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Tue. Nov 14, 2006

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City Style: The New Rules Of Manhattan Apartment Interior Design

November 14, 2006 - 1:10pm [Lifestyle](#)

By Meghan Dolan

Is your apartment up to date? Or would a designer scoff, "How passé!?" You'll need more



than throw pillows to keep up with Manhattan's hottest design trends. Below are expert designers' top ten trends for apartment living in the city.

1. The Living/"Screening" Room

An unassuming living room transforms into a private movie theatre with large flat-screen monitors that disappear when not in use. Stephen Miller Siegel of Stephen Miller Siegel Architects has recently seen clients requesting this kind of double-duty. "As technology gets more compact, it's easier to camouflage and become discreet," said Siegel.

2. The New Wood Floor

A hardwood floor is still par for the course (sorry, carpet salesmen), but their continued popularity has spurred the refinement of the ready-made floor. "Pre-finished, engineered wood floors have really grown in quality and popularity," said Keith Steier, President of Knockout Renovation, an all-in-one design and remodeling service. They are significantly less expensive and much faster and easier to install. The boards snap in to place and don't require the

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laborious process of staining and re-staining. Your guests will never know they are walking on laminate instead of solid oak.

3. Living With "The Valuables"

Designers suggest that you don't separate the objects you love from the rest of your living space. "There seems to be a return to the great design of the early seventies when one mixed great antiques with contemporary elements," said New York interior designer and architect, Robert Couturier. "The newest trend I'm seeing is using furniture, even functional pieces like sofas, as art or sculptural elements."

4. Bye-Bye Bathtub

Designers are opting to install a full-size walk-in shower these days, in lieu of cramming in a too-small tub to narrow bathroom spaces. "Bathtubs have definitely fallen out of favor," said Jennifer Melis, chief designer for Knockout Renovation. "There's been a focus on updating bathrooms and kitchens, because you tend to get the best return for your investment in those rooms," Melis added.

5. New Granite Counter

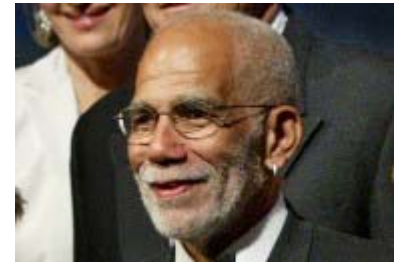
Every home design show on TV has the decorator drooling over a new granite countertop. "People like the look and they're durable," explained Steier. As with hardwood, popularity has spawned more options, like fake granite, that allow you to upgrade without blowing your design budget. "Man-made products give you the look and require zero maintenance," said Steier. Another plus: while it's not possible to control the color and pattern distribution in a slab of naturally occurring granite or marble, man-made delivers a completely consistent result.

6. Apartments Go Green

Designing using environmentally-friendly materials and renewable energy sources is a current trend. "There is definitely a new direction as far as using environmentally correct materials that did not seem to exist a couple of years ago," said Couturier. Knockout Renovation has experienced a lot of demand. "Energy efficient appliances are quite popular," said Steier. They're easy on the conscience and the utility bills.

7. Recessed Lighting

Who really wants to look at a fluorescent dome in the middle of their ceiling? Modern apartments have the lights tucked away and dimmable. "It creates a softer, nicer mood," said Melis. "It's a really clean look since nothing is hanging down from the ceiling."



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8. Space-Saving Innovations

Designers are coming up with creative solutions to get your clutter out of sight and out of mind: from floor-to-ceiling shelving in bedroom and living rooms, to extra tall pantry closets, to roll-out bins. "Any idea that will get things off the counters and off the floors," said Melis. New appliances are helping in the fight against clutter (and small spaces). "More manufacturers are offering drawer dishwashers and counter-depth refrigerators," Steier said. Drawer dishwashers are the only way to offer the amenity in many tiny galley kitchens, and the new models are of a higher quality than leaky, breakage-prone early models. Counter-depth refrigerators give a small kitchen a sleeker look, since they sit flush with the line of the counter instead of protruding out into the middle of the room.

9. Closet Pros

If you're sick and tired of the weekly sweater-avalanche from the top of your closet, you are not alone. "Custom closet interiors continue to be a huge trend," said Melis, "And people don't mind putting a significant amount of money into it." Be careful before you attempt to nail up some boards on your own. "We often refer clients to someone who specializes in making custom closets," said Melis. "It's a whole trade in itself."

10. Open Floor Plans

To make your apartment truly modern, consider using a sledgehammer. Melis and Steier agree that taking out extra walls is a huge trend for remodeling apartments. "Many clients have had us take out the wall between the kitchen and the adjacent dining or living room," said Steier. "It visually opens up the space."

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