

Summerizing Decor

By Georgie Binks

Even the smallest items in a room should get attention. Changing scone shades can go a long way to creating a seasonal look.



Light colours and fresh flowers as well as a general feeling of openness help bring a summery look to any room.

HunterDouglas Canada

Does your home have a summer look or a winter look? Hopefully, neither and both at the same time. Just as the seasons change, so should the look change to make for the most comfortable living. But doing that takes a little bit of forethought.

When choosing decor, it is best not to create a look suitable for just one season. In other words, while the home may have been purchased in the dead of winter and given a warm feel, six months later that look will no longer be appropriate, or comfortable.

Tara Fingold, an interior decorator with Tara Fingold Interiors in Toronto, advises that when making decisions about things that can't be easily changed, everything from cabinets to flooring, it is best to opt for items in a neutral tone. "I think what people are tending to do is go with neutrals on these permanent things and that is the whole trick of

being able to make it seasonal. Your backdrop is neutral, so large furniture, sofas and everything is in neutral colours. Those colours allow homeowners to be able to change with the seasons. In the winter, we like things with a hardier feeling, so we can put in reds, rich blues and hunter greens. In the summer, we can strip those colours away, and make it cleaner by adding throw pillows that are more neutral."

Other designers echo her advice. Elisa Giannone, manager of interior design with Tridel Corp. in Toronto, agrees that using neutrals is vital to ensuring flexibility. However, she says going neutral doesn't mean washed out or boring. "The colours should be neutral colours, but they don't have to be light, they can be deep. As well, keep the same tone throughout the house." Real colour can be brought in as an accent, on accessories.

When choosing flooring, Leslie Ho,



Monochromatic colours and shiny surfaces reflect light to help a room feel airier, as in this Cricket Club bathroom.

design consultant for high-rise at Monarch Construction, says “ceramic or slate tiles are good. Hardwood is also great,” for flexibility. For an updated look, Ms. Fingold suggests using inlays or mosaics on hardwood floors. “In the summer months you leave it bare, because it is a cooler, cleaner look, but in the winter you can put down shag rugs, cosy warm old antique tapestry carpets, which would create a warmer, cosier atmosphere.”

As well, sisal rugs in lighter colours like honey, beige and seagrass can help “summerize” a home. If wall-to-wall carpeting is installed, neutral colours are best, and it can be overlaid with sisals in summer or wools in winter.

Marlene Hartsman, design studio co-coordinator for Monarch Homes Decor Studio, agrees it is vital to keep floors neutral. “It’s very easy to bring summer colours in through pillows, flower

arrangements, but once you have the floor in, it is always there. Ninety per cent of our homeowners are thinking beiges, taupes.”

The best way to lighten a kitchen done in darker woods is to spruce it up with pots of plants, flowers and herbs. For backsplashes and tiles, mosaics provide a blend of colours that are easy to accessorize around according to the season.

Ms. Giannone believes one place to get

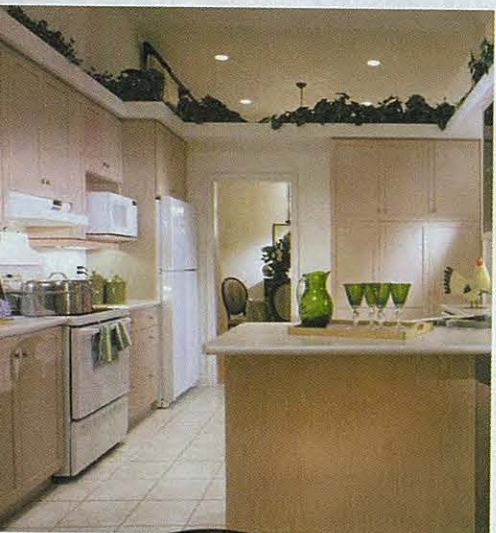


The living room at Sandbury's Aberdeen model in the Millcroft development in Burlington: Cool and calm.

Jac Jacobson Photography



Colleen Kidd / CanWest News Service



Brookside kitchen and living room: Simple changes of accent pieces can help span the seasons.



Jac Jacobson photography for Monarch

more colour into the kitchen is in the countertop. "It should accent cupboards, with dark granites or a mixture, i.e. earth tones with a bit of dark brown and gold." Increasingly, there is a trend on the part of designers to bring the outdoors in, ease the difference between the two areas, which also creates a larger feeling to a house. As well, this bridging can help to bring a particular season indoors. "On new homes," Ms. Fingold says, "people are choosing Juliet balconies, which we are seeing off bedrooms. You can put two little chairs out and leave French doors open, so you can have the opportunity to have the outdoors be an extension of the indoors." While most people would undoubtedly prefer a full balcony, some smaller spaces can only

accommodate a Juliet version, Ms. Ho says, but even that can provide light and ventilation; and if the curtain treatment is a sheer panel left to billow in the breeze, what better way make a room feel like summer?

"People are keeping their doors open," Ms. Fingold says, "and it actually looks like a continuation of the room. There's often a pergola on top of the patio, creating a ceiling, so we are getting that whole feeling of a room on an outside patio." Once the basics are in place, it is easy to make accessory changes. "If you go with a neutral, linen-feel drapery," Ms. Fingold says, "we can make it feel a little bit warmer with tapestry pulls, so tiebacks can be heavier with more colour, and in the summer take those off, and pull

open the drapes and more light and window is exposed."

As well, pillows, throws and area rugs can be changed without too much effort. Slipcovers can also be changed. In the summer, cream or white slipcovers are appropriate, which are then removed in winter to expose a warm chenille upholstery. Even the smallest items in a room should get attention. Changing scone shades can go a long way to finishing a season's look. "You can do the little shades in autumn with blacks," Ms. Hartsman says, "or go to something more neutral in summer."

So, by making important basic decisions about builders' options ahead of time, changing a home's decor to match the changing seasons really can be a breeze. ■



The Carrington model suite: A seasonal change of lampshades and accessories transforms the unit in minutes.