

Does designing your home have you confused? Elements of Design's Owner & Lead Interior Designer Lina Quintero answers your questions each month.



Question: I am looking into wood flooring for my home and I love the dark, solid woods but am getting conflicting advice about going too dark. What is the right shade for a contemporary Arizona home?

If you are considering wood flooring with a shade that is on the darker side of the color palette, it is important to factor maintenance and upkeep into the equation. Dust, scratches, and general wear-and-tear are more visible on the surface of darker woods. If you are not bothered by the increased maintenance requirements, rich, dark woods can add a level of sophistication that is unmatched. Dark wooden floors are a favorite of mine. However, if you are not prepared for the upkeep, go in a different direction.

Conversely, wood flooring with a lighter tone offers a classic approachable look that will never go out of style. In order to achieve a color balance with the lighter wood, add a dark area rug to the space.

Question: Are curtains totally out of style? I need window coverings and all I see are California shutters everywhere.



Curtains or fabric panels are a timeless element of design that never goes out of style. The style, pattern, color, and texture of the fabric determine whether or not the panels are "in-style." As opposed to the more generic California shutters, fabric panels soften a room and they add a custom feel. There are endless creative design possibilities with fabric panels versus the more limited range of options with shutters.

Question: I painted my kitchen pale yellow eight years ago when that was the hot kitchen color. What is the hot kitchen color now?



First and foremost, I recommend staying away from trendy design selections. By definition, trends are here today gone tomorrow. In design these trendy selections can become very costly to frequently alter. It is always better to opt for a more timeless material selection.

Secondly, to answer your question, the current hot colors for kitchens are neutrals with taupe and grey undertones. Grey is the new neutral. Lighter colors like ivories and off-whites have gained popularity in recent years and they tend to be historically classic colors that have mass appeal.

Question: I am doing a subway tile backsplash in my kitchen. Bright white tiles, with dark green/black granite counters. What color do I grout? White or beige to match the beige tile floors?



Bright white grout will disguise the grout lines. On the other hand, a darker color will make the lines pop and potentially create a busy pattern.

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

When selecting grout for tile, focus on the material at hand. For instance, if you are selecting grout for the backsplash, eliminate the thought of the floors from the equation when considering the grout for the backsplash. Under the scenario you describe, the grout for the backsplash should be white as this will tone down and match the existing tile materials.

Question: What type of carpet is durable, but modern, to use throughout all the bedrooms in my home?



Carpet with a tight loop is excellent for modern bedrooms. The material wears well and because of the tight loops it allows a pattern to show through. A faint and subtle texture adds depth to any style of bedroom.

If you are going to invest in a carpet, make sure that you invest in a high quality carpet. Carpet shows every flaw and every bit of the wear and tear that it encounters. High quality carpets from Masland and Shaw will help to alleviate some of the aforementioned concerns.

On average, carpet should be professionally cleaned every six to twelve months. Any stain or any patch of dirt should be addressed immediately.

Question: I have a TV and a fireplace in my living room – where do you suggest I focus my furniture?



Anytime you have a TV in a room, the TV is going to be the focal point because it is what gives the room purpose. Functionality in this case does in fact supersede form.

If at all possible, find ways to creatively hide or seamlessly integrate the TV into a more strategic overall design plan. Flat panel TV's and TV's in concealed space such as within an armoire, behind a custom built enclosure, or an automated lift, will allow for a more sophisticated approach to designing the remaining elements as well as the secondary and tertiary focal points of the room.

Question: Is wallpaper still a trend in bathrooms? I know it was last year, but, I don't want to go ahead and do it and find out the fad is already over.



When installing wallpaper in a bathroom, it is critical to consider the day-to-day usage of the bathroom. A master bathroom which experiences a significant amount of use is not ideal for wallpaper because of the constant exposure to moisture from heavy use of the shower and other water fixtures.

On the other hand, guest bathrooms or powder rooms are ideal locations for wallpaper with geometric patterns. Textures and vibrant colors in wallpaper help to personalize a space. Wallpaper has made a huge comeback and there are a plethora of options from which to choose.

Send your design questions to Lina at feedback@mediathatdeedivers.com and visit Elements of Design at www.elementsofdesign.com.