October 2007

FALL HOME IMPROVEMENT





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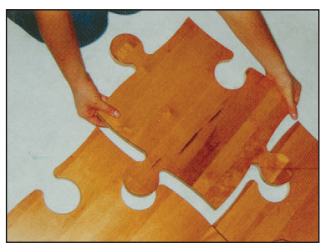

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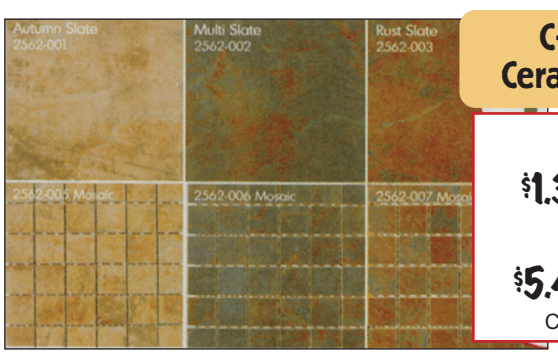

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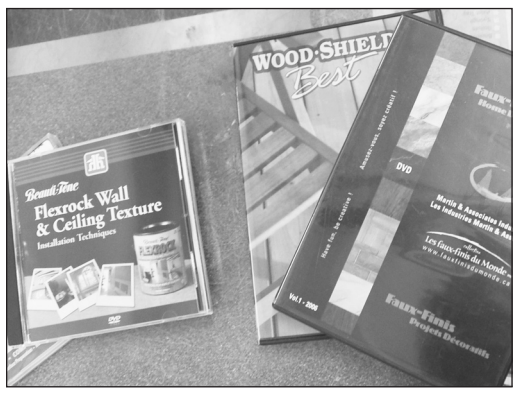
Winchester Home Hardware offers cabinets, flooring

WINCHESTER — Anyone planning to renovate their home should visit Winchester Home Hardware.

The store is now stocking a wider variety of cabinetry, flooring, wall treatments, and other products to help turn a house into a dream home.

"We certainly have as much as the big box stores," said Winchester Home Hardware owner Ken Boje about the variety of cabinetry and vanities the store is carrying.

The store offers Georgetown MasterBrand cabinets, a product exclusive to Home Hardware, which come in three formats — deluxe-assembled, value-assembled, and unipack — to meet a variety of price points and satisfy different levels of do-it-yourself ability. The unipack version comes flatpacked and requires more time and know-how to put together. The deluxe-assembled offers the most cabinet door styles.



Winchester Home Hardware is also offering a variety of instructional DVDs to give do-it-yourself home renovators more confidence.
Press Photos — James

"This is all stocked in Home's warehouse," explained Boje. "We can order it and have it in the customer's hands within a week in most cases."

Home Hardware has also introduced the Kwik Kitchen line of cabinetry.

"It's ideal for cottages, in-law suites, milk houses, some office environments, and anywhere else you want utility cupboards," said Boje.

He explained that 10-foot kitchen packages are available for under $1,000.

Along with kitchen cupboards, the store also carries bathroom vanities and cabinets.

"We've upscaled a lot of the vanities we carry," said Boje pointing to some samples of the Luxo brand with granite counter tops and various high-end finishes.

He also noted that Home Hardware provides vanities ranging in size from 24 to 48 inches.

Flooring

Winchester Home Hardware also offers some new flooring options, including puzzle flooring.

"It's good for rec rooms — that kind of thing," said Boje, about the floating hardwood floor that fits together like big puzzle pieces. "It's a very different look. It's very unique."

The puzzle floor comes in 13 colours and can be mixed and matched to create a variety of patterns — and it is easy to install. Visit www.puzzlefloor.com for more information.

Home Hardware also carries a full range of ceramic and porcelain tile and accent tiles, as well as vinyl flooring, hardwood, and laminates.

"We're more and more into the flooring," said Boje, noting that the store also has accompanying products such as DriCore underlay, which is ideal for installing under flooring in basements. He explained it's specially designed to protect flooring from dampness.

Also new is a selection of laminate flooring tiles that look like ceramic or textured stone. It's easy to create the luxurious look you want with the flooring type that fits your budget. The Home Expressions designer collection provides a variety of choices and comes with a lifetime warranty for wear.

Help from Home

Along with offering all the products a home renovator needs, Home Hardware is also providing the tools and education to make the process easier. The store has a selection of instructional DVDs that customers can borrow on things like staining, faux-finish wall treatments, and more.

"It's so people can apply the products with a little more confidence," explained sales representative Sue Robillard. "People are interested in doing things themselves and we're trying to help them do that."



Sue Robillard shows off one of the new up-scale bathroom vanity models that Winchester Home Hardware is carrying. This Luxo brand model features a granite countertop and a tropical wood finish. Press Photo — James

Robillard noted that Home Hardware carries a variety of products for achieving textured faux finishes on walls, such as Flexrock.

"It can be adhered to anything," she said. "And it's quite easy to put on — it's a two-step process."

Flexrock is available in a whole range of colours and depending on the technique you use to complete the second step of its application, it can result in several different wall textures.

A Flexrock how-to is one of the DVDs that can be borrowed from the store.

Customers can also purchase Home Hardware's HomeWorks software, which allows them to better visualize and plan their renovation. The $25 software includes a $25 gift card that can be applied to orders of home renovation materials of $450 or more.

Boje summed up the new direction the Winchester store is taking in supporting home renovators by noting it's important for customers to be able to come into the store and see samples of products first-hand. To that end, Winchester Home Hardware is working to create in-store displays that will inspire customers.

He added that he is making sure staff is well-versed with the cabinetry and other home renovation products to assist customers in making the right decisions about their home renovation.

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Carbon monoxide

Silent killer is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths

You can't see it, smell it or taste it but its effects can be lethal. Carbon monoxide is often called "the silent killer" and it continues to make headlines, especially as cold weather months approach and chimneys, fireplaces and furnaces are called back into action.

Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America, but is largely preventable. The first step is to practice smart safety at home that includes regular maintenance of fuel-burning appliances. The second is to add carbon monoxide alarms to your hardware store shopping list.

What is carbon monoxide?

Appliances that use gas, oil, wood, coal or any other kind of fossil fuel produce some amount of carbon monoxide, or CO, during combustion. Sources include your furnace, water heater, wood stove, fireplace, oven and of course, automotive exhaust. Normally appliances that generate a lot of CO are vented to the outside. However, if there is a leak or malfunction, that's when trouble begins.

How can you tell there's a problem?

Since CO is odourless, tasteless and colourless, detection by humans is impossible. Exposure brings on symptoms similar to the flu without the fever: headaches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. Public safety experts say it is difficult to diagnose CO exposure since there is no one tell-tale symptom to identify it.

Inspection and maintenance

The first step to preventing CO poisoning is appliance maintenance. Have all systems checked by competent professionals before you turn them on in the fall. Inspectors look for blocked chimneys, cracks, pipe leaks and venting, burner issues and other ways that CO can escape inside your home.

Installing and checking alarms

Once systems pass inspection, next check your carbon monoxide alarms. These need to be installed in your home if you have fossil-fuel burning appliances& one per floor is recommended by the National Fire Protection Association but at a minimum outside sleeping areas. Always look for a ULC approval certification. You may want to select today's most popular CO alarms that have a digital readout.

"Digital readout makes it easy to watch for rising levels that may signal a slow leak," says Carol Heller, vice-president of product innovation at Kidde Canada, this country's largest manufacturer of fire and CO safety products. "You can troubleshoot an issue before the gas reaches dangerous levels."

Once alarms are installed, be sure to test and maintain them regularly according to the supplied Owner's Manual, and, if your CO alarms are more than seven years old, replace them immediately.

If your CO alarm goes off

- Treat every alarm as an emergency. Since CO poisoning reduces your ability to think clearly, never delay.
- Get everyone out of the house.
- Call the fire department or 911.
- Get immediate medical attention for anyone showing signs of CO poisoning.
- Do not go back into the house until advised by a safety professional.

More information on carbon monoxide home safety tips and alarms can be found on the www.SafeAtHome.ca web site.

- News Canada

Oil heat is efficient, cleaner, and safe

WINCHESTER — Scientific advances with fuel oil make it one of the most popular heating options on the market.

"Oil heat has always been an economical, efficient, environmentally-friendly and safe heating fuel," said Dave Frittenburg, president of the Canadian Oil Heat Association (COHA) Ontario Chapter. "Recent technological improvements in the efficiency of fuel oil and the quality of storage tanks take us one step further."

Already a clean-burning fuel with efficiencies of up to 85 per cent, fuel innovations mean today's oil heat burns even cleaner and more efficiently.

With regard to oil heat appliances, sophisticated microprocessor controls and the revolutionary flame retention head oil burner mean precise, virtually noise-free operation, according to Frittenburg. Combustion venting technologies deliver flexibility and savings. Conversions or upgrades are fast and affordable since most oil heat appliances can be vented through the basement wall.

"The oil heat industry is always looking for ways to give its customers the most efficient and best quality product available," he continued. "Customer satisfaction is a top priority, and we're continuously improving the product and services we offer. With natural gas prices hitting all-time highs, and news reports predicting severe supply crunches, it makes sense for homeowners to be proactive and switch to oil heat — not only to save money but to take advantage of a market that, for the majority of the past decade, has been stable."

More information is available online and at www.coha.ca. *- News Canada*

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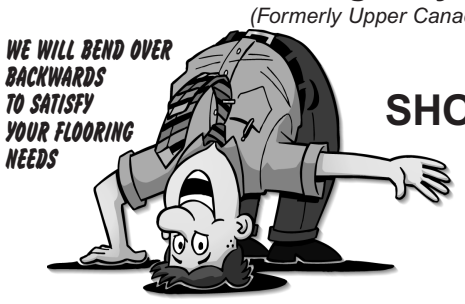

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Feng shui: the art of balance

by Meghan Duncan
Press staff



Furniture placement to allow energy to flow, and bringing the outside in through use of plants and other natural elements are just two principles of feng shui.



South Mountain resident Shari Martin is ready to turn any living space into a harmonious haven using the feng shui philosophy. "How you interact with the space and how you respect it can affect your energy and your outlook on life," Martin said.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN — "If you create a healthy home, it makes for happy people," said South Mountain resident Shari Martin. Feng shui (pronounced fung shway) is a Chinese philosophy that helps regulate how elements can affect different aspects of life, and Martin uses ancient theories mixed with new-age simplicity when she helps clients de-clutter, de-cloud, and balance their lives.

Feng shui was developed thousands of years ago in small villages of the Far East when people studied the formations of the land and ways of the wind and water to determine the best places to settle. Good feng shui would produce bountiful harvest, healthy livestock and abundant life.

Feng shui was originally known as "Kan-Yu," which means "the law of heaven and earth." Today feng shui is about placement and arrangement of space to achieve harmony with the environment — to have the best effects on health, wealth, and personal relationships by promoting the flow of positive energy and neutralizing or avoiding negative or destructive energy.

While the ancient philosophy dictates the use of the stars, some of today's principles aren't based on astrology. Martin uses a more western, North-American philosophy, which is pleasing in its simplicity.

"It's very personal to each person," Martin explained, noting that feng shui isn't a home design style, it uses the person's own accessories and furniture in different formations. When Martin uses feng shui in a home, she will make use of the homeowner's own style and the decorations already available.

"I'm not imposing my style on theirs," she said, pointing out, however, that rearranging and highlighting certain pieces can help people discover their personal style.

When she takes on a living space that's cluttered and unkempt, she defines it simply.

"They've forgotten what's important," she said. "If you love it, use it, and if it means something to you, then it's healthy for you. If not, it needs to be blessed and released. It (de-cluttering) can lighten your whole spirit."

Feng shui theories are simple to follow. The floor plan of a living space is divided into nine sectors (see diagram on next page).

"How you interact with the space and how you respect it can affect your energy and your outlook on life," Martin said.

Each sector is correlated with a specific area of life. Pairs in the love section can foster relationships, while coins placed in the soil of a plant in the wealth section can help finances grow. A photo of the place you'd like to visit in the travel section can help a dream become a reality.

Plants bring energy to a home, and also help to counteract any negative energy emitted by electronic equipment.

Eliminating dangers in the home is another philosophy of feng shui. Safety is a key component in creating a healthy environment. Martin explained that if someone doesn't feel safe and comfortable in their home, the good energy will be blocked.

Along the same lines, the feng shui philosophy prizes rounded edges rather than pointed corners. Whether it be a table or a light fixture, long, flowing curves will help the energy of the space keep moving.

"I usually tell people not to change more than three things a day, or there will be a severe shift in the energy (of the home)," Martin said. "I give them a map to work toward."

