



12 HOT HOME IDEAS

Written by Barbara Ballinger
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By Barbara Ballinger

People today seek to personalize, economize, and make the most of their space—inside and out.

Today's home owners seek style and comfort, but they're ever mindful of the toll that our choices can take on the environment. These 12 home-furnishings trends reflect current priorities and aspirations. Some of these phenomena will inevitably fizzle, while others will become mainstays of the home, but for now they are attracting lots of industry and consumer buzz. Here's a rundown:

#1 Induction cooking

Why trendworthy: Thirty percent more efficient than gas or electric.

Cropping up in more and more homes, induction cooking uses a power coil to produce a high-frequency electromagnetic field that heats only the contents of a magnetic pan, leaving the surrounding surface cooler to the touch. By maintaining a precise temperature, it immediately stops heat generation when the cook element is turned off or cookware is removed, and it doesn't produce an open flame that heats up a kitchen, says Malte Peters, product manager for cooking products at BSH Home Appliances, parent company of Bosch and Thermador. One downside: Special cookware must be used. Retail prices range from \$1,500 to \$4,399.



#2 Environmentally friendly cabinetry

Why trendworthy: Popular with green movement.

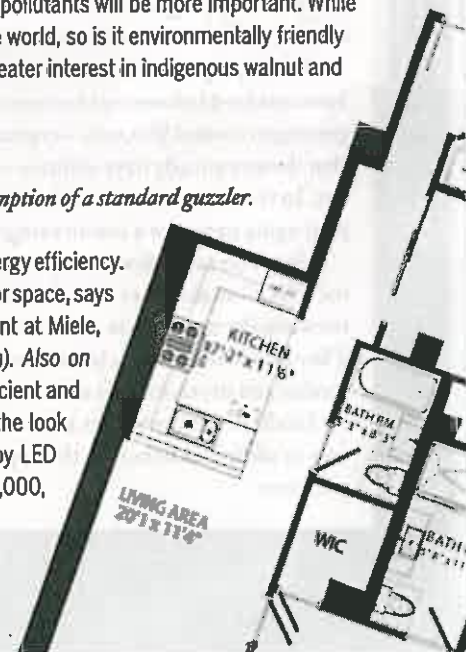
With sustainable products continuing to draw fans, more kitchen and bathroom cabinets are expected to be fabricated from green materials, says John Troxell Jr., director of design at Wood-Mode Inc., a large manufacturer (www.wood-mode.com). But it's not materials alone that make consumers pick one line over another, Troxell says. "Where materials come from, how cabinets are manufactured, and whether they're finished without pollutants will be more important. While bamboo is renewable, it comes from halfway around the world, so is it environmentally friendly given transportation costs?" asks Troxell. He predicts greater interest in indigenous walnut and cherry, less in endangered mahogany and rosewood.



#3 Energy-sipping refrigerators

Why trendworthy: Pares the electricity consumption of a standard guzzler.

Future refrigerators will be better insulated to improve energy efficiency. The challenge is to add insulation without reducing interior space, says Matthew Kueny, senior manager of product development at Miele, which is working to provide a solution (www.miele.com). Also on the horizon: New interior lighting that's more energy-efficient and that better illuminates dark corners without distorting the look of the food, which is common with the blue hue cast by LED lighting. Miele refrigerator-freezers start at almost \$7,000, while simpler conventional models start at \$600.



#4 Integrated stone composite sinks

Why trendworthy: They blend seamlessly into a countertop for a cleaner look, plus they're more durable and easier to clean.



Stainless steel sinks are still common, but stone composite designs built into a countertop are coming on strong, says Tim Maicher, director of marketing at Blanco (www.blancoamerica.com). The prime motivator is growing consumer demand for easier to clean, more durable surfaces that don't scratch or stain. Blanco's Silgranit II line offers another perk: multiple colors and textures. The designs will reflect demand for longer, deep models, yet not so deep that aging home owners have trouble setting down or removing pots and pans.

#5 White and beige color palettes, some grays and pinks, bold accents

Why trendworthy: Less intense colors to calm jittery nerves.



