

Interior Outlook Classic Choices, Simple Update

by Julie Dean Kessler

There's a fresh breeze coming through the window, the sun's rays stream in, and in the new light of spring you see your living space clearly. And clearly, it's time for a change.

Reflecting the freshness of the season doesn't have to mean starting over. "Take a hard look around and see if you're living with things just because they're there or because they serve some function," advises Valerie Steil of Marc t. Nielsen Interiors in Valparaiso. Donate dispensable items for others to enjoy, then "get one really special piece you'll love and put it where you'll see it." If you're living with posters you've had since college, she says, "consider upgrading your artwork to something that nourishes your soul."

Change Accessories for a New Look

When designing for clients, Larry Zimmer of No Place Like Home, says, "We don't focus on the trendy, but rather on what's unique to each household." Zimmer has offices in Michigan City and Chicago and emphasizes a green-conscious philosophy, and "part of being green is choosing classic things that will last, so you're not having to re-invent yourself every few years." That way, all it takes to create a different vibe from season to season is to change a few accessories, art pieces, or pillows.

Doug GeBraad of Lovell and Whyte in Lakeside, Michigan, sees some trends in colors, with strong interest in hues of grays, taupes, and beiges, referencing the still-popular earth tones. He and partner Jim Fitzmaurice are also seeing less demand for rustic motifs. "For several years," says GeBraad, "everyone wanted rustic – antique cabinets and furniture for their cottages. Now there's probably a little more demand for mid-century and contemporary looks, with people moving away from the more traditional cottage look." Regardless, he says, for second homes "many people still want the blue-and-white nautical references" to Lake Michigan.

Make It Personal

From rustic to post-modern, wherever you shop for fresh accents, "Shop in your own home first," says Steil. "Then you get the joy of enhancing your space with the help of a carefully selected piece you've always treasured." Once you've found the must-haves in your home, update them. "Say you have a sofa you love – freshen it up with new fabric. It enhances your memories," says Steil. Photographs are great for keeping memories fresh. "Find a favorite one and have it framed beautifully," suggests Steil. "Then it's also a conversation piece as you tell your story about why it's important to you."

Zimmer suggests that "One-day makeovers are great for people who don't want a long-term project." No Place Like Home can shift and edit furniture, art, and accessories to give a room a fresh look in just a couple of hours.



*Above photo:
This comfortable corner created by Larry Zimmer of
No Place Like Home. Photo by Craig Dugan, Hedrich-Blessing*



*Lovell & Whyte represents
local artist Floyd Gompf,
whose whimsical creations
add a splash of color
to any interior.*

When you're ready to invest in one accent piece or furniture for an entire room, Lovell & Whyte offer such high-profile brands as Ralph Lauren, Mitchell Gold, Brown Jordan and more. But it's the unique touch that will attract attention and satisfy your senses. Says GeBraad, "We like to find one-of-a-kind pieces of art," spending winters traveling in search of artwork and representing several local artists as well.

Light Quality Counts

Light fixtures are also important points of style, and just as the light of spring and summer affects the earth, the lighting you choose at home affects your decor.

"I try to be as energy-efficient as possible," says Zimmer, "but I do not like the quality of light from compact fluorescent bulbs. Provide plenty of warm incandescent light where it's needed, but I like to be able to control every light fixture or lamp with a dimmer or a three-way switch to match every mood or need and also save energy," notes Zimmer.

Outside the home, saving energy is as simple as not overdoing it with lighting. "People over-light outside," says Zimmer, who wishes people would be "a little more cognizant of light pollution ... a little light goes a long way."

Designers and their customers who embrace green technology and methods are finding more options. "The market is responding by producing more goods that are environmentally friendly," commented Zimmer.

"Life gets so hectic," says Steil. "That's why at Marc t. Nielsen our motto is, 'Restore and nurture your home and it will return the favor.'"

No Place Like Home - www.nplhinc.com

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