

## design inspirations

# NEW DÉCOR FOR A NEW YEAR

By Suzanne Lasky

Take a deep breath and congratulate yourself for making it through another festive holiday season. January is a wonderful time to think about your home and the interior design changes you would like to implement in the coming year. To assist you in your interior design endeavors, provided below is a primer on the principles and elements of design.

Chances are good that your home is a mish mash of furnishings, art, accents and accessories that have been collected over time. To create the perfect designer look, you want to first consider the purpose for each room, how you want it to look, your personal tastes, features that can and can't be changed, and finally, the budget you have available.

The basics of good design are proper scale, proportion, balance, the use of contrast, rhythm, pattern and texture, creation of emphasis (focal points) and harmony. Knowing how these elements work together will help you design your space so that it's not only beautiful, but comfortable and functional as well.

### SCALE & PROPORTION

Scale is one of the most important things to consider when creating the look of a room. A room that is proportioned correctly will feel welcoming while an incorrectly proportioned room will just feel crowded and unfriendly. The trick is to match pieces in terms of their scale. A large overstuffed sofa needs an equally large end table or coffee table; otherwise, these accents simply disappear as the sofa dwarfs them proportionally.

### BALANCE

When creating balance, there are two ways to go. The first is symmetrical design, where everything is perfectly balanced. With symmetrical design, there's roughly two of everything or items are mirrored in the room. For instance, one chair is placed exactly opposite another one just like it. Formal or traditional spaces are often symmetrically designed. Experienced designers use asymmetry to create interest. Objects balance well because they are judged by their visual weight, not pairings. For instance, you may have a large sofa on one side of the room that is balanced by two large overstuffed chairs with an accent table in the middle and floor lamp behind. These pieces balance the sofa visually, even though they aren't equal in size or shape. The design works because there is balance in the asymmetrical layout of the furniture.

### CONTRAST

Imagine walking into a white room with white carpet and



The selection of compatible design elements and furnishings that create a pleasing whole.

white furniture with the same textures. Contrast helps draw the eye around a room through the intelligent use of color. Bold use of colors creates energy while the use of muted shades in complementary tones creates calm. The more contrast you create, the easier it is for the human eye to follow the intended design of the room, moving visually from one space to another, guided by the use of color and contrast.

### RHYTHM

While creating contrast with the use of light and dark tones can be effective, it can also be unexciting. To keep the room connected, you want to use rhythm. This means reusing specific colors, patterns, textures or themes throughout the room. Pick a couple main colors and repeat them in different ways in your paint scheme, fabrics and accents.

### PATTERN & TEXTURE

As the eye moves about a room, it picks up specific patterns. These should be grouped together. For example, a blue wall is combined with a striped piece of fabric that has the same blue in it. You want to pick one or two primary patterns or textures and vary them within the color palette you've already created for the room. Right alongside the elements of contrast and rhythm in home decorating is pattern/texture. A monochromatic room can be interesting

when different textures are introduced.

### HARMONY

If you've ever heard three singers sing different parts that sound amazing together, then you already know what harmony is. The same is true for the harmony in your home. Different colors, different designs and different proportions combine to create a *new look* that was never there before, just as new notes are created by singers singing three different parts. The room is suddenly complete. It has a look that if you remove just one element, won't have that harmonic feel to it any longer.

*When you've achieved harmony, you've achieved your design goals. ■*

Suzanne Lasky, Allied Member of A.S.I.D., is the owner and founder of S Interior Design, the exclusive provider of Pawprint Design Services™. Suzanne works with her clientele to develop a winning combination of design elements that result in warm, comfortable and functional spaces that reflect each client's personal style. To contact Suzanne please call (480) 220-4659 or visit her website at [www.sinteriordesign.com](http://www.sinteriordesign.com).