One home that Martin visited had garbage cans at the front door, a broken doorbell, and a closet that couldn't be opened because it was blocked, among other things.

"Everything should be open and accessible," Martin said, noting that an entrance to a home should be welcoming. "If your space is cluttered, your mind will be cluttered."

She noted that some clutter is okay — if items are meaningful and used regularly, and you surround yourself with things you love, it won't seem like clutter. It's the useless clutter that can cloud one's thoughts.

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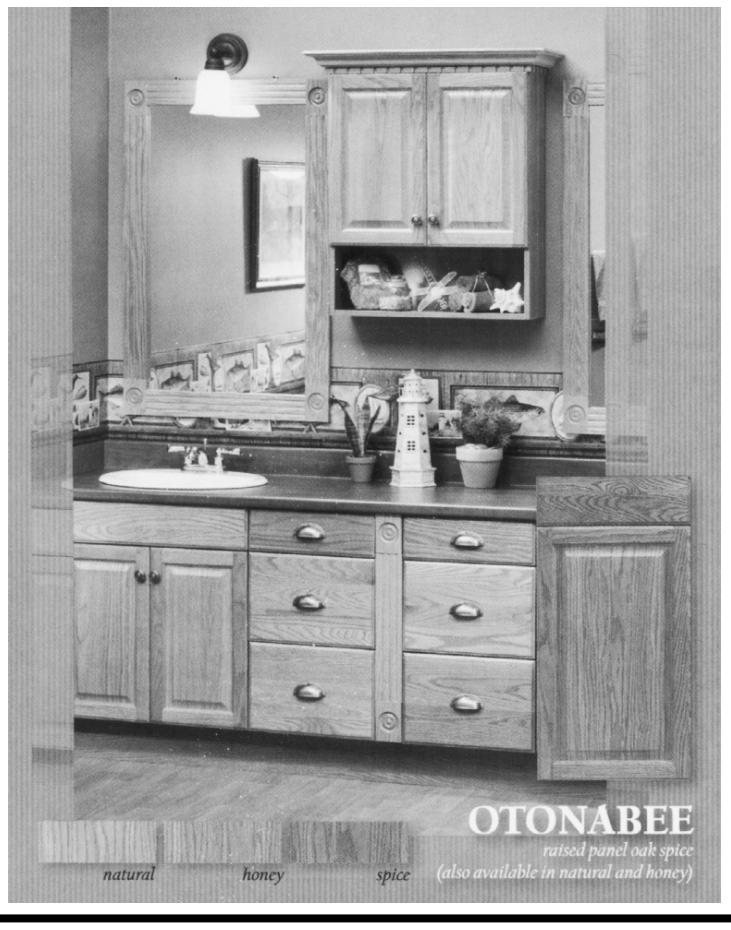
Give an Ordinary Bathroom or Kitchen A Fresh New Perspective...



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Feng shui sectors

Feng shui

• continued from previous page

It's been about 10 years since Martin first studied the art of feng shui.

"I wanted to make sure my house, my own personal space was healthy," she explained about how she became interested in it. "Then I wanted to pass that on to others. I still get excited when someone asks about it."

She pointed out that feng shui isn't just for homes — it can be used in offices or even on individual desks. "I've even done a teacher's classroom," she said.

Martin and business partner Joyce Boyd collectively form Joy to Share Decorating Services. The team decorates for weddings and other special events, and also stages homes that are for sale.

"It (feng shui) lent itself so easily to getting a home ready for sale," Martin said, pointing out that buyers will feel much more comfortable in a healthy, balanced environment. "If it (the environment) is cold and unwelcoming, they won't feel at ease."

Martin noted that feng shui isn't for everyone, but in most cases, people respond with enthusiasm. Even when homeowners don't necessarily believe in the changing effects of feng shui, they find their space more comfortable and aesthetically pleasing.

"When someone gets involved, they really get excited," Martin said, noting that everyone can benefit from "a little healthy balance."

"It may be a tiny personal risk, but give it a try," she offered as advice to those who may be apprehensive about feng shui. "There hasn't been (a client) yet who hasn't got something out of it."

A couple of years ago, Martin held a feng shui training session in the basement of South Mountain United Church. She charged $5 a person as a church fundraiser.

"The place was packed," she said. "I was blown away."

Martin is in high demand at work, too, where co-workers are constantly asking her to peruse their floor plans.

"There's a waiting list," she joked.

If you think your living space is in need of "a little healthy balance," call Martin at 613-989-2162.

Battery chargers: Handy devices with a dark side

Rummage through a few drawers in a typical Canadian home and you're bound to come across at least a couple of battery chargers. While these simple devices have prevented millions of disposable batteries from going to landfills across Canada, they also have a dark side.

Battery chargers continue to draw power even when the product they are charging has been fully energized or disconnected from the charger. Leaving a charger plugged in with no device attached is like leaving the television on when no one is home to watch it! In the meantime, your electricity bills are rising and unnecessary pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are being generated.

The moral of this story: unplug battery chargers as soon as the device is fully charged or when the charger is not being used. If you regularly use a number of battery chargers for cell phones, PDAs, portable music devices or power tools, consider creating a "charging station" where all of the chargers are plugged into a single power bar to allow you to control when and how they are used.

For more information on reducing energy consumption by electronic devices in your home, visit Natural Resources Canada's Energy Star web site at energystar.gc.ca or for free publications call 1 800 387-2000.

Buying energy-efficient appliances helps reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The end result is more money in your pocket and a better environment for everyone, including future generations. To find out more about the Government of Canada's initiatives to help reduce the consequences of climate change, visit ecoaction.gc.ca.

- News Canada



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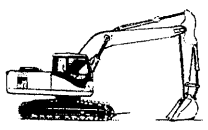
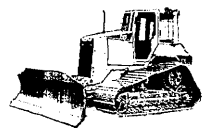

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Pool personnel

Owner Trevor Carruthers and the staff at Funtastic Pools on May Street in Winchester — including bookkeeper Janet Thompson (left) and office manager Kathy Killick — are excited to offer hot tubs and installations, and will keep the business open during the winter months. Carruthers took over from the previous owner in early 2007, and is planning to make the business "bigger and better than ever," still focussing on customer service.

Press Photo — Duncan

Fantastic service at Funtastic Pools

WINCHESTER — It's been less than a year since Funtastic Pools in Winchester changed hands, and the staff is ready to head into its first winter season on the job.

Trevor Carruthers, who grew up in Morewood, took over the business from its previous owner in early 2007. Having worked at the store for the preceding six years, he knows all the ins and outs of pools and installations.

"It's been pretty good," he said after his first summer season as owner. "I learned a lot. It's been a good year, and I hope next year is even better."

Carruthers said he's excited to now offer outdoor hot tubs and spas. He explained that while the former owner closed to business over the winter, he's happy to keep the doors open year-round.

"We're trying to get some more on-site," Carruthers said about creating a hot tub showroom at the May Street store, and maybe even having a tub running as an example for potential buyers.

Customers thinking about getting a hot tub should think about the size required, and how they will use it — many people use hot tubs for hydrotherapy for arthritis, while others are just looking for a spot to relax.

Outdoor hot tubs need a close-by electrical source and a sturdy deck — though Carruthers said he can install a pad for the tub if need be. Customers should consider protection from the wind when they're choosing a spot for their spa, but they are available in all sizes — the smallest model is 78 by 60 by 89 inches.

"They're actually one of the deepest hot tubs," Carruthers pointed out, noting the 39-inch depth.

Funtastic offers a range of hot tubs — from three person to eight-person — that come with a variety of options, and are professionally installed by staff.

"It usually only takes about an hour," Carruthers said of the simplicity of installation.

The hot tubs can be installed over the winter, as well, regardless of the snow. Carruthers said that many people opt to give hot tubs as Christmas gifts.

"We're very accommodating," he noted about delivery and installation, explaining that arrangements can be made to have the tub installed sooner, but that it usually takes about a week after purchase for delivery.

Funtastic Pools continues to provide chemical analysis on pool water, free of charge, which helps customers understand what chemicals should be added and when. For example, a low Ph level can wrinkle liners, and damage filters and pumps — but it's not something that many pool owners would be able to detect. The store will be providing all spa chemicals and instructions to new hot tubbers.

Carruthers said he's enjoyed being in the driver's seat at the business, and that he hopes to make it "bigger and better than ever."

There are customers who travel from Brockville, Cornwall, and Ottawa for the service and knowledgeable staff.

Funtastic Pools has been in Winchester for 33 years, "and I plan to stick around for another 30," said Carruthers. "I want to be here for a long time."

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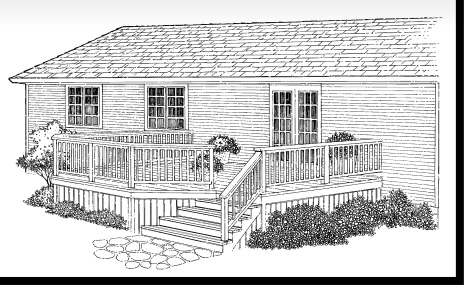

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WINCHESTER: Almost 1,400 sq. ft. custom home to be built. Many models available, **$239,900**



BERWICK: 2-bedroom with huge garage on 1/2-acre lot, **$124,900**



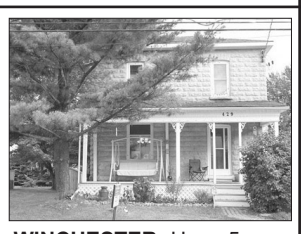
CHESTERVILLE: New 3-bedroom home awaiting its first owner in subdivision, **$219,900**



MORRISBURG: 1996 3-bedroom, 2-bath raised bungalow - move in condition, **$174,900**



CHESTERVILLE: 3-bedroom, 2-bath lovely character home with double deep double garage, **$219,900**



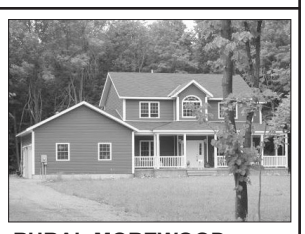
WINCHESTER: Huge 5-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with quality finishes & in-law suite possibility, **$259,900**



WINCHESTER: 100% completely renovated in last 3 years - gorgeous! **$166,900**



WINCHESTER: 3-bedroom, 3-bath home with large double garage with workshop - immaculate, **$239,900**



RURAL MOREWOOD: 2006 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath on 1 private acre - a beauty with large garage, **$335,000**



FINCH: 5+1 bedroom, 2-bath raised bungalow on 1 country acre, **$239,900**



CHESTERVILLE/DUNBAR: Upgraded brick 3-bedroom bungalow on 0.5 acre lot, **$174,900**



WILLIAMSBURG: Affordable and upgraded 3-bedroom family home, **$86,900**



SOUTH MOUNTAIN: Solid brick 3-bedroom character home with lush backyard, **$159,900**



SOUTH MOUNTAIN: 100% renovated in last 2 years with new full basement - beautiful, **$199,900**



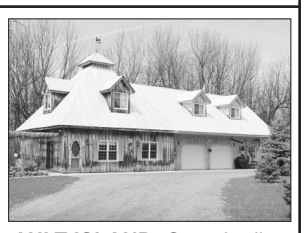
WILLIAMSBURG: R2000 2-storey, 5-6 bedroom home with wonderful finishing and 2.3 treed acres, **$339,900**



WINCHESTER SPRINGS: 5-bedroom Cape Cod style on 4+ acres with in-law suite possibility, **$299,900**



WINCHESTER: All-brick 3-bedroom bungalow on 1/2 acre with extra detached garage, **$209,900**



AULT ISLAND: Superb all-season executive cottage-retreat style home near the water, **$279,900**

LAND AND LOTS

SOUTH MOUNTAIN: 7 ACRES WATERFRONT **$47,000**
BRINSTON: 22 ACRES, VACANT **$45,000**
CHESTERVILLE/WILLIAMSBURG: 10 ACRES RECREATION **$29,900**
VERNON: 6 ACRES RECREATION **$60,000**
RURAL MOUNTAIN: 12.5 ACRE RECREATION **$13,000**
RURAL WINCHESTER: 3/4 ACRE BLDG. LOT **$40,000**
WINCHESTER: SUBDIVISION BLDG. LOTS **$39,900**
RURAL INKERMAN: 1 ACRE BLDG. LOT **$39,900**
RURAL INKERMAN: 1.6 ACRE BLDG. LOT **$23,000**
CHESTERVILLE: BLDG. LOT **$29,900**
WINCHESTER: BLDG. LOT **$30,000**
METCALFE: 1/2 ACRE BLDG. LOT **$47,500**

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Integrating storage for wine bottles in a cabinet creates an elegant bar.

