



by Catherine Fantauzzi
First Impressions Decor

Design & decorating details *for today's homes*



Mediterranean housing styles (left) have been translated to suit our Canadian climate. Exterior attributes might include stucco details and larger windows, while interior details often include columns, higher ceiling heights, knee-walls and cathedral ceilings.

An exceptional home plan includes both exterior and interior architectural detailing as major elements in its design. When properly executed, such details fortify the underlying design, and indicate proof of quality. Paying proper attention to these details can make the difference between having an indistinguishable home and an impressive one.

Trends travel at the speed of light. But when it comes to our homes, most of us want what's tried and true. So it's no surprise that the residential home building industry is going back to the classics, rediscovering familiar styles but offering flexibility that lets you create a look that feels fresh and new.

In recent years, our window on the world has

become a computer screen and an Internet connection. This is one of the reasons why, increasingly, we want our homes to provide a sense of escape.

"Contemporary Mediterranean" design provides one such means of escape. This trend continues to have staying power in exterior residential architectural details in Ontario. Homes in this style tend to have a lot of character; they are often more distinctive and visually interesting than other styles. Exterior attributes include stucco details combined with stone or cast, as well as larger windows.

Interior details often include cornice moldings, columns, higher ceiling heights, knee-walls and cathedral and coffered ceilings. The use of natural materials throughout the home, especially in

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The trend to "Contemporary Mediterranean" design continues to have staying power in Ontario.

kitchens and bathrooms, complete this Mediterranean look. Such features are now standard choices with many of today's Ontario homebuilders.

New residential floor plans are often designed to include rooms that can be used for a variety of purposes and open-concept combination rooms.

Colour, fabric, accessories—and even scents and music—can be used to customize the ambience of a given room.

Picking up on this mood of ease and openness, furniture manufacturers are offering lifestyle collections that are a good fit with today's residential structures. These often start with a flexible foundation of wood and upholstered pieces in clean-lined yet tradition-inspired shapes. Colour, fabric, accessories—and even scents and music—can be used to customize the ambience of given room.

The hallmarks of today's contemporary furniture are inspired by early to mid-20th century design. One of the latest looks is multi-functional pieces that are streamlined, sophisticated and slightly manish.

Such pieces have a European flavour, but often also reveal exotic influences from Asia and Africa, with a minimum of ornamentation. Woods are dark with brushed aluminum accents, simple lines and subtle curves. Richly textured fabric prints include monochromes, toiles, paisleys,

and small geometric florals. Colors typically reflect the intense, saturated hues of the Mediterranean region, though today's interpretations also accommodate our passion for garden greens and neutrals.

Create a visual statement by using design elements to draw the eye toward the details so that they don't disappear into the background. Balance hard and soft elements to complement the architectural details of each space. Choose appropriate furnishings, taking their size into consideration. Work with colour—it sets the decorative style and can change a space's appearance; and use textures for interest, dimension and depth.

Take all these elements into consideration to create individuality for your own home.

Catherine Fantauzzi is a Certified Interior Decorator and Design Consultant, and can be reached by telephone at (416) 937-4152

