Mary Klemic, editor
(248) 901-2569
Fax: (248) 644-1314
mklemic@homecomm.net

At Home

INTERIOR DESIGN ■ DIY ■ GARDENING

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Special dolls (F/O) B4
Remembering that special doll received on Christmas. C4

Accents

Trendy tape

Everyone has duct tape around the house. Now anyone can carry original, handmade wallets and purses made from Super Duct Tape™ by DUCTI.

The material is a proprietary duct tape, made exclusively for the DUCTI company. Unlike conventional duct tape, Super Duct Tape is a durable duct tape that won't lift, peel or get sticky.

If the item gets worn or damaged, the owner can fix it with the Super Duct Tape Repair Strip™ that comes with every DUCTI product.

DUCTI's line includes four original styles of duct tape wallets and bags: the Classic, a men's bi-fold 4-by-4-inch wallet featuring steel grommets ($18); the Chaparral for women, a slim, convertible purse measuring 8½-by-6½ inches ($25); the Barhopper, which measures 4½-by-3 inches and can be clipped to a belt loop or key chain or put in a pocket ($15); and the 4-by-4½-inch Lefti, which features a secret cash pocket and picture holder, opens from the left side and can be attached with a matching rope and clip ($20).

Two stores in Michigan carry DUCTI accessories: Red Jeans in Detroit (phone (313) 341-9349) and Cosmic Charles in Marquette (phone (906) 225-0527). For more information or to order online, call (866) GET-DUCTI or visit www.Ducti.com.

Give him silver

Paloma Picasso® Paloma's Groove™ accessories include items that make special gifts for a special man any time of the year.

Shown here are the ballpoint pen in sterling silver ($145), bar cuff links ($125), round cuff links ($95) and money clip ($75).

The items are available at Tiffany & Co. at the Somerset Collection, Big Beaver Road and Coolidge in Troy (phone (248) 637-2800).

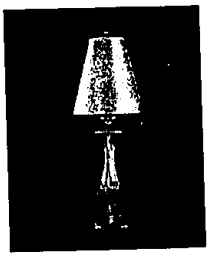
Decorator look

When setting aside an office, den or family room as a guest room, invest in attractive, quality bedding. A brand new collection of fully coordinated Waverly projects from Linens 'n Things makes it easier to achieve a decorator "look" at low prices. For more information, visit www.LNT.com or call (866) 568-7378 for the store nearest you.

Beautiful windows

Helping homeowners solve interior design problems is a free Hunter Douglas booklet entitled "Solutions: Your Guide to Beautiful Windows." For a copy of the guide, call (800) 937-7895 or visit www.hunterdouglas.com.

Comfort decor



2003 home trends grounded in notions of ease, solace

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

As homeowners approach renovation and decorating projects in 2003, values like well-being and comfort are likely to influence their decisions, at least subconsciously.

Likewise, these notions are defining next year's home decor and style trends.

With life as hectic as ever and worries about the economy and foreign policy unbroken, manufacturers and retailers believe homeowners are seeking to "cocoon" in comfort.

"Probably a psychologist would say that it's a way to gain to control," said Joyce Conklin, general manager of The Great Indoors in Novi.

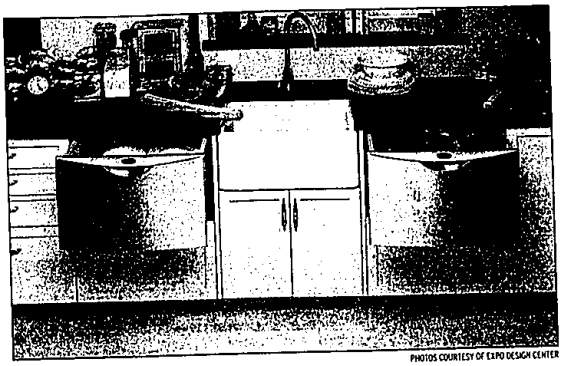
WITH COMFORT, COMES ...

From a practical standpoint, you can't have comfort without convenience. More than ever, homeowners are seeking functional living quarters and ease of use, say designers and forecasters. Baby boomers, particularly, are looking for ways to make day-to-day life more fluid and seamless.

Examples of the trend run the gamut. In design: Engineered stone flooring has a high-end look but requires less work to maintain than the real thing. In appliances: Dish drawers make daily kitchen clean-up quick and easy. In home improvement: Interlocking laminate flooring snaps together like a puzzle for swift and easy assembly.

The needs of baby boomers may drive the market, but "being comfortable is high on everybody's list," said Melissa Birdsong, director of trend forecasting and design for Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse, which has locations throughout metropolitan Detroit.

