

# 2023 Home and Design Trends to Watch

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Design Trends

By: Barbara Ballinger

Sustainable design and warm, cozy spaces are on the rise in 2023.



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While homeowners compile their holiday wish lists, we've compiled a list of 12 home and design trends experts think will be next year's stars.

Architecture and design experts weigh in on what's emerging in 2023. As the new year emerges, lifestyle changes due to the pandemic continue to hold strong. Cutting home expenses and conserving resources are top of mind for many. Move over, granite: These new countertop materials are coming in strong, and cozy comfort is taking the place of stark, minimalist design.

## Home Office Updates

For many, hybrid work is here to stay, so home offices make the list, though changes are in order. Many crave some interaction, says Priscilla Holloway, a salesperson with New York City-based Douglas Elliman.

Architect Liz Peabody of Boston-based The Architectural Team says that open, partially open and glass-walled spaces are seen in houses as well as multifamily buildings' common spaces and individual apartment units. Another change is that some offices are larger and have a window for a nice view, according to designers at [The Plan Collection](#) (link is external).

**Why now?** The pandemic changed how and where we work, and people are still figuring out what works best at home.



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## Induction Cooking

Though the change will be gradual, many homeowners are expected to switch to induction cooking from natural gas. Many are finding that their cookware is induction-safe, despite previously held beliefs, says Chicago kitchen expert Mick De Giulio of de Giulio Kitchen Design. Induction has many benefits: Water boils faster, food cooks quicker, and homeowners have more control of heat level calibration, he says. Additionally, the smooth surface is easier to clean.

**Why now?** Many cities are outlawing natural gas hookups in new homes and buildings to reduce fossil fuel emissions and better control environmental and climate challenges.





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## Eco-friendly Design

More real estate sites list eco-friendly design as a priority, from solar panels to energy-efficient windows, stronger builds that better resist severe weather, more tech features like programmable thermostats, gardening [apps](#) (link is external) and smarter, more environmentally friendly, hygienic toilets like Toto USA's Washlet and bidet toilets. TOTO also manufactures domestically, reducing its products' carbon footprints, says Bill Strang, president of corporate strategy, e-commerce and customer care.

**Why now?** More homeowners know the importance of sustainable design due to climate change reports, how fossil fuels damage the environment and the importance of preserving resources.



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## Cozier Comfort

Tough times call for an antidote, and many are seeking a dose of comfort within the walls of their homes. The ebb and flow of COVID-19 in conjunction with other stressors has people wanting to feel as though they're wrapped in a warm hug, says Chicago-based designer Tom Segal of Kaufman Segal Design. He suggests doing so with patterned wallpaper on both walls and ceilings. A tactile touch also works, he says. Think big, upholstered headboards; '50s and '60s lounge-style sections to sprawl, watch TV or eat; and colorful tufted or handwoven area rugs that resemble art.

**Why now?** Collective stress levels are at an all-time high, and people are finding they need a respite from the constant barrage of information available because of the digital age.



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## More Natural, Personalized Interiors

The biophilic, natural look prevails in appeal because of the benefit nature provides. Homeowners want organic furnishings, live plants and warmer colors in the clay palette, says Gena Kirk, vice president of Design Studio at Los Angeles-based homebuilder KB Home. The latest iteration reflects interest in embracing memories through personalized design aesthetics that display mementos and heirlooms, Kirk says.

**Why now?** During the pandemic, homeowners opted for cleaner, minimalist interiors to set a clear boundary between personal space and the outside world. They now want to return to a new form of nesting, through an accumulation of textiles, warmer colors, new hardware and fabrics for a welcoming, natural environment to live, work and play, Kirk says.



© KBLA Westport

## Dekton and Neolith Surfaces

Every few years, a new countertop surface takes center stage as the best in terms of durability, sustainability, color or novelty. The latest “it” surfaces are newer “sintered” stones, a combination of minerals that form a solid surface that can’t be etched, scratched, burned or stained. Dekton and Neolith appeal because they resemble marble and other high-end surfaces and are resistant to fading, says Boston designer Jodi Swartz of KitchenVisions. Milwaukee designer Suzan Wemlinger adds that because the slabs are large, there’s less need for seams, and they can be used in outdoor kitchens without cracking in extreme temperatures.

**Why now?** New technology processes have led to the development of these stain-resistant, strong surfaces, and kitchen counter durability is nearly always top of mind for homeowners.