Color seers may disagree about which palette will dominate, but they note that softer backdrops are everywhere—offering serenity to soothe frayed nerves as the economy remains turbulent. Mary Lawlor, color stylist with Kelly-Moore Paints (www.kellymoore.com), thinks whites and beiges will remain most popular and that bright colors will provide accents. Anne McGuire and Sue Kim, affiliated with Valspar Manufacturing Co. (www.valspar.com), see the most popular colors as water-inspired blues and greens, along with underwater corals. And Sylvia O'Brien, founder of Colour Theory (www.colourtheory.net), notes that earth tones provide tranquil reactions to the technical coldness in our midst and pink, especially with a pearlized finish, is popular as an accent because of its perceived healing power.

#6 Condo home offices

Why trendworthy: To help home owners maximize small spaces—and obtain a tax deduction.

Owners of single-family homes have long been able to convert a bedroom, den, or basement to an office, but down the road more condo buyers and apartment renters will find homes with small, dedicated spaces for business use, says Robert Kaliner, president of the Ascend Group, developer of the luxury Georgica condominiums in New York, where each glass-wrapped unit will have a home office (www.georgicany.com). Steve Kliegerman, executive director at Halstead Development, which is marketing units with home offices in another New York >>>

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Reuse With Style

It's all about functional design with these eco-friendly items.

By Erica Christoffer

From salvaging antique floors to transforming denim into insulation, reusing items in new ways helps the environment as you spruce up a home. Repurposing personal or industrial objects offers both functionality and aesthetic appeal. Here are five ways to incorporate repurposed elements into a home.



GIVE A HOME SOME HISTORY Antique floors dating back decades—even centuries—can add historic charm to a new or remodeled home, while saving quality wood and tile from demolition. Tom Campbell, owner of Connecticut-based Old Wood Workshop, started salvaging floors, paneling, cabinetry, doors, and stone from buildings in his rural farming community in the early 1990s. Home owners have become increasingly interested in repurposing architectural elements, he says, and last year was his best in 20 years. "I love selling to clients who appreciate the products," says Campbell, who sees his job as saving pieces of history from a bulldozer. Salvaged flooring can be used in restoration projects and to create a one-of-a-kind look. **COST:** approximately \$12-\$16 per square foot. www.oldwoodworkshop.com

GET CREATIVE Every person has an attic, garage, or storage space filled with items that can serve a dual purpose, says Bob Eckstein, an interior design blogger in New York. Do you have old bottles or scientific beakers? Fill them with different flavors of mouthwash for a splash of color in the bathroom. Come across an antique bedpan? Use it to hold sponges or potpourri. How about that old wooden ladder in the garage? Turn it into an outdoor trellis. "No one should feel intimidated by interior design," Eckstein says. His philosophy costs nearly nothing—ideal for home owners feeling the economic crunch. It's about using what you already have in new and interesting ways. **COST:** free. www.smartassideasforthehome.blogspot.com >>> 33



Photos: Flynn by Sarah Durio ©2010



building, The Fitzgerald (www.thefitzgeraldcondos.com) in Harlem, sees a couple of factors behind the trend: Older, retrofitted office buildings tend to come with nooks that lend themselves to becoming small offices, and the home office tax deduction gives these spaces special appeal.

#7 Interior wall treatments besides paint

Why trendworthy: Easier to install; more personalized patterns, colors, textures.

Less popular in recent years, wall treatments other than paint are making a comeback, says Atlanta-based interior designer Brian Patrick Flynn, who cites several reasons: new bolder graphic wallpaper patterns, some in shiny metallics and textured leathers, and easier and less costly application due to new primers. Wallpaper is cropping up on a single focal wall, which saves money. Flynn predicts more home owners will cover an entire wall with an enlarged photo printed in sections (left).

#8 Do-it-yourself projects

Why trendworthy: Less costly, more personal.

The DIY trend keeps growing as home owners look to cut costs and return to basics. Instruction is readily available in classes, on the Web, and in books. Example: Designer Fu-Tung Cheng (www.chengdesign.com), who helped make concrete a chic, green material for interior surfaces, is now helping even nonhandy home owners construct concrete countertops with his book and DVD, *Concrete Countertops Made Simple* (Taunton Press, 2008). "The DIY movement represents a trend away from overly complex projects that require professional expertise. The simpler designs are also more timeless and individualistic and more likely to touch the heart," Cheng says.

