



Blueprint for the future

Low-carbon footprint products, natural materials, organic shapes and innovative recycled designs will dominate the next decade

It is funny how much things can change in 10 years. Is it really less than a decade since the return of the trusty rainwater tank as a result of Basic regulations, the arrival of bi-fold doors for that indoor-outdoor flow and the all-important alfresco dining area?

The Noughties also heralded the mainstream arrival of multiple bathrooms, designer kitchens and parents' retreats.

From an interior's perspective, we saw the development of retro style along with the revival of such design classics as Eames chairs and Saarinen tables.

For many homeowners, it seems impossible to imagine life without these design essentials, which have been driven by a greater environmental awareness and design-savvy consumers.

As we move into the next decade, being able to predict what our houses

will look like all comes down to the driving forces shaping them.

Carbon training

Trends analyst and one of the curators at the upcoming DesignEX exhibition, Genty Marshall says the environment will be the strongest influence on our homes this decade, shaping everything from the floors we choose and the whitegoods we buy through to the window coverings and the colours we use.

"With the rise in the awareness of the environment, we are very curious about the source of everything from the coffee we drink to the car we drive," Genty says

"We are informed consumers and if people will not tell us, we can find out ourselves."

Manufacturers are slowly beginning to





respond to these issues and in the next decade she says they will be supplying goods that can be better cleaned, repaired and pulled apart at the end of their lives for recycling.

"After the recent global financial crisis, the rise in business for people such as shoe repairers was very interesting," Genty says

"There is a lot of frustration among consumers at the moment that you cannot get things fixed."

Material world

While old materials such as linoleum will receive renewed attention, innovation in textiles will come to the fore, particularly as we look to reduce high energy costs through traditional means such as window treatments.

As we continue to dip into traditional ways of designing and furnishing our homes, the handmade craft movement that has swept the design world will continue to gain pace.

"The craft resurgence was a backlash to globalisation and it will continue very strongly in Australia," Genty says.

"Design can be quite elitist, but the craft side of things is a very high trend and has gone worldwide. We see the value in it more because there is an appreciation for the human element."

This growing interest in one-off handmade creations, often using

reclaimed materials, has spilled into the industrial design world.

The curator of The Edge exhibition at the recent Australian International Furniture Fair, Uli Hasel says we should expect to see more reclaimed pieces such as the Retro Chest Coffee Table entry by Ana Calic.

"People have been working with existing products and translating them into new products," Uli says.

The Retro Chest Coffee Table is an example of how Ana has used an old cupboard door and a chair.

"What was strong in the last decade was the use of facets – all the straight planes bonded together. The 42 Chair with its hexagons is an example"

"I am hoping this is start of a new trend, because it is sustainable," Uli says.

"I think it is a very Australian approach, because we are strong on being practical."

With many industrial designers using Computer Aided Design (CAD) systems to create their works, as the programs become more sophisticated so will the designs.

"What was strong in the last decade was the use of facets – all the straight planes bonded together," Uli says.

"The 42 Chair with its hexagons is an example of this."



A Furniture suppliers such as Ikea provide contemporary, colourful options **B** Amy Gray's cane chair **C** Ana Calic's retro table using recycled material **D** Individual pieces of furniture in different textures are becoming popular **E** An organic-shaped bed made from bamboo



Organic designs using sustainable products will appear more frequently, such as the Melloh Chair by Amy Gray from the University of Western Sydney.

Constructed from fast-growing cane, Uli says this kind of design will become more popular as sustainability becomes the biggest influence on our choices.

Denby Dowling from Stylist Sydney, who lists Freedom and David Jones among her clients, says natural materials will fuel our interest in texture as well as world cultures when it comes to decorating our homes.

"There is a whole blend of different textures and colours going on," she says.

"Colours cannot be dictated, although I think we will continue to see more metallics.

"The interest in wallpapers and mosaics will continue to grow."

Slavish adherence to any particular design era or culture has had its day as homeowners feel more confident about mixing and matching.

"People want something independent of their next-door neighbour and all the different styles are being blended rather than following one look," Denby says.

"Combining old styles with new materials, such as creating chandeliers with plastics, works really well."

The current taste for design classics from the 1950s and 1960s is set to continue for some time yet, because it works so well with the mix of traditional and contemporary.

"It is still about creating that serene environment away from the stresses of the outside world," Denby says.

This should encourage the continued interest in high-end hotel interiors being used in a domestic environment.

Darren Mehl, general manager of marketing for Studio M, the design arm of project builder Metricon, agrees that homeowners in the new decade will still want contemporary, visually appealing homes.

"People still want to make the most of the main suite and to feel like they are staying at a resort," Darren says.

"They are entertaining more at home and they want to use the main hub of the house for entertaining, keeping everything out of sight with a butler's pantry."

Construction decisions such as double glazing, concealed water tanks and smart wiring will be made according to their energy efficiency without compromising on the design of the house.

"Using smart wiring has been a trend, but that will explode so that people will be able to control their house from a keypad and no lights will be left on," Darren says.

"People are being a bit smarter with greywater recycling and conservation of water with different sorts of tap innovations beginning to emerge."

The interest in the environment will also put more focus on indoor air quality, with more attention given to low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints, low-maintenance natural floors and well-ventilated free-flowing living spaces.

Robyn Willis

MORE INFORMATION
Australian International Furniture Fair aiff.net.au
DesignEX designex.info
Studio M studiom.com.au
Stylist Sydney
stylistsydney.com.au