



Photos by Anthony Masterson (from left), Christina Wedge, and Steve McKenzie; courtesy of Steve McKenzie

HOME DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2021

By Kimberly Biesiada

Since its onset in late 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic has plunged people around the globe into a world of travel restrictions, business and school shutdowns, quarantines, and lockdowns. Many families have seen major shifts in their daily routine, having to adapt to remote working and virtual classes and getting creative in an absence of outside-the-home entertainment. Unsurprisingly, all this extra time at home and the new ways people are using their spaces had a major impact on design trends for 2020, and continues to impact forecasted trends for 2021.

Interior design service Modsy surveyed thousands of people in the design community to compile its 2021 Style Trends Report. According to the report, 69% of those surveyed said they engaged in a home redesign project in 2020. That's expected to continue throughout this year as people's changing lifestyles influence their design decisions; survey respondents named the need for functionality and family entertainment space, followed by the need for aesthetically pleasing spaces and those that support productivity, as the most important factors in designing for 2021.

The demand for living spaces that serve the changing needs of the household can be seen in today's top design trends. From colors and textures to art and furniture styles, here's what's hot in home interiors and how framing retailers can provide the perfect solutions for their customers.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Working from home became a temporary or indefinite reality for many people amid last year's shutdowns. Beginning in April, home office design requests were steadily on the rise—growing 27% year-over-year, according to Modsy's report. The company also reported office furniture sales were three times higher in April 2020 compared to April 2019.

What do people want in their new work spaces? Sunshine, for one. A majority of survey respondents reported that natural lighting and plenty of windows are a top priority in their home offices. Ergonomic chairs and stylish storage solutions were also hot commodities as people transitioned to more permanent setups.

"People are seeking ways to create more serenity and tranquility in their living atmosphere for mental and physical well-being," said Jared Davis, MCPF, GCF, business development manager for Frames Now Australia. "Natural light and calming, lighter colors that promote the essence of internal peace continue to be popular."

LIGHTER COLORS AND FINISHES

In the furniture realm, lighter shades seem to be the choice for many home renovators. Modsy named lighter-toned and whitewashed woods a major trend prediction for 2021 based on survey data, with many people finding inspiration from Scandinavian and rustic style philosophies.



● Crescent's Couture collection puts a modern spin on a traditional woven surface. These matboards pair well with nature images.

Earthy tones also grew in popularity last year, and that trend is expected to continue into 2021. Homes & Gardens and HGTV both named the color trend in their lists of top style predictions for this year. The broader design trends of returning to nature and drawing inspiration from natural textures and colors can be seen in today's popular palettes, which favor warm, comforting choices.

Take a look at leading paint companies' current palettes, and you will see this trend everywhere: the 2021 Benjamin Moore color of the year is Aegean Teal, a sunbaked hue meant to evoke the feelings of comfort being sought by homeowners since the start of the pandemic. Aegean Teal is part of a 12-color palette the company curated for this year; other shades include Gray Cashmere, Atrium White, and Potters Clay. "The twelve hues in the palette radiate warmth and wellbeing," the company said on its website. "These are colors that make your home feel even more like home. Settle in."

Similarly, Sherwin-Williams' color of the year is its Ur-



● Aegean Teal is part of a 12-color palette that "radiate(s) warmth and wellbeing," according to Benjamin Moore.

bane Bronze, a color the company said is "rooted in nature.... It also works well with other biophilic elements, including light-filled spaces and foliage." The BEHR Color Trends 2021 Palette includes a whopping 21 colors, which the company says are aimed to "elevate your comfort zone." Hues in the palette include soft, subtle, earthy tones like Smoky White, Almond Wisp, and Canyon Dusk; calm and restorative hues like Dayflower, Jean Jacket Blue, and Royal Orchard, to name a few.

Those trends are being reflected in the framing industry as well. "From what we have observed, and through designer consultations, the current trend is leaning toward a lighter shade of gray and walnut, versus the darker shades of charcoal and espresso," said Charles Galazzo, co-owner of Michelangelo Moulding. "This also applies to gold, which is more popular in paler shades. Natural, wood-tone finishes are still very much in demand."

BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

Going hand-in-hand with the trending colors of today is the preference for biophilic, or nature-forward, décor. Natural materials were the number-one most favored style prediction for 2021 among Modsy's survey respondents, and HGTV named "plenty of plants" (incorporating house plants into home décor) one of its biggest home design trends for this year.

"Bringing elements of nature into your living space adds a tranquil feeling to your home," said Tom Fuller, vice president of sales and marketing at Crescent. "A simple way to incorporate this trend into your abode is through framed art. Crescent offers a wide variety of colors as well as hundreds of natural fabrics and textures that, when incorporated into your framed piece, are sure to give off calming and peaceful vibes."

Davis, of Frames Now Australia, echoed that sentiment. "The trend toward biophilic design (bringing nature into urban spaces) will help create a feeling of sanctuary," he said.



● Sherwin Williams' color pick for 2021, Urbane Bronze, is a root-ed-in-nature hue that pairs well with houseplants and natural decor.



● Michelangelo Moulding is seeing increased demand for lighter grays and walnut, as well as natural wood finishes.

COMFORT AND JOY

The feeling a piece of furniture, art, or other décor evokes is just as important as the purpose it serves. During these uncertain times, people want to feel safe, relaxed, and comforted in their living spaces; many want their homes to serve as a refuge from the harsh realities of the outside world.

“Comfort is a theme that may see spaces become layered with softer textures and warmer colors,” said Davis. “Rather than looking for products that just perform a basic function, consumers will be increasingly looking for art and design that conveys a feeling of luxury, warmth, and peace.”

Another trend that emerged in 2020 and is expected to continue this year is zen or zen-inspired rooms, which favor natural materials as well as an overall balanced, tranquil design principle. Overlapping somewhat with this is the trend toward travel-inspired or themed areas in the home. Travel restrictions, combined with the desire to escape the day to day, has led to increased demand for rooms to become personal oases that reflect the wanderlust mindset.

“Travel-inspired décor and design will help people reconnect with those places they love, such as Bali-themed zen-dens or coastal beach-feel bungalows,” Davis said.

For framing retailers, showcasing examples of beautifully framed travel photos, prints, and paintings in your shop or window display can help you capitalize on this trend. Ask your customers if they are undergoing a room or even full home redesign, and talk to them about ways you can help turn their living room, bedroom, office, and more into their own personal mini-getaway where they can rest and recharge safely.

THE 2021 FRAME SHOP

Although halted travel plans isn't a positive thing in itself, it can result in boosted bottom lines for retailers as people look to spend that discretionary income they'd otherwise put toward a trip, said Michelangelo's Galazzo. He is also seeing a push to shop local.

“With the very special circumstances of [2020], we feel there is a reverse trend in consumer buying that should help framers; people are encouraged to buy from local vendors rather than from large commercial stores,” he said. “Another consideration to keep in mind is that money typically used for travel is being redirected. Framers should absolutely update their framing wall with trendier products to make a better impression on their clients.”

Framing can help satisfy any number of current design trends, from light-colored and natural wood moulding to travel and nature-inspired artwork, calming abstract pieces, and more. Whether your client is interested in creating a background wall worthy of their corporate Zoom calls or wants their space to give them the calm, happy feelings they get on vacation, your framing business can help fulfill those needs in stylish, modern, and one-of-a-kind ways. **PFM**



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