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2010 decor trends

Global chic is in, say designers
By CANADIAN PRESS

With 2010 marking the kick-off of both a new year and a new decade, it seems only fitting that one of the emerging trends in interior decor and design would be of global proportions.

From furniture to accessories, international influences in decor are expected to surface in the coming year.

Yanic Simard, principal designer at the Toronto Interior Design Group, says the trend is one that blends elements from Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe to combine for a culturally chic look.

Simard recommends starting with a neutral colour like grey on the walls, which creates a perfect base for bringing in vibrant colours and bold patterns from around the world.

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And there's no need to stick to just one particular international influence, he says: "You can have [an] African furniture piece mixed with Chinese silk brocade pillows and an Egyptian mother of pearl storage box. That's the beauty of it."

Suzanne Dimma, editor of *Canadian House and Home* magazine, says the ability to seek out international items has been prevalent for a while thanks to the Internet, helping make it easier to purchase and source such pieces.

"You don't necessarily have to go to the store in your neighbourhood. You can get what you want from around the world," she says. "I think that's a huge thing for retailers and for stores, as well. The world is your oyster now."

Dimma says exotic carpets, such as the faded kilim carpet featured among the top 2010 looks in the magazine's January issue, are very on-trend.

"Last year, we were seeing a lot of really graphic carpets with bold high-contrast colours. Now they're kind of more home-spun and handmade."

Long before the recession hit hard, Dimma says, people started to transition towards investing in pieces with longevity. "You're seeing people looking for those pieces that are going to last them a long time, not something that they're going to have to replace a year from now, because furniture is expensive and people want their investments in their houses to last."

When it comes to investment pieces, Simard suggests spending money on a beautiful suspended fixture or table lamp.

"Now the trend is to use not one light but a grouping of many fixtures together or many bulbs together which makes it very sculptural."

Simard says gold is making a comeback in finishes, with many new faucets emerging in the metallic colour, as well as cabinetry hardware, plumbing fixtures and knobs.

"We've seen a lot in fashion, a lot of gold accessories and jewellery, so of course it trickles down to design," he says.

Opting for more of a white, matte gold gives a very new and vibrant look, he adds.

Both Dimma and Simard say there has also been a re-emergence of wallpaper. Simard says wallpaper with geometrical patterns is popping up, as well as designs inspired by Islamic architecture and infused in vibrant hues like orange, purple and teal.

The patterned paper is even being used to decorate ceilings.

"It's like another way to have fun with wallpaper," Dimma says. "It's also less of an investment. If you wallpaper your entire room, it can add up."

For those seeking to add a punch with colourful patterns or bold hues, they may consider heeding the call of the wild. Simard says animal prints are back for 2010, but he suggests doing it in small doses, like a zebra-print ottoman or throw pillows worked into a monochromatic scheme.

Dimma says she definitely sees velvet emerging as the fabric of the moment, from a covered sectional in one featured look to another with crushed velvet cushions.

Simard says another trend - and something they're trying to do in design - is integrating a few rooms, like the kitchen, family room and office, for example.

To keep it aesthetically appealing, they are using some modular furniture. Consisting of stand-alone, free-standing cabinetry pieces, modular furniture can be assembled in various ways and incorporated into a new design or matched up with decor already in place.

That could entail a kitchen island or countertop that looks like a piece of furniture, he notes.

Simard says incorporating modulars can work well in both modern and traditional spaces.

"You can use a modular cabinet and sink but use a more traditional tap," he said. "You've got to mix the old with the new, which brings the transitional approach and gives you so many more options."

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