

Staying in Style in the New Economy

Economic recession or not, homes are still being remodeled across the country and in our community. But the remodeling industry and home style experts have noted a change in how people are approaching those projects, specifically with more conservative and value-oriented choices.

We've been paying attention to those trends because we strive to be responsive to the needs of our clients and we want to be prepared when they ask our advice about remodeling and home decorating.

As you read this list, keep in mind that our clients' specific and unique wants and desires trump any trend. Consider the following as observations. They are not intended as mandates.

A few of the themes being reported include:

* People are looking for American made finishes and quality products that will last longer and reduce energy and resource consumption. Products that minimize ongoing maintenance and have a longer life are in great demand. Those options run the gamut from the choice of exterior finish and roofing to flooring and furniture for the remodeled space.
* Given that higher-quality and resource-efficient materials and products usually cost more, consumers are gravitating toward "minimalist" design schemes that use fewer pieces and a conservative color palette accented with a few bright, bold accessories or more traditional elements.
* We like our technology! We're rewiring homes to provide greater and more convenient access to satisfy our clients' high tech appetites. Today's design provides our clients with more wiring, more cable and multiple outlets to manage their mobile gadgets.
* Regardless of square footage, we see a call for greater storage capacity throughout the house, especially older homes. Modular organizing systems for closets and garages expand the usable space of those areas without having to make more expensive structural changes.
* Grey is the new white ... at least according to some style experts. Grey-stained wood and fabrics represents the "back to basics" trend of the new economy.
* Though not as opulent or outfitted as they were a few years back, outdoor areas remain a popular way to extend usable living space.
* Remodeling to create home offices is also in demand to accommodate in-home businesses or telecommuting trends.
* One thing we're seeing less of ... a home theater, at least as a dedicated room within a house.

These are trends and not absolutes. We are here to satisfy the design sensibilities and desires of each client. Overall, it seems clear that homeowners have altered their value systems toward more conservative, durable and space-and resource-efficient products. Our goal is to stay current to maximize our clients' options and deliver a project that meets the ambitions and dreams of our unique clientele.