Installing a bar in your home

If you want to install a bar in your home, start by determining the best location for this new feature. In addition to the available space, you must also consider the ambiance. Indeed, it is preferable to choose an area where it is pleasant and comfortable to entertain your friends and family.

You can use an existing surface and integrate some storage for wine bottles underneath. Perhaps, you will have to build your own bar, to fit the space and suit the use you want to make of it. The living room, the family room, and the basement are the most popular locations. You can also convert a room that is no longer used, and decorate it as you please.

If the lack of space or room arrangement makes it impossible to install a bar, you can transform an existing or new cabinet into a small bar or storage for your wine bottles. A portable wine cabinet is ideal. As a last resort, install a bottle-holder or a small wine service table in a room where you will enjoy entertaining your guests.

Don't just place a few stools around the bar; also group a few chairs around small tables, or comfortable armchairs with side tables. Finally, consider the decor, the lighting, and the sound system, to create a friendly and enjoyable atmosphere.



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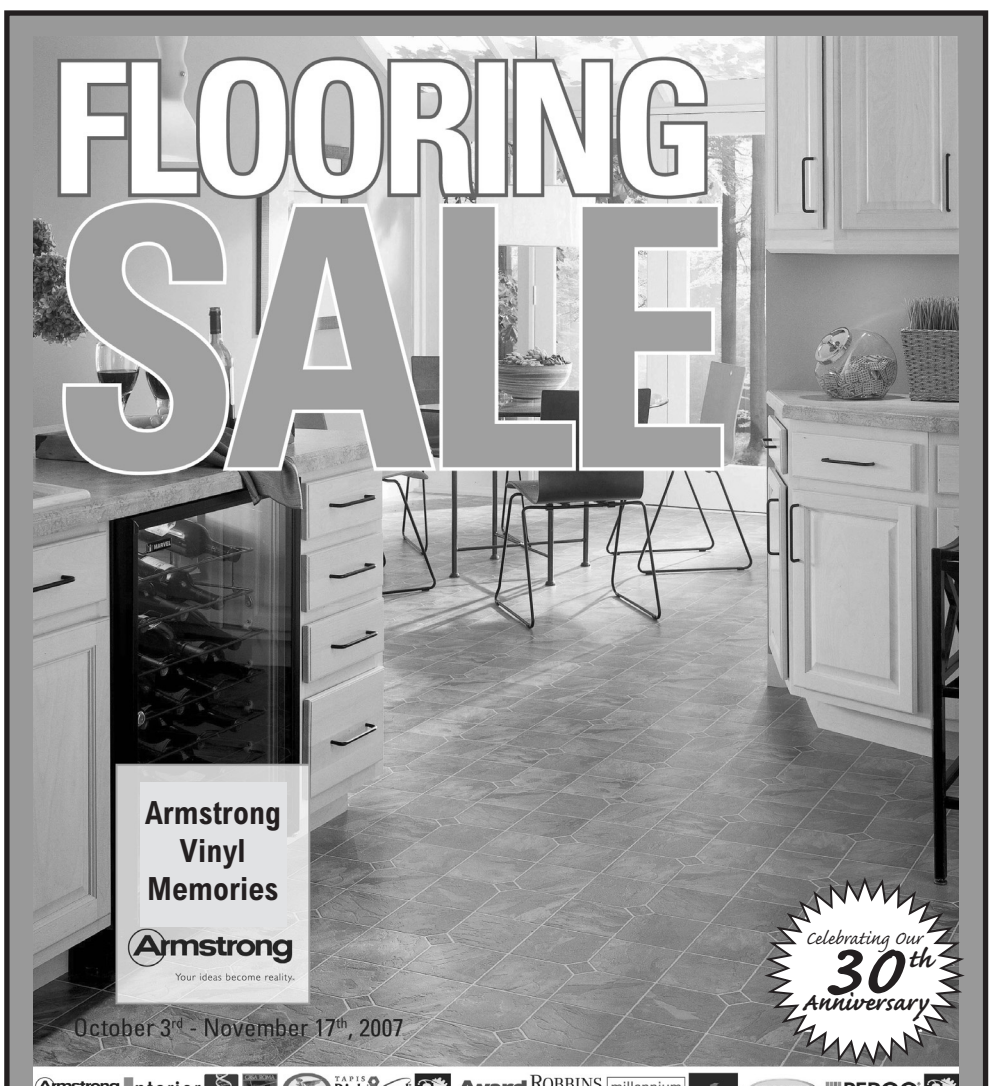

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To prevent the television from dominating the room, you can place it in a large bookcase and surround it with books, framed photographs, and decorative items.

Decorating solutions

Incorporate the television into the decor

Except for the few rare people who never watch television and don't feel the need to add one to their decor, the television is an integral part of most homes.

Yet, in a nicely decorated room, we often wonder where to place the television so that it will blend into the decor and be viewed in a comfortable setting.

First, determine the main focus of the room. If it's the television, place it in the middle of the seating area. If it's the fireplace, set the chairs and sofas facing this feature, then place the TV on an adjacent wall so that you can watch it without twisting your neck.

A proven solution is to conceal it in an armoire or some other built-in storage area. You can also place it on a large bookcase and surround it with books, framed photographs, and decorative items. This way, it won't overwhelm the space. In a small room, set the TV in the last corner to catch your eye as you enter.

As TV fanatics already know, our eyes get tired in the dark, yet lighting that is too strong or that reflects on the screen is not recommended.

So what can you do? Aim for softness and avoid creating a contrast between the brightness of the screen and the surrounding obscurity. Really, you have three options. First, you can aim some lighting at the wall behind the television; however, this means that the TV cannot be placed against the wall! A torch lamp with a shade can be placed in front of the TV, no further than 2 metres; the result is the same. Finally, wall-mounted diffusers can be installed on the wall behind you.

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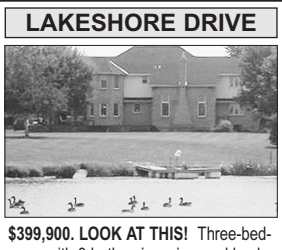
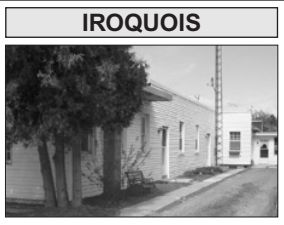
$149,000. OWNER SAYS SELL! Fantastic 2-bedroom, all-brick bungalow. Gas furnace and wood fireplace.

LAKESHORE DRIVE



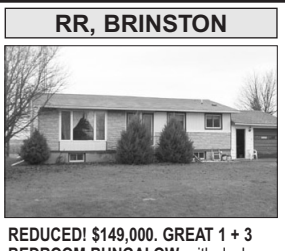
$399,900. LOOK AT THIS! Three-bedroom with 3 baths, river view and backing onto Flagg Inlet.

IROQUOIS



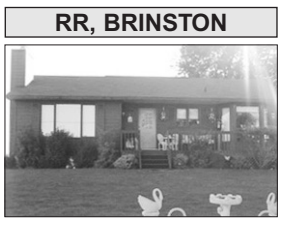
$123,000, MONEY-MAKING FOURPLEX, 3 rented apartments, one more commercial to rent at front.

RR, BRINSTON



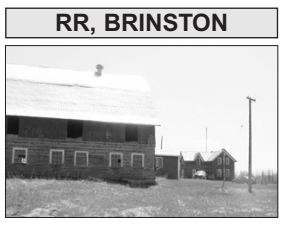
REDUCED! $149,000. GREAT 1 + 3 BEDROOM BUNGALOW, with deck and above ground pool on paved road.

RR, BRINSTON



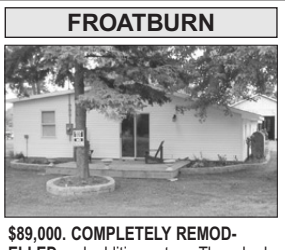
$189,000. GREAT 3-BEDROOM BUNGALOW, wrap-around porch and deck, storage shed, furnace, central air.

RR, BRINSTON



$199,000, 49 ACRES, 44 in hay and 5 in bush. Large good older cattle and horse barn. House needs TLC.

FROATBURN



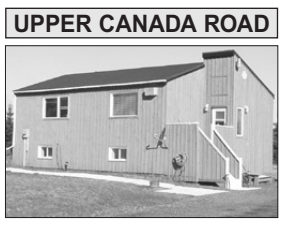
$89,000. COMPLETELY REMODELLED and addition put on. Three bedrooms, large 4-pc. bath, eat-in kitchen.

RIVERSIDE HEIGHTS



PRICE REDUCED! $157,000. LOVELY WELL-MAINTAINED 3-bedroom bungalow.

UPPER CANADA ROAD



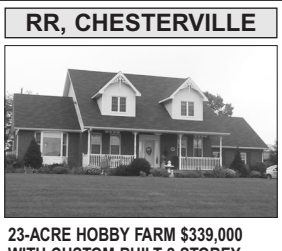
PRICE REDUCED! $145,000. NEWLY CONSTRUCTED 2-bedroom with family room. New septic and well.

WINCHESTER SPRINGS



$210,000. HOBBY FARM, 15 ACRES OR 92 ACRES, stone house, exposed beams, 20x40 insulated shop.

RR, CHESTERVILLE



23-ACRE HOBBY FARM $339,000 WITH CUSTOM-BUILT 2-STOREY HOME. Cathedral ceiling, landscaped.

WINCHESTER



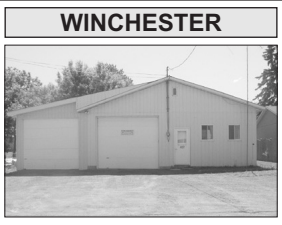
DUPLEX UP & DOWN, $139,000, both rented on 1-yr. lease, $700 & $610 + elec. Vendor pays heat at $1,600/yr.

WINCHESTER



REDUCED! $239,000. CUSTOM-BUILT HOME, 3+1, pine walls and cathedral ceiling, finished basement.

WINCHESTER



PRICE REDUCED! $89,900. A TON OF POTENTIAL, commercial building with 2 baths, office, 1 heated bay.

WINCHESTER SPRINGS



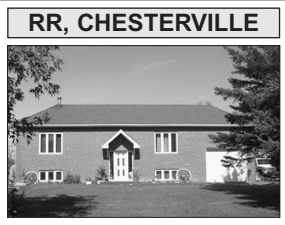
REDUCED! $239,900. 4-1/2 ACRES, 3-bedroom brick with new maple kitchen, 35x30 heated shop and more.

FINCH



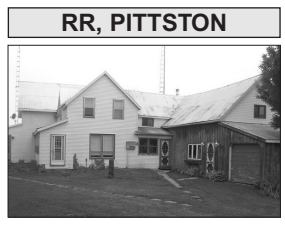
3-BEDROOM BRICK BUNGALOW $199,000, large shop, zoned commercial, priced to sell.

RR, CHESTERVILLE



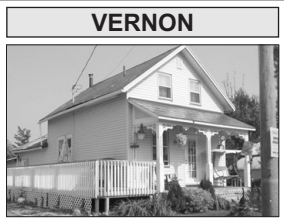
$219,000. GREAT LOT WITH 3-BEDROOM HI-RANCH, hardwood and ceramic flooring. Private.

RR, PITTSTON



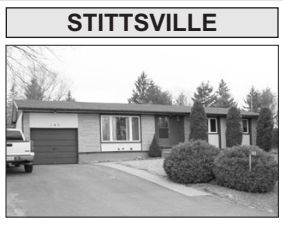
20-ACRE HOBBY FARM $229,000, double house, 2 services, can be rented or all one home.Fenced for cattle.

VERNON



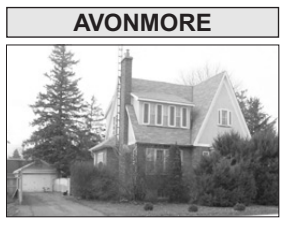
$169,000. AFFORDABLE 3-BEDROOM, 1-1/2 baths, new furnace and oil tank. Ready to move in.

STITTSVILLE



$269,000, DELIGHTFUL 3-BEDROOM, on municipal water, finished recroom and games room with woodstove.

AVONMORE



$154,900, LOVELY 1-1/2 STOREY HOME with hardwood throughout. Garage and paved drive. Fenced yard.

CARDINAL



$119,000, TWO-STOREY, THREE-BEDROOM, semi-detached.



