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Design trends influencing our interior spaces

Global and economic influences often dictate new trends in design. These influences include: water representing cleanliness and purity; ethnic and cultural blending prompting an interest in colours of the various cultures; spirituality, connecting the mind, body and spirit; individualism by personalizing one's environment; and simplicity, over technology, is prompting a more humanized way of living. Society is expressing a desire to create a balanced lifestyle.

Current design trends are multiple and varied, some of these are:

1. Minimalism, which is influenced by eastern cultures, creating a tranquil environment and a place of comfort. Valuing objects in a space and avoiding clutter.
2. Personal spaces for relaxation and place to get away from the everyday stresses.
3. Nature, inviting the outdoors in. Windows are larger and treatments are less elaborate. Gardening has become the number one leisure activity in the country.

4. Nostalgia, looking to the past for influences – retro with a modern twist.

5. Multifunctional living, to address the need for a more casual lifestyle, rooms are becoming multifunctional, such as a combined kitchen, dining, entertainment, living room area.

6. Kitchens have become the main room of any house, as a natural gathering place. Cabinetry and styles are becoming more efficient and practical.

There is a strong resurgence of the minimalist approach to interiors, however, an eclectic style also resonates. There is a move toward a more informal way of living.

Some items that will take you well into the first decade of the new millennium include:

- Mirrored pieces
- Retro accessories
- Vases full of flowers
- Dark wood furniture
- Boxy sofas, tightly tufted upholstery
- Modern chairs
- Patterned carpet

The forecast colours that have emerged to complement the design influences are blues, soft greens, reds in all shades and tints, browns, terra cottas, purples, yellows, and metallics, and black as an accent colour.

The new fabrics are very textural and are used as ways to customize our own environment by using the contrast of smooth/soft against coarse/rough surfaces. Chenilles, silks, cut velvets, sheers, embroidered fabrics are sumptuous and elegant.

Your space must reflect your needs and tastes no matter what the trends are. Decorating schemes that are more personalized and suited to individual lifestyles will make full use of the new palette throughout the home environment.