

Kitchens are now the home's HQ

Kitchens have become the central headquarters of the home, and this Fall's trends in décor craft the kitchen into the focus of the home through a blend of soft lines, granite, stainless steel and an assortment of colours. Veering away from its utilitarian roots, the function of today's kitchen has broadened to become a social gathering space for friends and a homework space for kids. As the weather gets colder and people start congregating back inside, Fall is a good time to spice up the kitchen's comfort level and transform it into the heart of the home.

With the kitchen becoming a home's central meeting place, more homeowners are redesigning their old kitchens to better accommodate the needs of their families.

Consider the following key kitchen décor and renovation trends to anticipate for Fall/Winter 2004.

1. Curves and colour are key

The role of the kitchen has grown tremendously over the years and now it's the place where Canadians cook, but also work, socialize, entertain and generally live. Round or oval tables are making a comeback, particularly since they're much more conducive to conversation, which goes hand-in-hand in turning the kitchen into a social gathering place. Refrigerators are smoother in style as rounded fronts and curved handles offer some relief to the straight lines of the past few years.

Stepping away from Spring's rustic and warm colours, the kitchen has undergone a dramatic transformation for Fall with coloured appliances. Reds and

greens along with more unusual tones, such as mushroom and mint julep, are popular shades for appliances, from the toaster to the mixer, this Fall.

2. New fashioned kitchens call for stainless steel and granite

Once solely the backdrop to cooking, washing and mundane domestic chores, the kitchen moves away from its traditional roots and becomes a stylish, aesthetically beautiful space with fresh and modern materials. Stainless steel remains a must-have feature for Fall 2004 in both modern and traditional kitchens, and it is likely to remain a strong influence in kitchens for some time to come. Traditional black appliances are even showing stainless steel accents in handles.

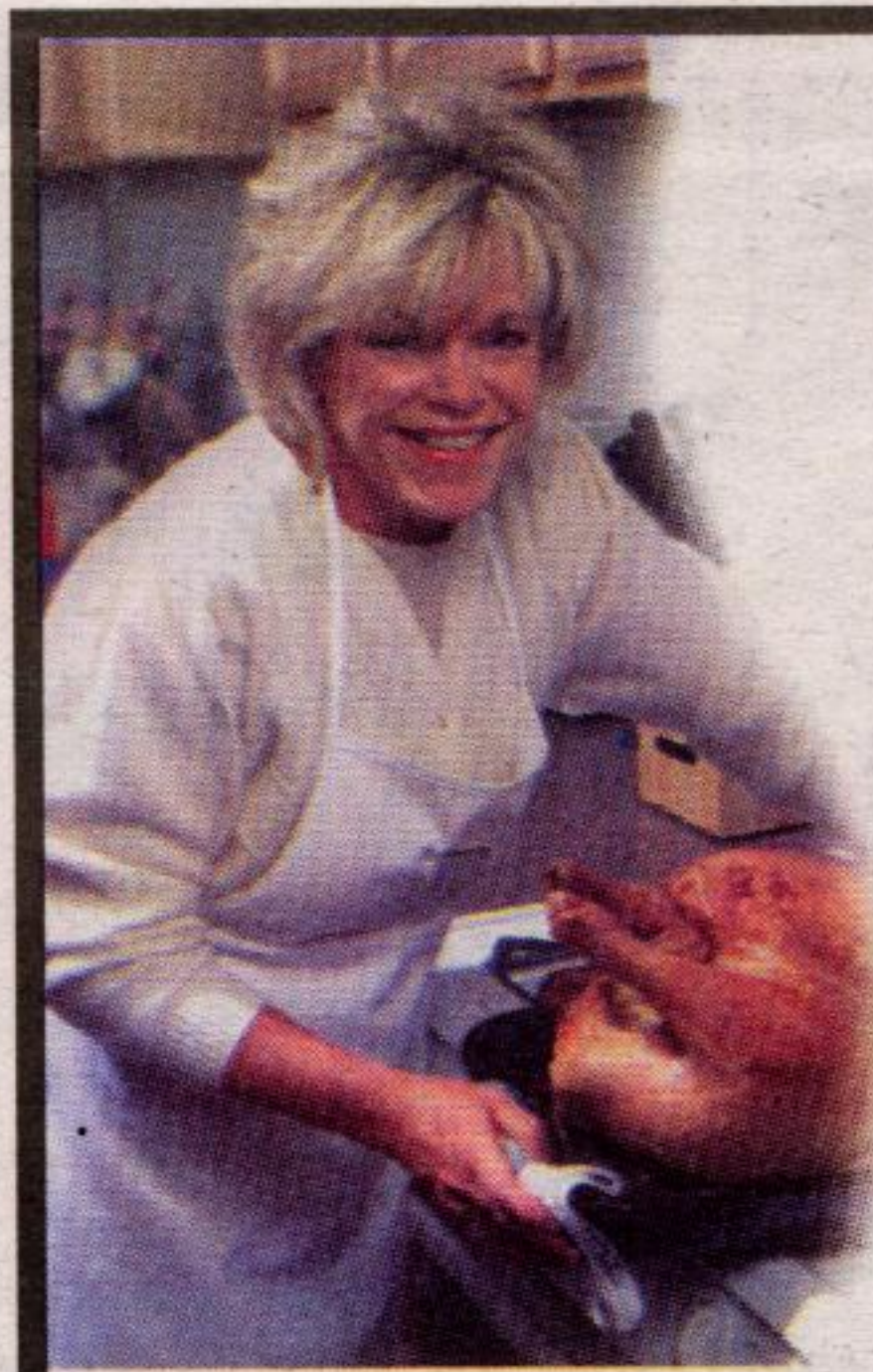
In addition to the contemporary styling of stainless steel, granite countertops are also a big hit for Fall 2004. Canadians are seeking a granite finish for their kitchen countertops as it is relatively unaffected by most chemicals and provides a natural and modern look.