Gardening tips: Autumn clean-up guide, eco style

The chill in the air signals that it is time to get your garden and lawn ready for the winter months ahead, so why not do so in the most environmentally friendly way possible? Consider the following top three clean-up tips for fall:

Fall and your lawn

It's actually more important to fertilize your lawn in the fall than it is in the spring because it dictates how strong the grass will be next year. This year try a 100 per cent natural fertilizer and use a push or electric-powered mulching mower to help reduce the toxic air emissions produced by old two- and four-stroke gas mowers.

Garden clean-up

Leave plants in bloom alone along with anything with seeds for birds to munch on all winter. However, cut back anything that's looking mushy or dried-out and put this garden waste in the compost. Last but not least, clean all your garden equipment with fine steel wool and rub with vegetable oil to remove rust and dirt.

It's a wrap

Wrap new trees and evergreens if they need protection from wind or southern sun, especially in the first year. Drape fabric over them (light insulation cloth or burlap will do) and staple them to stakes placed a few feet away. Native plants don't need any special treatment for the winter.

More environmentally-friendly garden clean-up information is available online at www.homedepot.ca.

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Charlene Gibeault shows off the RotoSpa, a portable polyethylene hot tub that she and her husband sell at their Berwick business, Serenity Spas. Press Photo — James

Affordable portable hot tubs available at Serenity Spas

BERWICK — Serenity Spas near Berwick celebrated its first anniversary this past July and business is going strong for the portable polyethylene hot tub retailer.

"Everyone needs to relax more," said co-owner Charlene Gibeault, about the appeal of a spa, adding that hot tubbing is a great way to spend time with friends and family members as conversation just seems to flow like the swirling water.

Serenity Spas sells the RotoSpa, a tub for five or six people with surround seating and 14 adjustable jets in various positions and combinations — from a "six pack" for deep tissue massage to single jets at various heights to target specific areas.

A key attraction of the RotoSpa is its portability. The tub weighs 275 pounds when empty, can be transported in a pick-up truck, and rolls through a 24-inch door. It can rest on a well-supported deck, on cement, or on a patio.

"If they're going to sell (their house), they can take it with them," said Gibeault, also noting that the tub can be moved into a garage or indoors for the winter if desired. She said she also knows some families who pass the tub around from house to house.

Gibeault explained that she and her husband, Richard, had been searching for the perfect hot tub for themselves, but were put off by high prices. When a friend purchased a RotoSpa they were impressed and soon got one for themselves.

"We enjoyed ours so much, we contacted the company in Lakefield (Ontario) about becoming a dealer," she said, noting that they toured the facility where the tubs are manufactured. "The quality control up there is amazing — it's predominantly what sold Richard and I on the product."

Serenity Spas sell the RotoSpa and cover for $3,995 plus tax. It has a 10-year warrantee on the shell and a two-year warrantee on the electrical components.

There are a variety of additional tub accessories, including a cover lifter, outside stair, extra LED light, hand rail, and even a screened in gazebo.

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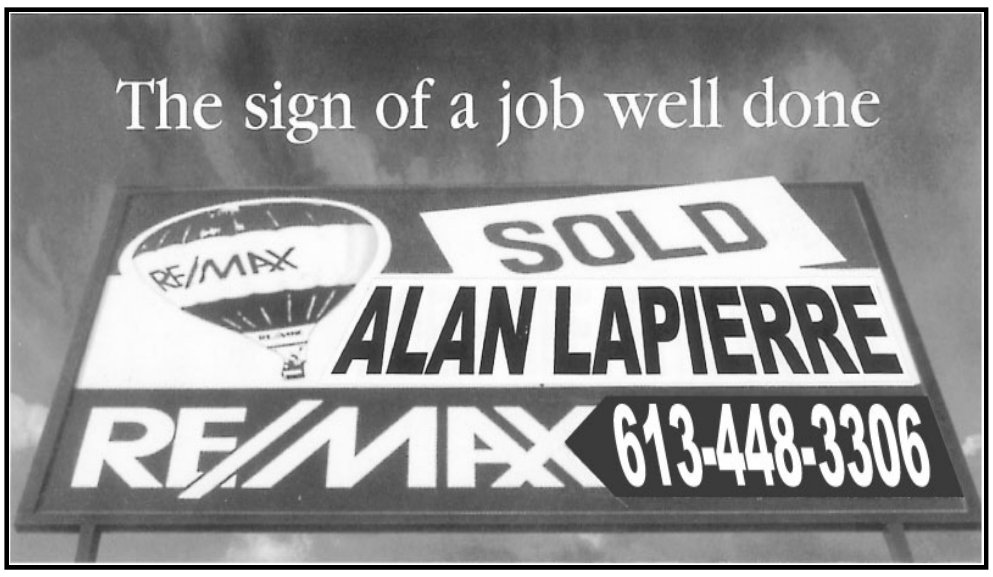

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Serenity Spas

• continued from previous page

Serenity Spas also offers all the necessary chemicals and some additional items such as fragrances, and sandals.

"They're very easy to run," said Gibeault about the tubs, noting that the chemical additions are simple and otherwise the water only needs to be changed a couple of times per year. "There's nothing complicated about it."

There are generally four or five tubs on-site at Serenity Spas showing a sample of the tub colours: brown, grey, and green. The company also offers rentals at $299 a week or $499 for two weeks. If renters decide to keep the tub, the rental fee comes off the purchase price.

Of all the tubs the company has rented, only one has been returned, the rest have been purchased.

Because there are tubs on-site, delivery is generally very quick. And because the RotoSpa headquarters isn't far away, even orders for parts or tubs not in stock only take a couple of days to arrive.

Gibeault explained that Serenity Spas is flexible in its hours. Customers can stop in and pick up extra chemicals in the evening.

"There's usually somebody here all the time," she said. "(People) know that we're really accessible."

The business is growing and is proving to be a good fit for the Gibeaults.

"I really enjoy it," said Gibeault about having the business right at their home. She said that in the past year word of mouth referrals have really boosted the company's business. "People are getting to know more and more that we're here."

Heading into the Christmas season, Serenity Spas is holding a draw for a free weekend tub rental. In order to earn a ballot, visitors are being asked to bring a food item or small toy to donate to local needy families. The campaign will run until mid-December, and the Gibeaults are hoping to fill at least one tub completely with donations.

Gibeault noted that she is not really into being a salesperson.

"Either the product is right for you, or it isn't," she said, adding that it seems the people interested in buying are looking to take care of themselves, both with the therapeutic benefits of the hot water and with the emphasis on relaxation that a tub inherently holds.

"People are looking to treat themselves," said Gibeault. "And they deserve it."

Serenity Spas is located at 14612 County Road 9, just west of Berwick, and can be reached at 613-984-2623.

Humidity problems in your home? There are solutions!

By humidity, we mean the amount of water vapour in the air. You, your family members, and your pets produce water vapour by breathing and transpiring. Even your indoor plants produce water vapour. Our daily activities (meal preparation, showers, laundry, etc) affect the air inside our home. In addition, continuous water vapours from the ground can infiltrate our house through the basement or the vacuum line.

Some humidity is necessary for our comfort and our health. However, an excess or a lack of humidity can entail all kinds of problems for the occupants of a house. Some problems are just annoying, but others can be much more serious.

There is a simple and economical way to know if your house has a humidity problem: the hygrometer. This instrument will confirm if the air in your house is over- or under-humidified. You can then determine if special measures are required and, depending on the case, which measures must be taken.

Sometimes, changing some of your family's habits is enough to re-establish the humidity level. However, if the problems persist, some appliances can help you solve them. A dehumidifier is an effective way to deal with excessive humidity. Many models are available (with a heat pump, chemical absorbers, dehumidifying ventilator…), so it is essential to be well-informed before you purchase one.

Hygrometer measures humidity of your home

Because of home heating during winter, we often use humidifiers to obtain an adequate level of humidity. At first glance, using a portable humidifier may appear to be harmless, however, this appliance can propagate certain microorganisms that can affect the health of younger and older people.

Here are a few guidelines to help you reduce the risks

- Empty the water tank after every use.
- Disinfect the different parts of the humidifier with a bleach solution every three days.
- Only fill the tank when the appliance will be used.
- Always respect the manufacturer's directions.



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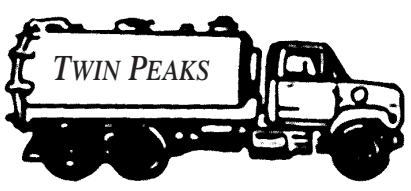

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New program launched

Home staging can help sell your house

by Matthew Barbour

MORRISBURG — "Gender neutral" and "curb appeal" are still relatively new terms when it comes to the real estate business, but according to Dwight Saunders, a design consultant, these concepts must be considered when putting a property up for sale.

Saunders has established the Canadian Network of Redesign and Home Stagers, which prepares people for the growing home staging industry with a five-day course.

During one his classes recently, he explained that the art of home staging is the process of cleaning, organizing, rearranging, updating, and preparing a home for sale at the best price.

He said home stagers prepare residences for the real estate market by depersonalizing and decluttering them, then highlighting the best architectural and functional features. He noted that when a house has not been sold after being on the market for a few months, the first suggestion is that the price be lowered.

"That usually means a $10,000 or $20,000 reduction, but by engaging a home stager, the owner can maintain and probably obtain the asking price and the property will sell faster," Saunders said, noting that a home stager's fee would be a good investment to guard against the much bigger loss of a price reduction.

Depending on the task at hand, the work of a home stager can take anywhere from a few hours to a few days to complete and the fee can vary accordingly, from a few hundred dollars to several thousand. The cost of home staging a three-bedroom bungalow, according to Saunders, often comes in anywhere from $250 to $1,000.

"There are three ways to approach the pricing of a project — we can do the consulting only and the owner can arrange for the physical labour to be done, or we can do everything, or we can work out a combination of consultation and some labour," he said.

Depersonalization of a home's decor is where the gender neutral aspect comes into play.

"Prospective buyers will not feel like they are walking into what is decidedly a woman's domain — we arrange things so that it can be anybody's space," said Saunders, pointing out that once a residence is placed on the market, it becomes a house and is no longer a home.

"The idea is to appeal to most of the senses," he continued, adding that caution must be used when it comes to smell. "It's better to have people attracted by the sparkle of the kitchen, rather than be distracted by the smell of bacon hanging in the air from breakfast."

When asked about the technique of having an apple pie baking in the oven when someone comes to view the house, he frowned slightly. "That's an idea from the '80s and '90s and it's not done anymore — some people are very sensitive to strong smells," he said.

He indicated that a house has curb appeal when it is considered to be attractive to most people who look at it.

"There are people who want to move into a ready-made space," Saunders said. He suggested that this is one of the reasons why unoccupied and empty houses do not sell as quickly. When it comes to unfurnished residences, he said he usually recommends that the owner rent enough furniture and accessories for at least two rooms to help create a lived-in atmosphere.

Saunders' home staging course includes sessions on photography and picture composition, in which students learn to capture key features of homes as well as accents in decor. Photographs taken by home stagers are usually turned over to real estate agents to aid in off-site presentations of the home, including on the Internet.

The course also covers the fundamentals of home staging and setting up a career in that field, as well as marketing and promotion of a home staging business.

As yet, there is no form of accreditation for home stagers, but Saunders is attempting to remedy that, partially at least, by setting up a network of recognition amongst his students. He said he hopes the network will be a form of association through which students will be able to share referrals and resources.

Many area residents know Saunders as one of the creative minds, along with Helder Ambrosio, at Aura Beauty and Wellness Spa in Winchester. But Saunders has worn a number of other hats, as well. In addition to 30 years of experience as an interior designer, he has been involved in the clothing design business with his own private label, and in cosmetics, forecasting future trends.

Saunders launched his first home staging course on Sept. 15 with two students, but his second course was sold out weeks before it was scheduled to begin.

"I want to keep the classes small — there will never be more than six students per course," he said.

For more information, Saunders can be contacted at 613-543-0485. His email address is cnrhomestagers@yahoo.com.





Dwight Saunders, known to local residents as owner of the Aura Beauty and Wellness Spa on Main Street in Winchester, has launched a new program — a training course in home staging. Above: he takes his very first students, Angela Vinet of Long Sault (centre) and Lissa Fawcett of Winchester through their final hours of the course.

Right: Having been involved with home staging for about two years, Dwight Saunders has built up a small inventory of accessories that he can use when he is called upon for a quick fix to most decorating deficiencies.

Photos — Barbour

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In reality, it is when we mix different colours that the eye and the brain recognize the limits of the walls, which sometimes gives the impression that the space is smaller.

Colour selection and the impression of spaciousness

Many of us believe that a dark colour makes a room look smaller.

Yet, many experts agree that the colour, light or dark, does not affect our perception of the size of a room if it is applied on all four walls. It is when we mix different colours that the eye and the brain recognize the limits of the walls, which sometimes gives the impression that the space is smaller.