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## Affordable Design Choices

Instead of tempting buyers with fancy cabinets, finishes and appliances, more homebuilders are turning to affordability as a feature. “Good design is not about spending the most money but offering well-designed homes, sometimes without bells and whistles,” says Mary Cook, founder of Mary Cook Associates, a Chicago-based commercial interior design firm. Builders are displaying predesigned packages of cabinets, countertops, appliances and flooring that keep costs down. They’re also cutting square footage to show that buyers can live well in smaller homes, Cook says.

**Why now?** Higher interest rates have put a pause on buyer frenzy. “We went from crazy busy to crazy slow,” one homebuilder says. Now is the time to see how affordability and quality design come together.

## Zero Emissions

Master-planned developments are taking the guesswork out of emission-free living. Developer Marshall Gobuty of Sarasota, Fla.–based Pearl Homes shows how with his 18-acre Hunter’s Point development, the first LEED Zero–certified community in the world, he says. “There’s no energy cost associated with the 86 single-family houses except for a \$35 monthly maintenance fee from Florida Power,” he says.

**Why now?** With the pandemic and overall inflation, energy costs continue to soar. Also, sustainable development helps communities adapt to challenges posed by climate change and protects natural resources.



© Pearl Homes, Allan Mestel



## In Multifamily: More EV, Fewer Additional Amenities

Few multifamily buildings are constructed without an EV charging station, says architect Peabody. Developers are including a handful and leaving infrastructure available to expand the number. At the same time, they are devoting less square footage to amenities since younger generations are less inclined to pay for features they may not use, especially after seeing how the pandemic shut down facilities. What most still want are lounges, coworking spaces and outdoor areas to exercise and unwind, Peabody says. Pet parks and spas still make the list as well, says Cook.

**Why now?** EV stations are essential as more people switch to electric vehicles. Just over half of passenger cars sold in the U.S. will be electric vehicles by 2030, [according to Bloomberg](#) (link is external).



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## Walkable, Affordable Boomer Living

More efforts are underway to create more options for the [enormous boomer cohort as they age](#) (link is external). Many want to give up owning a car, live where their location has a high walkability score and cut living costs by living in smaller, energy-efficient homes. One example is developer David Fox's Passive House building in Northampton, Mass., to be completed in 2024; it will eliminate 80% of typical energy needs to heat and cool and be built with sustainable mass timber construction, solar panels, a community garden and a bicycle shed. The building's 70 apartments will average 1,200 square feet; share a gym, lounge and roof area to exercise; and limit rent increases.

**Why now?** Boomers are the largest aging community to date, and as the [country ages](#), more emphasis on how elders live is needed now.

## Fire-Resistant Modules

On the east coast, building structures to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and floods are in high demand. On the west coast, however, San Diego-based modular builder Dvele focuses on manufacturing fire-resistant steel modular houses. The company started with 500-square-foot homes constructed from a single module design and now offers 4,000-square-foot homes from seven module designs. All are also highly energy-efficient due to self-powered solar panels, says Kellan Hannah, the company's director of growth.

**Why now?** The National Interagency Fire Center statistics show that as of last October, almost 60,000 fires burned 7 million acres, above the 10-year average of 48,000 fires and close to 6 million burned acres. Fires are only worsening, meaning construction must adapt.



© Dvele

## **What's NOT Hot?**

Several once-popular design choices are losing appeal, primarily because they require high maintenance or aren't functional for today's busy routines, says Gena Kirk with homebuilder, KB Home. She suggests letting go of these four in the year ahead.

### **High Pile Carpet**

While soft, shaggy carpet styles make a statement, they are difficult to keep clean and aren't practical, especially in households with kids and/or pets.

### **Gray Cabinets**

Gray cabinets have been popular but are cooling off as more homeowners shift to warmer hues to make their spaces more welcoming.

### **Standard Subway Tiles**

Standard-size white, horizontal subway tiles are still popular, but many now prefer larger 4-by-10 inch or 4-by-16-inch tiles that run vertically to draw eyes up and give an age-old design a fresh look.

### **Open Shelves**

Most struggle with clutter, so even though some love the open look above, others are opting for the traditional closed cabinets since they find it easier to keep stuff concealed. These days there are countless custom interior organization systems to arrange contents in a neat fashion.