designed for in-reach applications, which open wider,

as much as 45 degrees, for additional ventilation or emergency egress. They also have a sash that flips around so the outside glass can be cleaned from the inside.

Another important similarity between windows, roof windows, and skylights is in the glazing, or how the glass is manufactured. Patrick says that skylight glazing technology is among the best in the industry. "Quality units control heat gain or loss, filter the sun's fade-causing rays, and resist condensation," he says.

Independent research done in Denmark shows that skylights admit 30 percent more light than vertical windows in dormers, while providing the drama of a sky view that