Therefore, don't hesitate to choose a deep red if you feel like it, or if you think it will be perfect to highlight the elements of your decor.

In fact, it is smart to choose a dark colour in a room that basks in sunlight. A nice assortment of glass items, along with a cool white ceiling, usually gives the impression that the room is larger.

The colour of the ceiling always looks darker than the wall colour. This is because the ceiling receives about 30% less light. To address this problem, you can direct some lighting towards the ceiling.

Another trick is to use yellow or yellow-based paint in order to add some brightness to a somber room. This colour reflects the light and gives the impression that the room is bright.

Finally, do not rush into a decision if you don't like the paint that you selected; it takes at least seven days for the eye to get used to a new tint. Give yourself some time!

From mish-mash to eco-green, the colours are true!

Today, home decorating is considered an entertaining and freeing therapeutic activity. The trend for 2007 is to blend everything together: earth tones with a touch of ethnicity, gold, terra cotta, and propylene; fair market products and signature designs; colours that clash; nature, Salvation Army chairs, and psychedelic wallpaper. This amazing hodgepodge is less about snubbing the rules of good taste and more about the desire to create a warm intimate ambiance with everything we love, and where we feel comfortable.

As for colours, you will notice that the tones are clearer, truer, and less elaborate than in previous years. Emotion, passion, and warmth are highlighted and, in 2007, we dare to go red. Following the trend, reds are infused with blue, making room for deep sophisticated colours, like burgundy tones with raspberry red and deep pink hues. Luscious berry-inspired reds are very in. Tones lean slightly towards violet but they are more red than mauve. Currants, plums, and raspberries are very much in style and add elegance to every decor.

Echoing the environmental concerns that affect every sector of activity, greens are well-regarded. Design and decoration have not escaped this powerful groundswell. For 2007, greens with subtle hints of yellow are more present. Avocado greens are quite popular as they appear in a vast array of tones and intensities. Also appearing on the horizon are celery and celadon greens, a tint that is a bit more yellow than sage green. Moss, khaki, and olive greens are, and will continue to be, popular. No matter which trendy green you choose, they are here to stay. A refreshing ambiance is guaranteed!



No matter which trendy green you choose, they are here to stay.

A child's bedroom… in constant evolution

Whereas adults share their activities between the different rooms in a house, children spend most of their time in their bedroom, where they sleep, play, work, and entertain their friends. A child's bedroom is its own universe, which is why it is so important to pay it special attention.

When the children are born, parents want to welcome them in a soft place that was designed especially for them, just like in the magazines. However, there is no sense in rushing into numerous purchases because, even if the "baby" furniture is irresistible, will it be useful for very long? Will your 3-year-old daughter's room, decorated with cute ducks in pastel colours, still please her later on?

The following list of questions will help you determine what you really need:

- Is the room meant for your first child, and how many children do you expect to have? (People often move when the second child arrives.)
- How long will the child occupy the room?
- Will the room eventually be shared with other children?
- Is it only for sleeping or is it also a playroom?
- Can the size of the room accommodate new furniture later on?
- Is the floor covering appropriate for a child?
- What are the child's needs? (The arrangement is different for a fearless daredevil little girl than for a young boy who enjoys spending his day with his books.)
- How much have you budgeted for furniture? For decoration?
- What style do you want to give the room?

Your child is still in diapers and it seems far away, but the time will come when the nursery will no longer be suitable, the colours and the decor too childish, the dresser too small, and, naturally, the crib will disappear. By carefully planning your child's bedroom, you won't be caught unprepared when the time comes.



Will this child's room still please your three-year-old daughter later on?



Advertorial

Geothermal Heat Pump Clears the Air

CASE STUDY: 2,200 SQ. FT. 10-YEAR-OLD HOUSE, JEFF GOODMAN & LYNNE LEBLANC, KEMPTVILLE, ONTARIO

SITUATION

Jeff Goodman and Lynne Leblanc live in a ten-year-old 2,200 square foot house in Kemptville, about 30 km south of Ottawa in Eastern Ontario. The house is well-constructed and insulated. The property is 20 acres in size and heavily forested.

CHALLENGE

Jeff and Lynne were fascinated by geothermal energy before moving into the house, but were unable to install a system immediately. They used the oil furnace that was already in place during their first year living at the house, during which they spent $1,700 on heating oil. After a year had passed, Jeff and Lynne decided it was time to install a geothermal system.

ACTION

Jeff contacted ATEL Air, a highly regarded NextEnergy Geothermal Specialist in his area, to install the geothermal system. He decided on the 'closed loop' design. Utilizing the open space provided by a logging trail through the forest, a trench was dug in Jeff and Lynne's back yard measuring five to six feet in depth, two feet in width and 750 feet in length. Fifteen hundred feet of piping was buried in the trench.

ATEL Air's technicians installed a Tranquility27™ geothermal unit in the basement to exchange heat between the piping in the ground and the house interior. The geothermal unit circulates air throughout the house via standard air ducts, supplying heating and cooling as required. The unit also provides a portion of the hot water.

RESULTS

Jeff and Lynne found that their heating and hot water costs dropped by half after installing the geothermal system (the new totals included air conditioning, which they did not have before). At the same time, they were able to maintain the house's indoor temperature consistently higher than they had with the oil furnace.

In addition to the payback, the geothermal system made very good sense for Jeff and Lynne in other ways as well. The bank considered the geothermal system a dollar-for-dollar increase in the resale value of the house. The geothermal system will also have a much longer lifetime and lower maintenance costs than an oil furnace. As Jeff says, "All factors considered, it's the most economical choice we could have made."

Jeff has also dramatically reduced his impact on the environment. Installing a geothermal system cuts an average household's greenhouse gas emissions by four tons a year, or the equivalent of four cars. Regarding that fact, Jeff has this to say: "It's hard to put a dollar amount on something so important to today's children."







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Custom cabinets *Sales associate Dave Young — pictured in the Clear Cut Installations showroom in South Mountain — is ready to sit down with customers looking for a new custom kitchen or bathroom and make sure their dream becomes a reality. Press Photo — Duncan*

Clear Cut Installations

"A one-stop reno-shop"

SOUTH MOUNTAIN — The staff at Clear Cut Installations in South Mountain is ready to make your dream kitchen a reality.

"The design options are unlimited," said sales associate Dave Young. "We will customize individual needs and make sure the final product is exactly what the customer looking for."

Whether a customer wants a simple countertop or cabinet upgrade, or a complete restoration and renovation, the staff will take the time to make sure all needs are met. Which is what, Young said, makes Clear Cut stand out.

"We have the ability to deal with the customer one on one," he said. "We sit down with them and work through the whole process — start to finish."

Over four or five consultations, customers look at the various options of their renovation — from colours and wood grain to cabinet placement. They have the chance to peruse several design mock-ups and decide what suits the space — and their needs — the best. Clear Cut also offers custom built-in units.

"If customers have a particular request, we can modify the cabinets any way they want," explained Young.

Whether it's flipping a room around, adding new windows, or concealing old doors, Clear Cut can transform an out-dated kitchen into a family's fantasy space.

"It's a one-stop reno-shop," Young said of the store, located on Main Street in South Mountain. "We look after all facets of kitchen installation. We can offer the complete contract — from A to Z."

Young said Clear Cut covers plumbing and electrical work — on top of flooring, cabinet, and countertop installation — eliminating the need for customers to have to co-ordinate several contractors to get the job done.

"We cover all areas," he said, noting that Clear Cut ensures quality control.

"There are constantly new products on the market," Young said about countertops and cabinet finishes. He pointed out that a popular trend in custom kitchens right now is pot lighting under cabinets or the edges of countertops.

"We pride ourselves on personal service and attention to detail," said Young. "We work with the customer and end up with a finished product they are truly happy with. It's nice to see people happy after going through many iterations of the project."

Young pointed out that much of Clear Cut's business comes through referrals.

"When we finish a job like this," he said, pointing to a photo of a flawless finished project on a bulletin board in the show room, "we're sure to see their (the homeowners') friends and neighbours."

Clear Cut serves all of Eastern Ontario, and has customers who travel from Stittsville and Cornwall. The business also offers custom bathrooms, all types of flooring, sunrooms, roofing, and siding. Check out www.clearcutinstallations.com or call 1-800-561-4206 for more information.

A furnace inspection is inexpensive and wise

by J.C. Carroll

This is the time of year when we flip the thermostat to "heat" then cross our fingers to hope that it works.

"Homeowners tend to take their heating appliances for granted," says Dave Frittenburg, president of the Canadian Oil Heat Association (COHA) Ontario Chapter. "We just assume that they'll perform when called upon. It is interesting to note that we don't hesitate to take our cars in for annual tune-ups and inspections, but we tend to ignore the equipment that keeps us comfortable through freezing temperatures all winter."

Frittenburg says that annual inspections aren't expensive and they are often covered in an oil dealer's annual service plan for which customers have already paid. Most inspections last 30 to 60 minutes and involve a thorough cleaning of the unit. The burner, controls, and hot water heater are tested and the oil tank is carefully inspected.

"Inspections on oil heat appliances are even more important now," he explained, "because of current safety regulations, such as those implemented in Ontario by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. These standards require that fuel oil distributors perform basic and comprehensive inspections on their entire customer bases. The regulations are intended to ensure that oil heat customers continue receiving the safest heating fuel and products available."

If a system is more than 20 years old, COHA suggests that homeowners consider replacing it. Even simply upgrading to a high efficiency burner will provide savings in energy and money.

More information is available online at www.newoil heat.com and at www.coha.ca.

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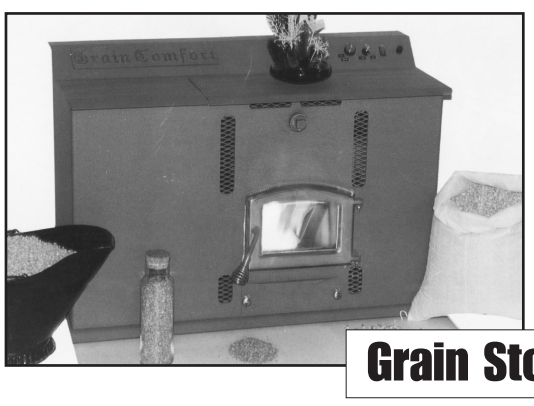

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Morrisburg Victorian



This is a magnificent home and a once in a lifetime investment. This triple-brick, Victorian-style, three-storey home is over 6,300 sq. ft. The 3/4 acre serviced lot is located on the St. Lawrence River shore in Morrisburg. The lot offers almost 200 feet of waterfront with a spectacular view.

Known as the Gorrell home, located at 31 Lakeshore Drive, it was built in 1874 for one of Morrisburg's early medical practitioners. At that time it was regarded as one of the finest homes in the area, consisting of 27 rooms. Currently used as a six-unit apartment building completely retrofitted with sprinkler system, door closures, fire separations, etc. Included are six fridges, six stoves, electric water heaters, and existing light fixtures. There are two one-bedroom units on the main floor; two one-bedroom units on the second floor; and two bachelor units on the third floor.

The huge entrance way serves as an opening to the dining room, kitchen, living room and a mammoth curved hardwood staircase. Hardwood floors with oriental rugs. Woodwork and plaster work is extremely decorative. The living room and dining room are set off by floor-to-ceiling, carved wood fireplaces with mosaic tiles surrounding the hearth, and large wood-framed mirror above.

Exterior is dark red brick and verandahs and porches are decorated with intricate woodwork. On the south west side of the house there is also, a large detached drive shed.

The home is a beautiful piece of architecture showing that at one time the area was rich not only financially but in craftsmanship too.



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A playroom requires planning

When we fail to delineate a space for young children, the entire house becomes a playroom. A playroom is an excellent idea if you have an interesting space where the kids can play as they please.

To ensure the safety of your little ones, you must pay close attention to the quality of the make and finish of the furniture, as well as the floors and the walls. You must also make sure that the furniture and storage areas are within their reach and easily accessible. To make the most of the space, remove bulky furniture and select finishing materials that will cushion any falls.

As for decoration, consider the psychological effects of the colours you apply. For example, if your child is hyperactive, it is better to choose calming colours, like blues, greens, and soft tones, instead of bright red. For a child who suffers from allergies, avoid carpeting and any other materials and accessories that are likely to aggravate the condition.

In addition to the room being easy to access and offering sufficient natural light, you must also ensure that the play area you create is a safe and healthy environment.

Even when space is limited, a playroom should ideally respect the following criteria:

- easy to access, in case of an emergency;
- located near an outside exit, in case of fire; and
- safe access stairs.

