

Ask Kat

Interior Design Questions

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"To live the creative life, one must lose one's fear of being wrong." This is the philosophy that I bring into my life, as well as my interior design work. I believe that the design process should be fun, and a time to take some risks and explore your creative self. With that being said, I am here to answer some frequently asked interior design questions and to introduce some ideas for hot interior design trends for 2009.

What are the new design trends for 2009 and how can I incorporate them in my own Home?

The big trends that I see for this year, are the "Modern Glam" Style, Green Design, Global and Multi-Cultural Décor, The Home Sanctuary, and "One-of-a-Kind Design.

To expand on those themes, The Modern Glam movement is the revived interest in Old Hollywood Glamour, with a modern twist. This is a throwback to the clean sleek lines of the 40's and 50's, Retro and Art Deco styles. The glamour is achieved by using antique mirrored case-goods and occasional pieces, accent pieces with Capiz shells, luxurious fabrics-silks and velvets, and metallic or pearlized fabrics, wall colors, or finishes, as well as black and white lacquer finishes on furniture. A tasteful touch of animal print is imperative, and shiny black patent leather on an ottoman or even a pillow infuses some fun, and a bit of the unexpected. Big and bold patterns are in! By taking more traditional patterns such as the Fleur-de-lis, Greek Key, Quatre-Foil, Herring Bone, and Paisley, and enlarging the scale and updating the color palette...it is a whole look. The clean and timeless color scheme of black and white is huge, especially when combined with a pop of color, such as avocado green, chartreuse, deep lipstick red, peacock blue, champagne, blush, and any shade of silver-gray or antique-gold.

Eco-Awareness and societal responsibility are on the public radar screen now. There are many ways to incorporate Green design into your interiors. Paint companies have lines created with low VOCs. There is flooring made from sustainable woods, such as bamboo. And furniture companies have developed lines made from sustainable woods, recycled materials such as steel, soy-based cushions, and organic fabrics. Among the leaders in the furniture industry for Green product are Precedent, Abner Henry, Simply Amish, Flexsteel, and Harden. Another way to lesser your carbon footprint is to reupholster or refinish quality furniture pieces, instead of merely discarding them. Color palettes recommended to complement Green design are neutral, earthy colors, such as tans and chocolate browns. A neutral color scheme can have added dimension when a variety of textures are used or when paired with accent colors like leaf greens, sky blues, citrus oranges, or golden yellows.

With increased accessibility and appreciation for the world around us, through the internet, television, film, travel and global trade, multi-cultural décor has become a hot design trend. Global design is now inspired by Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Morocco, and India. Current events shape "Pop Culture" in both fashion and interior design. The popularity of The Oscar Award winning film, Slum Dog Millionaire, set in Mumbai, India has launched a new interest in all things Indian. An easy way to incorporate a touch of global intrigue is with accessories...a Middle-Eastern hand-knotted silk or wool rug, an Africa mask, tribal sculpture or piece of primitive artwork, Latin

American pottery, Moroccan Moroccan star lighting, Byzantine mosaic tiles, or Indian motifs on fabrics or pillows. Interiors are also simpler, cleaner, sleeker, and more minimal, which is influenced by the Asian Zen philosophy of simplicity and harmony. Multi-cultural design is complemented by the spice colors of the Far East, such as Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Saffron, Cumin, Bayleaf Green, and Indigo Blue. **Tip:** Instead of a typical souvenir, bring back an artifact or piece of artwork from your travel that is indicative of the local culture. It is not only decorative, but tells a story of your life, and personalizes your interior design.

The Home Sanctuary is a trend to create a spa-like respite in your own home. Even if it is only one room, it is important to carve out a place where you can find peace and serenity, in these turbulent economic and geo-political times. Ideas for creating this environment include the use of calming colors inspired by nature, the earth's oceans, beaches, deserts and forests. These colors would include soft whites, tans, robin's egg blue, and leaf greens. Use natural fibers and materials, incorporate candles, water fountains, soothing music and soft textures. Keep design clean, simple and unfettered. Clean up clutter. Remember less, is more. Use items as accessories that bring you back to nature, such as sea glass, shells, Petoskey stones, natural wood, etc. **Tip:** Get rid of all of your artificial plants and flowers...they are very passé! Replace them with living plants, it not only looks better, but it is better for you by replenishing your oxygen. If you do not have a green thumb, use a unique bowl or vase filled with real fruit, shells or Petoskey stones you gathered on the beach for a centerpiece. If you want to get really creative, find an interesting branch or pussy-willows to give you a more artistic linear arrangement. Remember: Fresh flowers are good for the soul.

One-of-a-Kind Design is something I feel extremely passionate about, being that I come from a fine art background, as well, as interior design. Authenticity is key. This movement is inspired by a desire for artisan pieces and one-of-a kind design, and a rejection of impersonal, mass produced products. Invest in original artwork and take the time to work with an interior designer to create custom selections that are specific to your own personal style and as well as your lifestyle. While some consumers may be concerned about the additional cost of using an interior designer, (and who doesn't want to spend their money wisely, these days?!) it is worth the investment. Their knowledge, expertise, and guidance can prevent costly mistakes. Having a professional will save you countless hours of shopping. They have access to a wide variety of local, domestic and foreign resources. They can make the most of what you have, and do the required research to find what you need. They are trained to make the most of available spaces and to create traffic patterns and furniture arrangements that make daily living functional, safe, comfortable and easy. They can help you define and enhance your own distinctive style. Thinking outside of the box, interior designers can give you that little push to try something new, that you would not have thought of on your own. They have the ability to look at the individual pieces in relation to how they will work in the context of the entire project. Hopefully, they will make the process enjoyable, by giving professional guidance to a process which can be overwhelming for some, especially when new construction is involved. I view interior design, as I do fine artwork, it should be thoughtful, personal, creative and unique! My personal goal is to make your home, a place you are proud to share with others, and one that you can not wait to get home to yourself.