



The home outlook for 2008: Green design and so long, minimalism

By SEAN O'DRISCOLL

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If you thought green home design was big in 2007, wait until you see 2008. And say hello to warmer colors, goodbye to too-cool-for-school minimalism. Here's what a sample of interior designers and industry insiders say you should be shopping for:

GREEN IS GOOD

Sure, everybody seems to be talking about eco-friendly furniture and finishes. But IKEA design team spokeswoman Janice Simonsen warns of tacky, pseudo-green designs. "Caution should be used when using these themes, as they have become a bit of a buzz word in the industry," she said. "Look at the entire production cycle of the product, from the paints to the wood, not just some vague "eco friendly" label"

Recycled and waste materials are very popular, but Simonsen says consumers should check the amount of shipping and transport needed as well as the product itself. [Manhattan-based interior designer Claire McGovern of McGovern Design House](#) said green design could be the most important design change of 2008, as long as it's done right and not to fit a trend.

["Most start-up design companies are acknowledging the need, and most educated customers are now asking about the green qualifications of a furniture piece," she said.](#)

FAREWELL TO MINIMALISM

Dump your Le Corbusier chair and black turtleneck: Minimalism is out. Susan Gutfreund said that minimalist white and beige are being pushed out in favor of color, textures and layers. Speaking from Paris where she is redesigning an apartment, Gutfreund said there is a move toward warmer colors and away from the shininess and flatness of interiors over the last few years. "There is a lot of wood and cork coming in and I'm using a lot of them myself," she said.

Back at IKEA, Simonsen is seeing the same move toward bright colors. Black and white are allowed to stay, but only if they share the room with some surprise and offbeat combinations. "In 2008, red tones take on a decidedly soft, warm feel, such as watermelon or a carrot orange. Black and white continues to be used, but with unexpected combinations of yellow, lime orange and fresh green," she said. Fruit colors such as lime yellow, kiwi and tangerine will be very popular in 2008, especially when used in the kitchen. But blue will continue to be the number one color choice for homeowners. In 2008, blue will be combined with camel and tan, pale green and yellow, she said.

McGovern says minimalism has been dying for some years now, but she saw a big shift in the Fall of 2007. She is happy to see the end of "boring" geometric perfection.

"I predict that we might even be moving into a design age that recalls Baroque more closely than ever before," she said.

MIX AND MATCH

Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, said she has seen a huge move towards eclecticism as the Internet and home design centers bring more awareness. She sees a big move away from "themed" rooms in which everything must comply with an overall motif, such as country kitchen or a maritime themed bedroom. "Once there was a theme or mood. For traditionalists, that meant everything in rustic folk craft, but that is dying away. People can be traditional but you are going to see more mixes," she said.

Eiseman sees the common sofa and carpeted floor mixed with a very modern coffee table. "You will see much less hesitancy to mix," she said.

Gutfreund is seeing the same trend, having just decorated an apartment for a

young couple who wanted a Mexican designed room. She used pink and orange on Mexican themes but also displayed contrasting photography with it. The colors used in the apartment also made a bold statement — shocking pink against a chocolate floor and bright orange walls. "It's bright, it's warm, it's not beholden to just one theme. It shows confidence, even if some people are fearful," Gutfreund said.

GRAY IS SEXY

Debbie Travis and Barbara Dingle Have written several interior design books and see gray replacing black both as a stand-alone color and to offset other colors in the room. While gray has been rising in popularity, they predict a huge jump in 2008 for softer gray tones such as granite, putty and stone. Gutfreund is also a big believer in gray for 2008 and is working with it in Paris this month. However, she cautions against gray in cities where the light is harsh, such as in New York. "New York has what I call 'Scandinavian light', it's very harsh and you have to be very careful," she said.

OLD FURNITURE, NEW SHAPE

There are a lot of exciting new takes on furniture design for 2008, says Eiseman. "You'll find the old wicker chair in a much more modern look and style," she said. She is particularly excited about a resign of a bentwood chair she saw at a Milan furniture exhibit. Bentwood chairs, often found in French restaurant patios, are being restyled in high tech, polished chrome. "They took something old and put it in a modern setting. You're going to see a lot of that in 2008," she said.