Keep in mind that a playroom must evolve with the family. Today's toddlers are tomorrow's teenagers, who, sooner or later, will need a place to entertain their friends, watch television, listen to music (sometimes a bit too loud), or set up video games. Then, the teens will become young adults who may want to challenge their parents to a game of billiards or table tennis. There is no age limit for playing!



When planning a playroom for the kids, it is important to include furniture and storage areas within their reach and easy to access.

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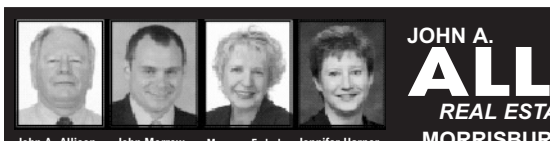
2 Fairholme Drive, Morrisburg - $349,000

Spacious, executive home features all the extras like central air, central vacuum, central front foyer, wood burning fireplace, air exchanger, cold storage room, and high efficiency gas furnace. There are five generous bedrooms for the growing family, plus formal living and dining rooms, main floor family room and a recreation/games room in the basement. The master bedroom features a full en suite with a deep tub, perfect for relaxing. This home is richly and tastefully decorated, with plaster ceilings in the dining and living rooms, French doors, and features quality 2" x 6" construction, Pella windows, and 200 amp electrical service. Quality flooring including hardwood, ceramic tile, and broadloom. There is generous closet and storage space throughout, including a cedar-line closet for off-season clothing in the basement and a full linen closet in the main second level bath. The double attached garage features extra storage space at the back, perfect for sporting equipment. The yard of this home has been tastefully landscaped. From the screened sun porch you can look over the spacious back yard complete with a creek running through at the rear of the property, and seasonal views of the St. Lawrence River. If you're seeking quality, impeccable decorating, and spacious rooms, then this home is definitely worth looking at. Call for a viewing today!



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The storage shed needs a good cleaning and some reorganization for the winter season.

Reorganize your shed for the winter season

Fall is the time to reorganize your storage shed. Start by taking out all of your winter protection gear and install it around your shrubs. Also get the temporary car and entrance shelters out and install them in preparation for winter. You will need to get the snowblower from the back of the shed and move it to where it will be easily accessible. While you are reorganizing, it's also a good time to perform some maintenance on your shed.

A storage shed must be solid and resistant in order to withstand the rigours of winter. You must repair and solidify it, as needed. A good cleaning of the interior will allow you to get rid of useless and cumbersome items. The shed will then be ready to welcome your summer equipment. You can add shelves and hooks for easier storage.

Before storing the patio furniture, the barbecue, the swing, the mosquito netting, the garden tools, and the bicycles, it is essential that they be properly cleaned. There are products specifically formulated to clean the different materials that make up these items. Pay special attention to the lawn mower, which needs some maintenance, an emptied gas reservoir, and a thorough cleaning before storage. Place the snowblower, the shovels, and other winter tools where they will be easily accessible.

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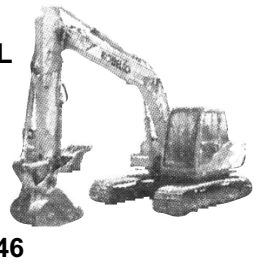

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When work takes over the house

Increasingly, more work is being done at home. Parents bring files home from the office; home is the office for the independent worker; and children have always done their schoolwork at home. Whatever the case, it is important to plan for a work area in the room arrangements of a home.

If the work is only sporadic, you can arrange a quiet corner in the living room or in another room. However, if you are working at home regularly and need privacy, you will be more inclined to dedicate an entire room for this purpose. Choose a quiet area to arrange a workstation. After determining the specific needs of the worker, select furniture that responds to the requirements. In addition to the desk, a file cabinet and bookshelves can complete the furniture arrangement.

For children's schoolwork, the work area is often set up in the child's bedroom. Today, most youth desks are designed to accommodate all of the conveniences. Modern desks include space for a computer and its accessories, storage space, and bookshelves. Often, there is enough room to add a decorative item.

When the work area is placed in a room that serves other purposes, like the bedroom or the living room, it is important to designate the area with a few visual elements. You can use floor or wall coverings to denote the area reserved for work. You can also add a division, such as a screen or some plants. Don't forget to decorate the work area to create a warm ambiance.

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A wood and metal staircase without risers.

A tasteful staircase

Today, staircase design has relaxed in order to make room for strong concepts. Rich woods, stairs without risers, and graphic handrails are always popular styles.

A staircase is an important feature in a house and so it must complement the style of the house. For example, in a house that features exotic wood, install a staircase made of exotic wood. If the decor is more modern, the staircase must complement this modernism. In antique styles, turned wood is still present but now it assumes clean slender curves. For modern decors, consider brushed iron posts. Eclectic decors call for cast iron, which dares to mix styles. With its sensational entrance, stainless steel is a very interesting option.

The modular staircase and factory finishes are the current options, because of their quick installation and great durability. Entirely factory-manufactured, the modular components include the staircase as well as its adjacent partitions. The modular staircase offers pre-cut sills and factory-painted and varnished stairs. Simply unpack and install the rails, spindles, and newels, to reveal a brand new, functional, staircase.

The advantages of the factory finishing process are increasingly more appreciated. It saves the house from the odors of toxic chemicals. In addition, the varnish, paints, and stains applied in the factory are high quality products. Varnish is applied uniformly on the stairs with one base coat and two finishing coats, making it particularly durable, especially since it has time to reach its maximum resistance.

In addition, the stairs are varnished on both sides, minimizing the risk of humidity infiltration. It also frees the house from dust by eliminating the need to sand at the work site. A factory-varnished staircase is sanded more finely to ensure a perfect finish with no brush marks or dust residue.

Two bedrooms for one child

When parents separate, a child may end up with two bedrooms: one at Mom's and the other at Dad's. It can be very upsetting for a child to live in two separate places. For this reason, it is recommended that the child be involved in the selection and arrangement of the decor. By providing an environment where the child is happy and comfortable, the shock of the separation is slightly diminished.

Because the child already has a bedroom in the family home, it is in the new apartment or the new house that the new bedroom needs decorating. You can create a space where the child will really feel at home by discussing his or her tastes and preferences.

While it is more difficult to let them choose the furniture, which is a big expenditure, you can still let them participate in the furniture placement for their room. In addition, the selection of colours and patterns for the paint, bedding, and curtains will contribute to the creation of a decor that reflects their personality. Don't forget the accessories and other decorations that convey a very personal touch to a child's bedroom; choosing these items should always be their exclusive responsibility.

The parent who moves may be unable to offer the child an entire room. It then becomes very important to reserve a space just for them, that can be arranged and decorated as they wish.

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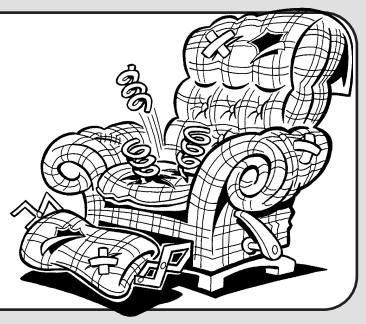

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For professional results, allocate a small portion of your decorating budget to hire a designer.

Avoid these common decorating mistakes!

We all want our house to reflect our personality and we want to be happy to come home. To this end, some basic rules must be respected in order to highlight our home as much as possible. Here is a list of the most common mistakes made in interior decoration, along with solutions to avoid them.

Decorating without professional help

Interior design is a process that is expensive, difficult, and emotionally challenging. By allocating a small portion of your budget to hire a professional, you are sure to realize a design that will please you.

Accumulating objects

In spite of ourselves, we collect way too many things that don't really go together. We must exercise restraint in order to obtain a simpler, more uniform, and, therefore, more attractive decor.

Scrimping on window treatments

Ready-made curtains and inexpensive ordinary curtain rods may be adequate for the bedrooms but, for the main rooms, custom-made curtains and drapes are a good long-term investment.

Mixing multiple wood tones

There is one very simple rule: avoid mixing more than three shades of wood in one room.

Hanging large family photographs in the main rooms

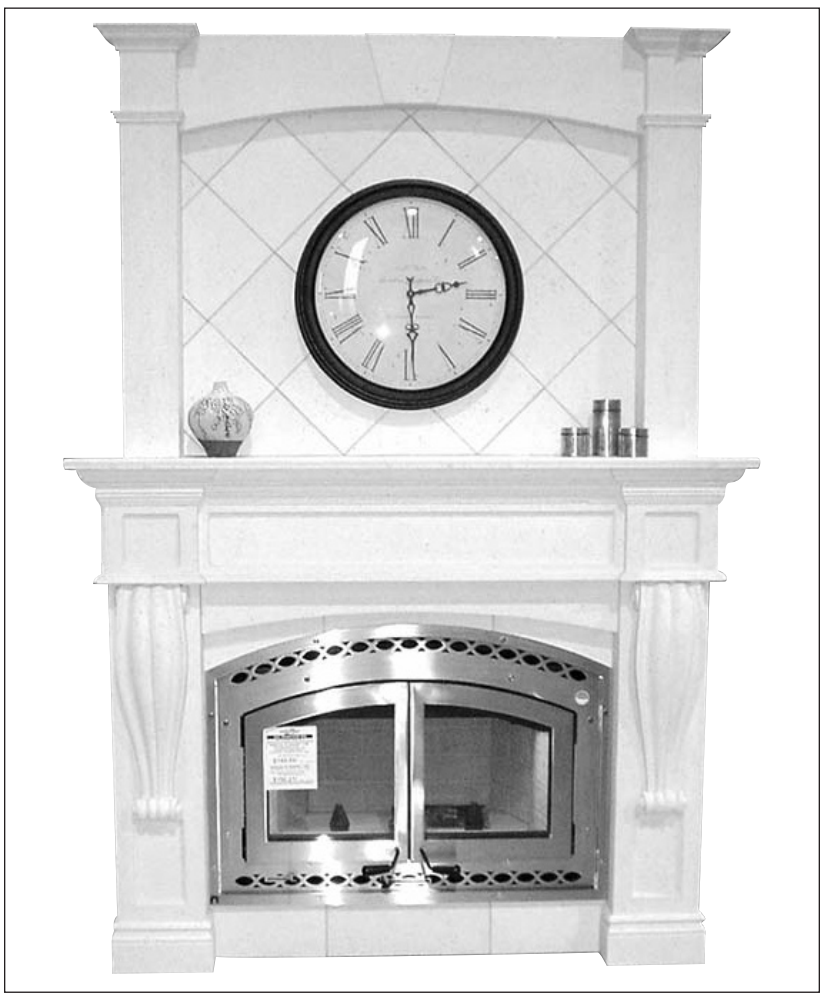
Instead, hang these imposing keepsakes in the stairwell, the office, or the den.

Choosing the wrong shade

Remember: light on top, dark at the bottom. Generally, the floors are a darker shade than the walls, and the ceiling is lighter.

Doing everything at once

Take some time to live in your new home before you start to decorate. Adopt a progressive pace, where your vision, your goals, your budget, and your schedule will be taken into account as you create a decor that is full of nuances.



Painted in white, with an impressive clock hung above, the fireplace is the highlighted feature of a room.

Dressing up the fireplace: paint offers quick and easy transformation

Whether you plan to install a new fireplace in your home, or you just want to highlight the one you already have, pay attention to its aesthetic arrangement. It is important that the entire section that frames the hearth contributes to the overall harmony of the room's decor.

The style of your house probably influenced the style selected for your fireplace, either contemporary, Victorian, refined, antique, etc. You may be fond of the warm character of a brick or stone finish, or you may prefer the elegant look of marble or ceramic. Paint offers the advantage of a quick and easy transformation in order to adjust to a new decor.

Marble or ceramic slabs are set at the foot of the fireplace as a safety measure. By selecting neutral tones, they will fit any decor. If you intend to install a mantle, choose a material that matches the room's decor. Warm and versatile, wood is always a popular choice.

Accessories are used to dress up the fireplace. Take the time to select the decorative objects that will adorn the main piece, which is the fireplace. On the wall adjacent or above the fireplace, place a few pictures or other works of art to add a touch of refinement. On the mantle, a few trinkets, some dried flowers, or framed photographs will personalize your decor. A clock hanging on the wall or set on the mantle will become a practical, as well as beautiful, accessory.

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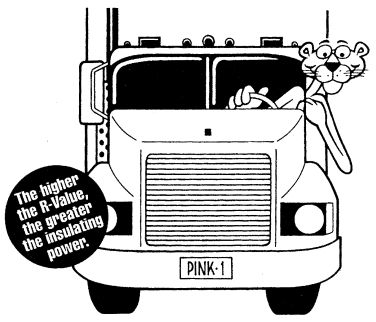

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An antique kitchen decor conveys warmth and welcome.

