

Redecorating your home

If you're thinking of creating a new look in your house but don't have a big budget, don't despair. You don't need to hire an interior decorator or spend a fortune.

Looking at new and different lighting fixtures and bulbs gives you a wealth of practical as well as aesthetic options.

GTE/Sylvania can help you redecorate, and get more use out of the rooms.

An artist's perspective

Hundreds of years ago, renowned artists such as da Vinci and Caravaggio developed the technique known as *chiaro scuro*, meaning "light-dark."

The artist would place objects and people in varying shades of light in order to draw attention to certain features and conceal others.

For example, in a painting, the contours of a woman's dress may not be visible, but a beam of light crosses her face; the artist's intention is to highlight her face, not her dress. You, too, can use this concept when decorating your home.

Bearing the da Vinci and Caravaggio technique in mind, take a new look at those parts of your home that often are overlooked.

Kitchens and bathrooms are so vital in our everyday lives, yet many people don't realize that lighting them correctly can be not only attractive but functional. Using some of the following ideas is sure to result in a brighter, more efficient and pleasanter living space which boasts a true decorative touch.

Kitchens: Lights add work space

Directing your home's lighting towards objects that you wish to make the most of, the purpose of the artist's technique, can also help you utilize space more efficiently.

For example, by installing fluorescent lights underneath kitchen cabinets, you can see the food you're preparing much better. Your counter can now be used where once there was only dark, wasted space.

Fluorescent bulbs are especially good to use in kitchens because they are more efficient, producing more light per watt than incandescent bulbs.

Instead of positioning a light in the center of your ceiling, hide a fluorescent tube on top of your cabinet so that the light shines upward and then bounces off the ceiling and back down onto the kitchen. This gives a warm glow to the room.

Spotlights are one of the newest ideas in home decorating. Consider using a wall mounted unit, with a hinged movable arm, placed so that it shines on to a table that you use often, or over the sink so that washing dishes isn't a gloomy experience anymore.

Another innovative option is an infrared light—ideal for keeping the family's food warm when members of the family aren't on the same schedule. You don't need to be a fast food restaurant to have food ready and waiting.

Create a separate room with lights

If you have an eat-in kitchen, you can create the effect of a separate room simply by adding the appropriate lighting. Try a lamp or chandelier hanging directly over the table to create the sensation of a separate room.

To improve on the mood, why not add a dimmer switch to your light. That way, no matter what atmosphere you want to create, the control is at your fingertips.

Bathrooms: Lights add clarity

Bathrooms traditionally are used for shaving and applying makeup. The standard one light on top of the mirror results in the poorest reflection.

In order to achieve a glare-free and shadow-free reflection, experts recommend that you surround the top and sides of your mirror with low wattage bulbs, similar to those in actors' dressing rooms.

Alternatively, light both sides of your mirror with fluorescent tubes. For a warmer, more flattering appearance, be sure to choose a fluorescent with improved color over the standard cool-white tubes.

Lights improve appearance, add atmosphere

Be adventurous; cast the glow of a spotlight through track lighting onto a plant or picture in the bathroom. Don't think that these small decorative touches only belong in the living room.

Another suggestion is adding a warming light outside of the shower to take the chill off of your skin and out of the air. These unusual ideas add flair to the bathroom and are surprisingly affordable.

GTE/Sylvania is offering consumers a free "Light Design Idea Book" full of a multitude of energy-saving, yet affordable and attractive, lighting ideas. Write to: GTE Products Corp., 100 Endicott Street, Danvers, MA 01923, ATTN: Light Design Idea Book.

Euro-style cabinets surge

The European invasion of American kitchens seems sure to continue. Less than a decade ago, European-style cabinets, with sleek laminate finishes and "frameless" construction, accounted for a mere fraction of cabinet installations.

Today, European-style cabinets account for more than 40 percent of all cabinets purchased by homeowners. By 1990, industry experts predict that more than 50 percent of all cabinets sold will be European-style.

What makes European-style cabinets so popular among today's homeowners? According to Bart Stolp, executive vice president of ALNO Kitchen Cabinets, a U.S.-based subsidiary of the largest European cabinet manufacturer, there is a variety of reasons.

"Probably the most important factor is the visual appeal and flexibility of European styling," comments Stolp.

European-style cabinets are dominated by clean lines that are appealing in any surrounding. There are no visible hinges,

and most cabinets come with a large selection of door knobs and pulls.

In addition, they are available in a spectrum of colors. Even patterned and textured finishes are available.

As a result, says Stolp, homeowners have complete flexibility in picking cabinets to meet their requirements in both function and design. Brightly colored cabinets can serve as a focal point for an entire kitchen. Just as easily, white, almond, pale grey or other neutral colors can serve as a unifying background for a kitchen.

Other reasons cited by Stolp for the growing popularity of European-style cabinets are frameless construction and solid laminate surfaces, both inside and out.

"Frameless construction maximizes useable storage space," claims Stolp. "while use of all-laminate surfaces makes it very easy to keep European-style cabinets clean."

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