#9 Outdoor curtains

Why trendworthy: Even backyard "rooms" require some privacy.

As more people construct "rooms" in their backyards for purposes such as swimming, cooking and eating, and relaxing under a pergola, the need for curtains has arisen. New fabrics stand up better to outdoor conditions and visually soften hardscape surfaces. They also screen out nosy neighbors, says designer Flynn. Fabric runs \$12 to \$80 per square foot, plus installation.

#10 Dual-flush, environmentally efficient toilets, plus more healthful designs

Why trendworthy: Greater recognition that liquid and solid waste have different flush requirements.

Though widely available abroad, dual-flush toilets—with separate mechanisms to handle liquid or solid waste—are gaining attention here, says Lenora Campos with Toto USA, a leading toilet manufacturer (www.totousa.com). The main challenge isn't convincing home owners to buy the models, she says, but getting them to remember to use the right button. More companies may follow Toto's lead to construct toilets with glazed concave rims and water nozzles that repel bacteria and wall-mounted models that make cleaning underneath easier. Toto's Aquia II dual-flush models run from \$457 to \$686, while the company's conventional single-flush models range from \$350 to \$525.



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#11 3-D HDTV

Why trendworthy: Images are becoming more lifelike.

HDTVs display a beautiful picture, but they can't offer a 3-D presentation like your local IMAX movie theater does. The reason: True high-definition 3-D in the home currently lacks a standard and is still too expensive for most consumers. That should change, in part because electronics manufacturers are developing a standard format. When that happens, prices should drop, says Dave Pedigo, senior director of technology for CEDIA (the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association), a national trade association.

#12 Relaxation retreats

Why trendworthy: Increased need to unwind.

Who cares about a home being a castle when most just want a place to unwind? Atlanta architect Johnna Barrett (www.barrettdesigninc.com) has designed several relaxation rooms, where creature comforts include natural materials, color kinetics, programmable LED lighting, candlelight, aromatherapy, a sound-blocking machine, flat-panel TV with DVD player, refrigerator with purified water, and a door. Depending on room size and amenities included, a retreat room could cost from \$3,000 to \$10,000. ■



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>>> **31 WARM UP TO COTTON** Old jeans are finding new life as home insulation material. Bonded Logic of Chandler, Ariz., manufactures UltraTouch Natural Cotton Fiber insulation, which is made from 85 percent recycled denim and cotton fibers. The Class A insulation contains no VOCs or formaldehydes and doesn't irritate skin. "It's very healthy and a great recycled product. Made from denim waste, it's given a second life," says Sean Desmond, director of sales and marketing at Bonded Logic. The insulation is treated with a 100 percent natural borate mineral solution that is mold and fire resistant. UltraTouch receives the maximum insulation performance rating and is sold at retailers nationwide. **COST:** \$0.50-\$1.50 per square foot. www.bondedlogic.com

WASH WHERE YOU FLUSH Toilets are one of the biggest water hogs in the home. Seattle-based ecohaus has addressed this environmental challenge by promoting the Caroma Profile, a bathroom fixture that is part sink and part toilet. Users wash their hands in the toilet tank (cleaner than you might think). That water is then repurposed for future flushes. Its dual flush component reduces water consumption by an additional 40 percent to 70 percent. The toilet and sink combo is a great space saver in smaller bathrooms. **COST:** \$499.99. www.ecohaus.com



BOTTLE THE LIGHT U.K.-based artist Sarah Turner turns plastic bottles into lampshades that are modern works of art. The shades are individually designed and handcrafted, and each is typically composed of 10 to 30 bottles. Turner started repurposing bottles as a university student a few years ago when it struck her that she and her housemates were discarding used bottles at an alarming rate. Turner's recycled ReDesign line includes shades for various lamp styles, from floor to ceiling. Her signature "Cola 10" shade is made from ten plastic Coca-Cola bottles. **COST:** \$420. www.sarahturner.co.uk