A room with old-fashioned charm

Decorating a room in an antique style involves many aspects if you hope to recreate an old-fashioned atmosphere. From the floor to the ceiling, everything must be harmonized. Start by selecting a floor covering that is realistic and suits the setting of the room. Matte-finished hardwood flooring is particularly well-suited to depict the ambiance of the era. Antique-styled ceramic tiles and a few assorted coarse rugs also work well.

For the walls, brick and stone are the most popular choices. Paint and wallpaper adopt the dark colours and patterns inspired by the good old days. Continue the flow with bedding, curtains, or other fabrics that match, without repeating the patterns. In fact, checkers, stripes, flowers, and other patterns are mixed to better replicate the warm interiors of bygone days.

Naturally, the furniture will have to complement the theme. You can select antique pieces in good condition, or opt for imitation antique furniture. Today, the artificial aging techniques for wooden furniture create marvelous replicas. In addition, antique-styled home appliances are re-emerging with the modern technological features that make them high-performing.

You must also plan to include certain indispensable items, such as a large storage chest, an antique bench, a buffet displaying dishes and glassware with antique motifs, a pedestal mirror, an antique clock, a wood stove, etc. Instead of concealing wooden beams, they are highlighted. Decorative accessories must be carefully selected, in order to respect the antique look of the decor.



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MORRISBURG: On Fairholme Drive, 1,680 sq. ft. 3-bedroom brick bungalow with an attached garage. Spacious lot and quiet location with a private rear deck. This beautifully maintained home is wheelchair accessible including a shower, wide hallways and doorways. Asking only **$279,000.**



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Relaxation is the focus in a modern home

Living rooms and family rooms occupy an important place in modern homes. Our need to relax and to decompress after long hours at work, along with the cocooning trend that still continues after a few glorious years, all contribute to the creation of enjoyable rooms in our home.

To help relax our bodies and our spirits, home theatres have invaded our homes. The trend calls for clean lines and clear sound.

Home theatre systems take on an attractive designer look in order to blend harmoniously into the contemporary decors.

Sofas, couches, and armchairs all abide by the same rule: comfort. Despite concerns about the visual aspect, sacrificing comfort is out of the question. Fortunately, most of the current furniture ensures that our indispensable standards of well-being are met.

Electronic appliances have adopted warm tones, browns being paramount, in order to integrate the decor harmoniously, in spite of their cold and bare appearance. Even the wall-mounted screen is encased in a wooden frame. The wood, glass, metal, and plastic groupings are sometimes eclectic, but always tasteful.

Wine storage for your home

Connoisseurs of fine wines usually want to conserve a few bottles of the best vintages in their home. Different options are available, depending on each person's needs and budget. In a large home where the owner wants to dedicate a room and invest in his or her passion, a wine cellar remains the ideal choice. However, it should be noted that installing a wine cellar requires the expertise and attention to detail necessary to create the best possible conditions for wine to age and be preserved.

A wine cabinet is, undoubtedly, the most popular alternative; it can occupy a vacant area and adapt to the available budget. You can place a wine cabinet in a spare room or even in a closet, depending on the number of bottles you want to keep on hand. However, its installation also requires some knowledge of temperature, aeration, vibration, and humidity level.

There are also small portable wine cabinets that let you conserve your wine at the ideal temperature. Available in a wide variety of sizes and finishes, these appliances can also be fitted to blend into the decor. While they are meant to let wine age under the best conditions, not all portable cabinets offer the same features. Choose a model that retains a certain level of humidity, functions quietly, and pay attention to its insulation against light and vibrations. It should also be equipped with a precise thermostat.



Start planning the installation of your wine cellar.

Mirror, mirror…

Decorative as well as practical, mirrors are found in most rooms in a house, whether in the bathroom, the bedroom, or the entrance hall.

Mirrors alone can broaden a space, help brighten a room, and add style to a decor. This decorative accessory has become indispensable, thanks to its multiple uses.

Do you have a small entrance hall? A mirror can create the illusion of a corridor where none exists, creating a welcome impression of spaciousness. Besides, it's not a bad idea to place a mirror where you can take a last look at yourself before going out.

You can expand your living room or your dining room by placing a mirror above the hutch or the sofa.

You can also add an interesting touch to a room by placing a mirror so that it reflects an item that you love, a painting, for example.

If you don't have many accessories or works of art, a mirror arrangement is a brilliant and economical way to decorate a wall.

Place a mirror in front of a window to naturally brighten a somber room. You can also place a mirror in a stairwell so that it reflects the light from a lamp to light the stairs.

On the other hand, according to the principles of feng shui (a discipline that promotes the circulation of good energy through the layout of a room), because of the reflective and intensifying powers of mirrors, they must be placed in such a way that they do not disturb the harmony in your home.

For example, you should never place a mirror directly in front of a door, to your house or to a room, because any bad energy that enters the door could rebound and create disorder.

You should also avoid placing a mirror facing your bed because it could disturb your sleep.

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Oil heat in demand in new and resale homes

by J.C. Carroll

WINCHESTER — Collecting information is a valuable first step when buying a new, or resale home. The only way to match your needs to the right house is by getting all of your questions answered.

"The furnace and the fuel requirements are important features for buyers," said Dave Frittenburg, president of the Canadian Oil Heat Association (COHA) Ontario Chapter. "And in recent years, there have been so many technological developments in this field, realtors everywhere find it quite a challenge to keep up. In the oil heat sector for example, a complete refresher course is the only way to keep up to date with all its advancements."

Purchasers need that information too, so here's a snapshot on the newest oil heat from a realtor tip-sheet:

Clean burning

Oil heat produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions than ever before and residential oil burner particulate emissions are now at near zero levels.

Efficient

Oil heat burns hotter than natural gas, propane and electricity. As a result, it delivers about 100 gallons of hot water per hour compared to only about 30 gallons from an equivalent gas-fired water heater.

Warmer

Oil fired water heaters are five times faster than electric models and air exiting from registers can be as much as much as 30 per cent warmer than air heated by other fuels.

Safe

Unlike natural gas and propane, oil heat is non-explosive, non flammable at room temperature, and it poses a very low risk for carbon monoxide poisoning.

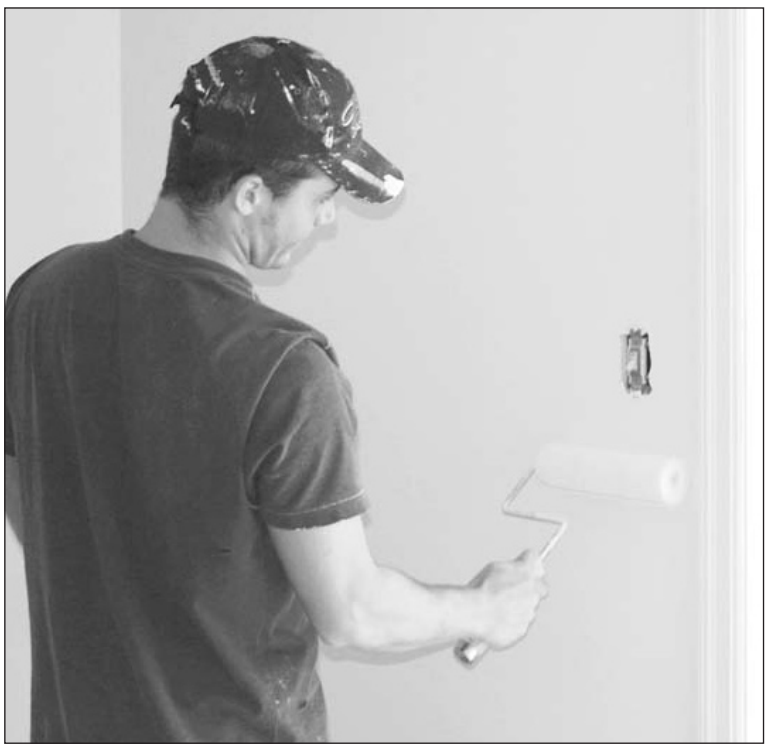
Reliable

When you consider the possibility of disruptions in the natural gas supply line, and the potential for more electrical blackouts, having a supply of oil stored on your own property makes good sense.

Competitive

According to COHA, the cost of oil, adjusted for inflation, has risen less dramatically than natural gas. It's also projected to rise at a lower rate than natural gas and electricity.

- News Canada



Choose the appropriate primer before you paint.

How to choose primer

Because the primer you need can vary depending on the type of paint you use, it is recommended that you purchase the paint before choosing a primer.

This is even more important when you use a colour with a translucent finish, which requires a special primer. Start by applying the primer to ensure that the paint adheres evenly and retains the finish you selected (matte, satin, semi-gloss, or gloss).

If you are painting a room where the walls are covered with graffiti, like a playroom or a child's bedroom, choose a special protective coating to camouflage the felt pen markings.

If you paint in a humid area, use a primer designed to delay the appearance of mildew and rust; cover it with an oil sealant and finish with a mildew-resistant, 100% acrylic latex paint.

It is important that you apply a primer before you paint new surfaces. Choose a primer that is appropriate for the quality of paint you are using.

Even though it isn't necessary, it is still a good idea to apply a primer on pre-painted surfaces, and it becomes essential if you are applying a different type of paint. To apply latex paint on a surface that is covered with an oil-based paint, you must sand and apply an oil-based primer that can be used with both types of paint. You can only use a latex primer under latex paint.

It is important to determine the existing type of paint before you apply a new one. To do this, apply a bit of nailpolish solvent on the surface. Latex paint will dissolve, but not the oil-based paint. After the room has been painted, adding a protective sealer will maximize the paint's adherence and increase its durability.

Calling on an interior designer

You need to change the decor in your home, or just in one or a few rooms. You lack the time, the energy, or the skills to assume this task. It's time to call on an interior designer.

An interior designer has the competence and the knowledge of materials required to create a superb decor that will meet your expectations. In addition, this professional knows the latest trends and can answer all your questions. He or she is trained to design an interior decor that will respect your taste and the requirements of the room.

A professional designer has access to a complete array of the various products that can fulfill your needs. All home decoration materials, such as fabrics, floor coverings, curtains, wallpapers, and more, are offered in the colours and patterns that will complement your home. In fact, the designer usually provides you with catalogues to consult, and samples to look at. In addition, this expert in home decor can advise on the products and inform you on their advantages and disadvantages.

A sharp sense of aesthetics, a good understanding of colours and colour schemes, and close attention to the harmony of the finishes and the details, are the qualities that distinguish a good interior designer.

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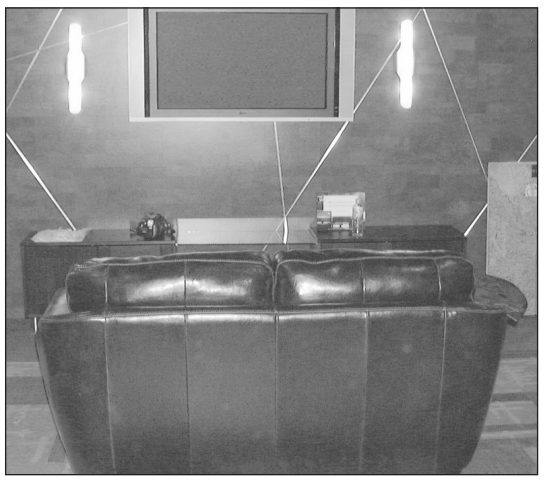
Home theatres:
Just like being in a real cinema

When you furnish your home theatre room, make sure that the seating is comfortable. Home theatre furniture includes low-backed leather or fabric chairs, placed one beside the other, or reclining sofas. Choose models with cup holders.

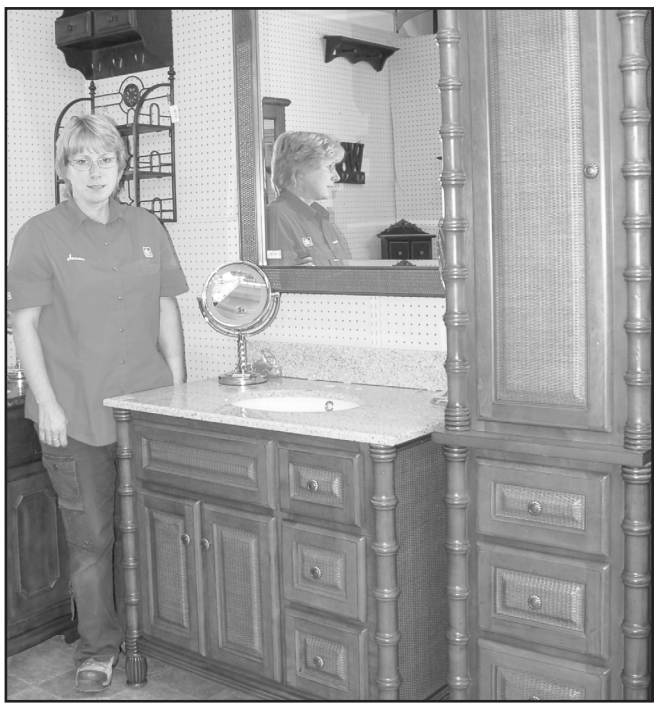


Low-backed chairs, placed a good distance from the screen, are never backed against the wall in order to take full advantage of the surround-sound feature of a home theatre system.

