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Renovations – special feature

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 ▲ Interior design – West Coast-style

Simply inviting to feel at home

By SUSAN BALCOM



How do you define West Coast style?

At home, it's all about serenity, luxurious materials and open spaces, according to one designer. Another points to our fondness for new materials, interesting textures and warmer colours.

Whatever design trends are happening in the wider world, consumers in BC have a distinctive sense of what it means to feel at home.

We love natural light, hardwood floors, comfortable furniture and rooms that invite guests to sit down and relax.

"A simple, clutter-free space is one of the biggest trends right now," says Brentwood Bay designer Kimberly Williams. "A balanced living space can be created by removing unnecessary items, which instantly calms a room by having less in it."

There is a growing appreciation for beauty. Yesterday's drop-in sink is being replaced by a sculpted granite bowl or a glass vessel sink.

Glass is a huge trend, appearing as colourful accent tiles in kitchens and bathrooms and as diffused laminated glass panels in interior doors. Glass doors allow light to transfer through, from space to space, while still providing privacy.

"Glass is even being used on closet doors," says Coquitlam designer Kori Nightingale. "It lightens up a small space. It's also still a sound barrier."

While a laminated glass door costs about \$350 compared to \$150 for a quality wood door, the effect is well worth the expense, she says. "If you have room in a budget, it's a great upgrade."

Above: Engineered wood flooring was installed in this den, centre, and living room. Below: Luxurious fabrics for the bedroom are rich-looking – and washable. Opposite page, top and bottom: Reclaimed hardwood floor in deep walnut contrasts the pale grey walls in the dining room/living room. Opposite page, centre: A warm bedroom for Vancouver's grey winters. All interiors by Nightingale Design.



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Wall-to-wall carpets continue to take second place to hardwood floors. And the most popular colour for hardwood is a rich, dark chocolate called *wenge* (named after the exotic African wood.)

"People who do want to stay with carpets are going with very textured carpets, like berbers," Nightingale says. "It's not your boring, standard berber. It has lots of visual, textural interest. It's sort of like visual delight."

The darker wood flooring is versatile as well as attractive, adapting to a range of design styles, from traditional to contemporary. It can also help make smaller spaces feel larger; a dark floor recedes, creating an illusion of height in the room.

"We're steering our customers towards not being afraid of a bold, deep colour," says Nightingale, who recommends painting walls in shades that tone in with the floor.

Deep caramels and rich taupes are strong colours, with merlot and cranberry red used for accent. Chocolate brown is the new black.

Furniture is being covered in comfortable ultrasuedes and chenilles. Jewel-toned Asian and Indian prints appear as toss cushions and throws.

Designers are once again painting a single wall a dramatic darker colour, often to match a large piece of furniture in front of it, minimizing the item's impact.

For windows, vertical blinds are passé (they take up too much of the window when they are pulled back). Roller shades with an accent panel of fabric on the side are in.

Two-inch-wide wood horizontal blinds are also popular, especially in Craftsman-style homes. For windows in high-ceilinged rooms, a valance helps to define the space.



Windows are a huge priority for everyone, says Williams. One new trend that's just beginning to be seen in BC is the use of commercial windows in residential applications.▲



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