"In some decades past, particularly certain areas of the home were presentation-ready. Today, people want to be able to use every room and space in their house."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EXPO DESIGN CENTER

Stylish, space-saving dish drawers such as these by Fisher & Paykel (above), available at the Expo Design Center, make everyday food clean-up quick and effortless. Items that offer such convenience are expected to be popular in 2003, as homeowners seek to make life at home as comfortable and easy as possible. An above-counter sink (top left) brings an almost-divine serenity to the bathroom. Accessories with an heirloom look like this crystal lamp with Swarovski Strass crystal beads (top right) are expected to be popular as part of a larger trend toward elements and interiors that comfort us.

Bringing nature and a sense of the outdoors inside the home will continue to gain momentum in 2003. Gauged natural slate flooring, available at Expo Design Center stores, is one way to bring earth tones and textures into a room.

RELAXED STYLES

That shift in thinking explains the growing popularity of more casual furnishings, within which such trends as English Country, French Country, American Country, Arts and Crafts and even modified Contemporary fall into place.

English and French Country styles enable homeowners to have "that formal edge but a setting that's comfortable," said David Kallis, multi-room house designer for the Expo Design Center in West Bloomfield. The retailer also has stores in Troy and Shelby Township.

At the other end of the spectrum, contemporary furniture, which is sophisticated but informal, will emerge in softened form next year, Kallis said. "It's more relaxed without the hard edges. It's called soft contemporary."

COMFORT NATURALS

Convenience, ease of use and, particular, decorative styles address comfort, but, simply put, there are certain elements and objects that, like comfort food, make us feel good.

Among them accessories that could be called vintage but are better described as faux heirloom, are the kind of pieces one finds in grandma's attic. Vintage pieces from more recent decades will continue as a trend, but the latest is what The Great Indoors calls "out of the attic."

Cut crystal and table lamps with crystal drop accents are two examples of the look – both relatively inexpensive ways to bring the comfort of an heirloom into a room.

Another natural at soothing the soul is Mother Nature herself. While the concept of "bringing the outdoors indoors" has been a trend for a while now, it is expected to grow in 2003 with use of natural materials for flooring and countertops, earth-toned color palettes and design elements that play up water, such as

PLEASE SEE DECOR, C3

Contractors take heat off furnace worries for seniors

BY JOHN R. HALL
CORRESPONDENT

Some seniors in the Detroit area got an early Christmas present – a free furnace inspection and tune-up, and carbon monoxide detector – thanks to a group of local heating and cooling contractors.

"Al Keat's Day – Project Heat" sponsored by the Northwest Heating and Cooling Dealers Association on Dec. 7, benefited 56 senior citizen homeowners. The homeowner's names were provided by two local agencies – Seniors Alliance of Wayne County and the Area Agency on Aging of Oakland County.

The event, named after founder Al Keats, has been sponsored by association for the past 15 years. The association is comprised of 29 heating and cooling contractors and another 15 suppliers and educators from that trade. The association is dedicated to the highest ethical standards among members and is committed to providing the most professional and highest-quality installation and service to its customers.

Two of the leaders of association and organizers of the event, Cliff McCourt of Day & Night Heating, Novi, and Craig James of Slasor Heating & Cooling Inc., Livonia, started Project Heat by addressing the participating companies. Day & Night was the meeting point for the day's activities. The contractors were also joined by Ken Erdody, a representative of Research Products Corp., Madison, Wis., which donated carbon monoxide detectors to the Project.

Bill Bradley, one of the co-owners of Airtronic Heating & Cooling in Redford, installs a carbon monoxide detector in the home of George and Sue Illingworth of Redford.

Additional carbon monoxide detectors were donated by the Behler-Young Co. of Livonia.

"This is an opportunity to do the right thing," Erdody said. He explained to the 15 participating contractor crews how to test existing CO detectors to see if they are functioning correctly or whether they need replacing. Homeowners need to know about the dangers of CO and the functions of their alarms, Erdody said.

James reminded contractors that they should replace any non-functioning CO detectors and said more would be available if the group's supply ran out.

STOPS

Two of the homeowners who received a free inspection and cleaning were Redford residents.

George and Sue Illingworth have been lived in Redford for 40 years. The couple normally has their furnace checked every year by a local contractor and were happy to hear that a member of the association would provide a free inspection. Bill Bradley and Kevin McPherson, co-owners of Airtronic Heating & Cooling, Redford, showed up that morning, armed with test equipment and a CO detector, if it was needed.

The Illingworths did not know where their existing CO detector was. Bradley suggested installing a new one and explained its location and functions to them. That was important since the couple are legally blind.

Meanwhile, McPherson cleaned and checked the 12-year-old furnace and declared that it was in very good shape and needed just a minor cleaning. He said the filter was in good shape and was impressed by the overall cleanliness of the unit.

George Illingworth said he

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