

Cozy Rooms

"There's a trend toward personal comfort," says Kris Linder, owner of Interior Design Source in Los Gatos. "Life is hard, the world is tough, and we need something to cozy up in, and that means softer fabrics and softer colors, even in the most highly designed homes."

Warm is hot

When it comes to current trends in home décor, warmth is the watchword. Interestingly, proof of that can be found in the pages of fashion magazines like *Vogue*, because home design essentially

follows fashion, says Linder.

"Textiles come from fashion, and it's always been that way," she says. "Fabrics start to change because of fashion, then tile colors start to change. Right now, the industry is moving toward warmer tones." Linder says that while colors from nature — earth tones — have always evoked a feeling of warmth, even colors that typically are considered "cool" are being warmed up.

"The blues and pinks are coming back but they are infused with gold undertones," she says. "Even the black tones are warming up, with more brown in them, and the whites aren't so shockingly white, they've got warm undertones."

When you turn on the lights, things feel cozier."

Certainly, warm tones and soft fabrics are crucial to making a cozy, inviting space, but Linder says it must begin with something more intangible: personal style. "Trends happen, but for almost any room to feel cozy and inviting, it has to key into something the client relates to, something of their nature or emotional state," she says.

Tricks of the trade

Making a large, high-ceilinged room (such as a great room), feel cozy can be challenging. One trick of the trade is to break the room into vignettes — such as a sitting area with two chairs and a table — often defined by area rugs, a window or pillows. "I don't believe you can have an inviting room that's just a big square," says Linder. To avoid that, her firm gets involved architecturally, changing ceiling angles, creating alcoves, adding niches in the walls or over beds and installing cabinetry. "We personally don't ever want a large space to just be four walls," she says.

An important thing to keep in mind is that a room should have a focal point that's visible from the doorway, such as a cozy-looking chair or sofa, or even a fireplace. "If you're standing at the threshold, you want to be looking at the focal point; you shouldn't have to turn your head to see it," says Linder. "It should grab you in, so that you want to go to that chair or sofa."

Besides warm colors, soft fabrics, cushy chairs and sink-into sofas, there are plenty of other ways to make a room cozy and inviting. Here are a few suggestions:

Walls. "One of the things people often overlook is the walls," says Linder. Artwork or some kind of collection or artifacts displayed on the walls really pulls the room together, she says. Besides art, Linder also suggests using a tall piece of furniture, preferably finished in a warm tone. And of course, the walls should be painted in warm tones, perhaps with one or

two walls painted in a deeper color to create interest. Another option is textured wallpaper. "A flat wall looks dull and cold," she says.

Window treatments. Linder says the trend is moving toward drapes again, with an emphasis on heavy, textured fabrics, such as velvet. She says more creative designs are being used, configurations with side panels, top treatments and sheers inside the window. Linder says such layers add dimension to a room, and make it more inviting. For window coverings, pleated and honeycomb shades create a much warmer look than hard, straight miniblinds.

Fabrics. Generally, softer fabrics such as chenille, suede and mohair lend warmth to a room. Also, fabrics that are a blend of manmade and natural materials create interesting textures. "Cotton is not soft all the time, but mix it with polyester or rayon, and you get a very soft, squeezable feel — such as pillows you can cuddle up to," says Linder. Such fabrics can be incorporated in the draperies, furniture covers, pillows, throws and rugs — or even mounted on walls.

Furniture. If coziness is the ultimate goal, Linder suggests furniture with soft, round edges, such as a fully upholstered sofa. "Inviting fur-

niture looks like it's been made to curl up in, so the minute you sit in it you're going to relax — and then when you do, you're surprised because it feels even better than you thought it would," she says. One style that fits well with the cozy theme is the California traditional style, which Linder says inherently has a comfortable look defined with earth tones, casual design, luxurious fabrics and soft edges.

mahogany, but somewhere in between. She says the warmest looking woods are honey- or caramel-colored woods such as pecan and fruitwoods, as well as antique whites. She adds that a popular trend right now is to use a fabric-covered ottoman as the cocktail table instead of a standard table.

Flooring. Layering beneath the feet is also important. "For warmth, you'd usually want wall-to-wall carpet with rugs on top of that," says Linder. She also suggests placing two or three unmatching carpets in a room, depending on whatever the room demands: maybe a 9-by-12-foot rug in the center of the room, a 4-by-6-foot rug by the chairs, and a 6-by-9-foot rug near the fireplace.

Lighting. "Layering" is even the buzzword when it comes to lighting, as in layering different types of lighting, such as ambient, overall and task lighting. "We don't ever do one type of lighting in a room," says Linder. One obvious way to cozy up a room is with candlelight.

Accessories. "Tons of them are always the way to cozy up the place," says Linder. She suggests everything from large potted plants, bowls of different shapes and sizes, framed art, sculptural pieces, shadow boxes, or anything else that has personal meaning.

And don't forget about satisfying your other senses: Montenegro suggests incorporating the sounds of water, such as with a small fountain. And of course, music such as jazz or classical can do wonders to warm a room, as can potpourri and scented candles.

"It's all in the details," says Linder.

Cozy Room Resources

Interior Design Source

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