3. Designer style for the kitchen

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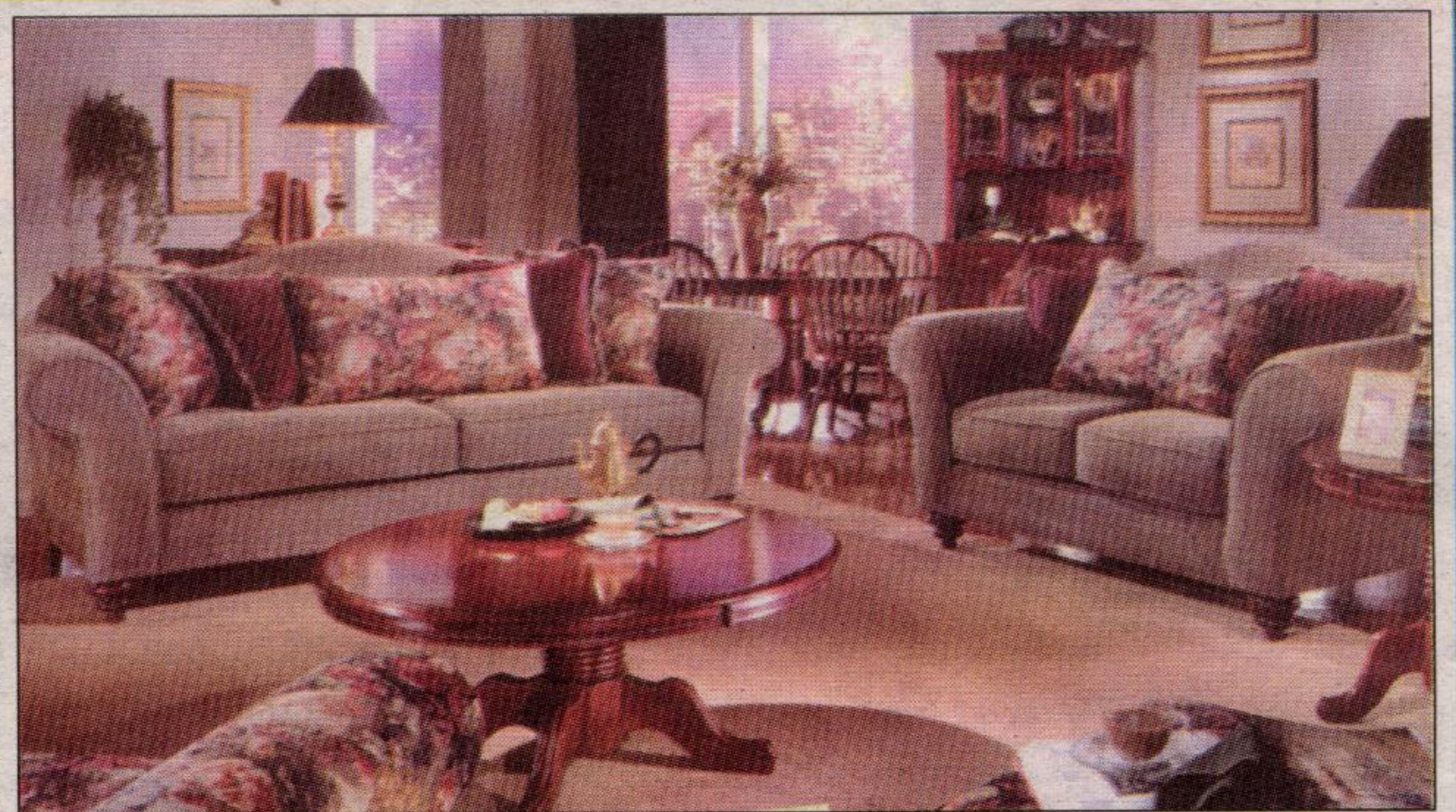
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