If your home theatre room is also used for entertaining guests, choose furniture that can easily be rearranged to create conversation areas.

When selecting the seating arrangement, consider the height of your liquid crystal or high definition plasma screen in order to enjoy maximum visibility and avoid kinked necks. It is important to place the seats a good distance from the screen; two and a half times the width of the screen is the recommended distance.

To fully enjoy the surround-sound feature of your home theatre, keep the backs of sofas and chairs away from the wall. Start by installing your main speaker, which diffuses dialogue, just above or below the centre of the screen. Place speakers in front of the chairs, remembering to place them 1.2 meters away from the television. Install speakers behind the chairs so that they are at eye level when sitting. To do this, place the speakers on a console or other piece of furniture behind the chairs. If this is not possible, you can place them on the floor. The subwoofer can be placed anywhere.



Home Hardware has it

Sue Robillard stands by the Georgetown cabinetry display at Winchester Home Hardware. Customers can peruse a large variety of colours and styles before ordering the products from the Home Hardware warehouse. Press Photo — James



Purchasing a new mattress?

Try before you buy

Before shopping for a new mattress, you must determine your preference for a soft or a firm mattress. It is recommended that you try different models before finalizing your choice. A mattress that provides good support and molds to the contours of your body is preferable.

You can try spring mattresses. The choices include continuous, offset, or pocketed coil innerspring mattresses. In addition to the total number of coils, you must also take into account the gauge of the wire and the number of turns. The more turns in the coils, the more support and durability offered by the innerspring. Also take the time to test waterbeds and airbeds, which offer design-specific characteristics.

While you are at it, sample some mattresses made of visco- or thermo-elastic polyurethane, which minimize pressure points. Thanks to the sphere-shaped visco-elastic foam cells, the mattress molds perfectly to the body. It may require some time to recover its original shape. Density determines the quality of this material: the denser it is, the heavier and firmer it feels. Body and room temperature can also affect the foam's density, hardening in the cold and softening in the heat.

Finally, you should also try latex foam mattresses. This material also reduces pressure points and it offers exceptional body-impression resistance. It always reacts the same way and its density is not affected by temperature. Hypoallergenic and anti-microbial, latex foam is made of millions of empty cells that promote excellent air circulation and eliminate pulmonary allergy problems.

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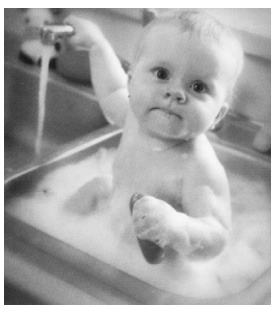



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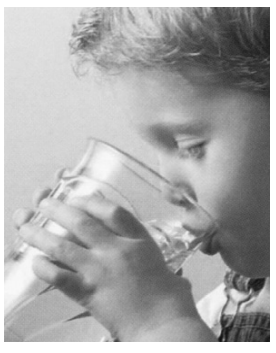

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The kitchen island can easily incorporate a sink, a dishwasher, a hot plate, an oven, or even a grill.

The kitchen island: multifunctional and a great place to gather

When you renovate a kitchen, storage is always one of the priorities. Adding an island is an interesting solution to a storage problem. In addition, it allows a group of people to cook together as they share the space, the aromas, and the colours of the kitchen with the hosts. Multifunctional and a great place to gather, a kitchen island is a big attraction during cocktail hour and the main accessory when spending the evening with friends.

Kitchen islands are available in every size and shape; from the simple butcher's block to the multifunctional island, the selection is varied. The two criteria you must consider before you decide on a model are the available space and the use you intend to make of your island. Of course, you can settle for a simple work area where you can prepare meals and share the cooking, but it is so interesting to associate it with other activities…

Above all, if you want the island to be functional, it must not interfere with circulation. Make sure to leave a minimum 36- inch clearance all around, and calculate a width of at least two feet for the work area. Then arrange the space according to your requirements.

If the island is meant for meal preparation, include some storage for the knives, cutting boards, and small accessories. If it is to be used for cooking, it should accommodate the pots, pans, and casseroles that you use regularly.

A kitchen island can easily incorporate a sink, a dishwasher, a hot plate, an oven, or even a grill. In all cases, make sure that the remaining work area is large enough to be able to prepare meals, set down dishes, and fill plates.

Finally, not only is an island attractive and practical, it also lets you add many things that may be missing in your kitchen, like drawers, a small cabinet, a bottle-holder… Many elements can easily be integrated into a custom-built island!

Lighting for each room

Lighting is a very important element in decoration. It is responsible for establishing the ambiance of a home and creating a cold or warm interior.

Windows are the main source of light. Other sources of light must be positioned to create the desired effect, while taking into account the type of activity it will serve.

First, in the kitchen, it is important that work areas, like the stove, the sink, and the counter, be well-lit. Recessed halogen pot lights or a ceiling fixture are the most popular types of kitchen lighting.

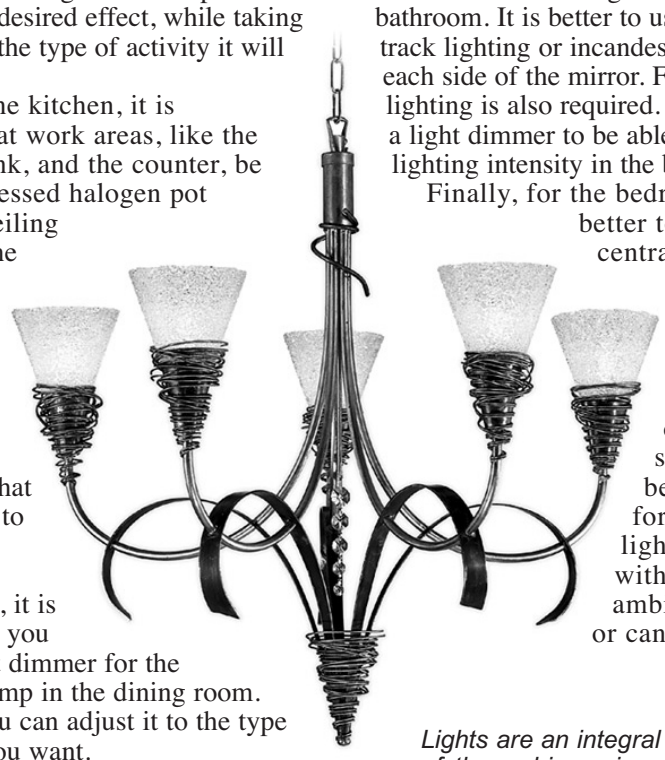
Next, to create an atmosphere that is conducive to good conversation during meals, it is essential that you install a light dimmer for the suspended lamp in the dining room. This way, you can adjust it to the type of lighting you want.

Three types of lamps are necessary for the living room: a torch lamp to ensure functional lighting, table lamps to create a warm ambiance, and a reading lamp to be used during leisurely moments.

The bathroom and the bedrooms

Avoid fluorescent lighting in the bathroom. It is better to use halogen track lighting or incandescent lights on each side of the mirror. Functional lighting is also required. Again, install a light dimmer to be able to adjust the lighting intensity in the bathroom.

Finally, for the bedrooms, it is better to avoid central ceiling fixtures, which are not very relaxing. Instead, choose wall sconces or bedside lamps for functional lighting, along with one or two ambiance lamps or candles.



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How to balance accessories

Accessories often make the difference between a nicely done decor and one that is beautifully finished. However, you must know how to balance the accessories in a room.

An accessory is often purchased on impulse because of the way it inspires us. Decorative accessories complete a decor wonderfully and they reinforce the overall ambiance. Carefully placed to create a subtle balance and to harmonize the elements in a room, these small details never fail to get noticed. In addition, they are available in an infinite variety of styles and offer countless setting possibilities. Paintings, frames, mirrors, chandeliers, occasional tables, baskets, and plants become indispensable in the sense that they are an integral part of a decorating concept and they add a personal touch to our surroundings.

Accessories are an economical way to revamp the look of a room without undertaking major renovations. Still, they must be selected with care.

How to harmonize accessories

Sometimes, an accessory that is particularly important to you can serve as the starting point for a decoration concept. For example, a painting, a curtain, or a quilt can become the basis on which to design a decor. It is also possible that the reverse is necessary, and the inspiration comes from the stronger pieces in a room, such as the style of furniture and the colours selected to give it a final touch. Currently, motley designs are the trend. So, take advantage of this to mix the styles, the eras, and the colours. Be careful, the overall concept must be coherent.

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Three-season solarium

A beautiful alternative for daylight lovers

Elegant and comfortable, solariums convey an exceptional ambiance to a home. They let you take full advantage of the daylight, as you enjoy reading under palm trees in October or breakfast in the sun even when spring keeps you waiting; all of this while sheltered from mosquitoes and the weather. However, a four-season solarium is a major investment, particularly if your budget is limited. That is why people are increasingly opting for three-season solariums.



Among other things, installing a solarium lets you enjoy reading under palm trees in October and breakfast under the sun even when spring is slow to arrive.

A four-season solarium requires a solid foundation, below the frost line, for the structure to remain stable. In addition, the glazing of a four-season solarium must be highly efficient because it must withstand extreme temperatures as it performs double duty: protect against the winter cold and prevent excessive summer heat. A three-season solarium is a good alternative if you are not prepared to assume all the work and expenses involved in the installation of a four-season solarium. Since it does not have to confront harsh winter conditions, the glazing can be simple and, consequently, it requires a less massive supporting structure. In other words, it is an excellent compromise for daylight lovers!

Solariums can take on all shapes and all styles. Before you make a final selection, start by determining your requirements; your available budget, the use you intend to make of the room, its orientation, and how to harmonize it to the rest of the house are the basic criteria that will help you make the right choice. You must also enquire about permit requirements from your municipality. Evaluate the information provided by the different manufacturers and retailers, and, above all, make sure that you do business with a qualified contractor.



Wise consumers can still rely on wallpaper classics, but the traditional patterns have been replaced with geometric designs in strong warm colours.

Wallpaper – far from being passé

Far from being outdated, wallpaper is actually making a strong comeback. It dresses the walls by creating special effects that paint cannot match. Now more than ever, wallpaper lets you showcase your colours and your style. Until now, wallpaper was mostly used to embellish a room. From now on, wallpaper becomes a central element of decoration. This is surely due to the many possibilities it offers. In fact, today, wallpaper is available in an infinite array of colours, prints, and textures.

Where do the trends come from? Pairing predominant colours sets the tone. For example, some twenty years ago, the trend was to couple pink and gray. It then made room for the peach and green combination, then burgundy and forest green, followed by yellow and blue… Wallpaper manufacturers always know which way the wind is blowing. In this field, as in any other, nobody has to submit to the trends. Wise consumers can still rely on the classics, but the traditional patterns have been replaced with geometric designs in strong warm colours.

Remember that thick wallpaper is usually more durable, as well as easier to install and to remove. Thin wallpaper tends to tear. Vinyl wallpaper can be embossed to look like leather, corduroy, hay, stone, or brick. Some manufacturers have also designed wallpaper that contains cotton fibres; extremely resistant, this type of wallpaper can be removed dry. Are you moving and it breaks your heart to leave your wallpaper behind? Just remove it and re-glue it in your new quarters! You can't afford good quality wallpaper? You should know that, on average, it costs about 15% more than lesser quality wallpaper, which isn't very much when you consider all the advantages that quality wallpaper offers.

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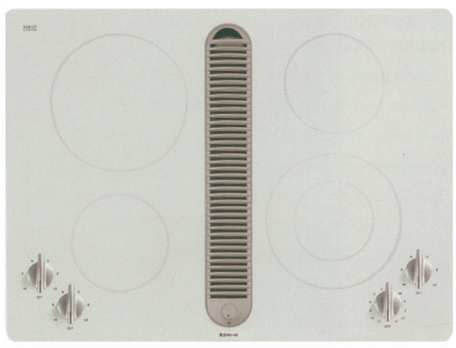

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