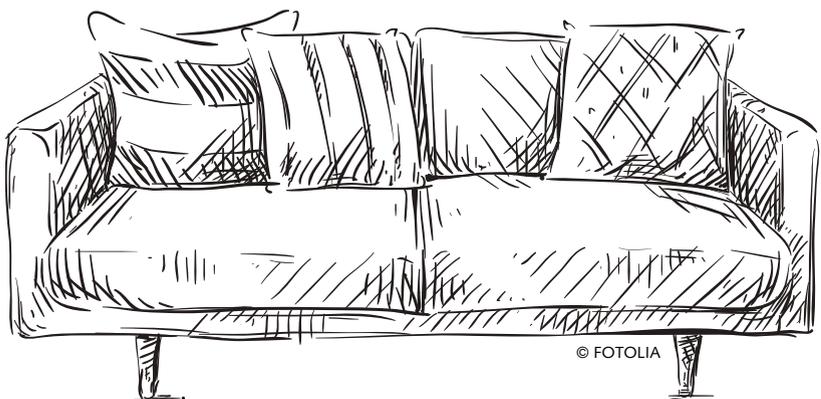
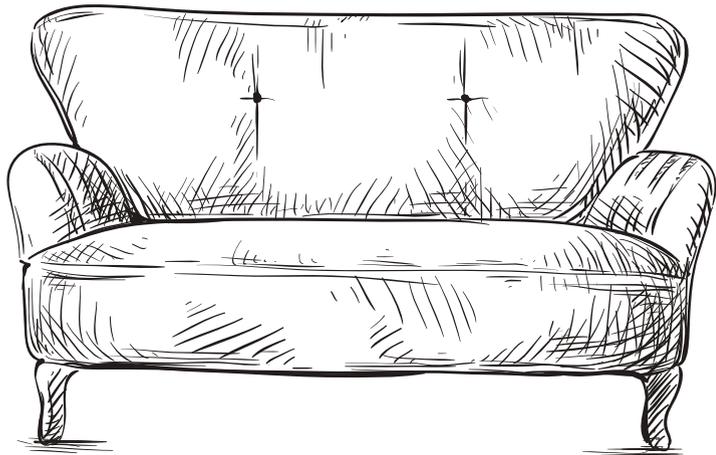
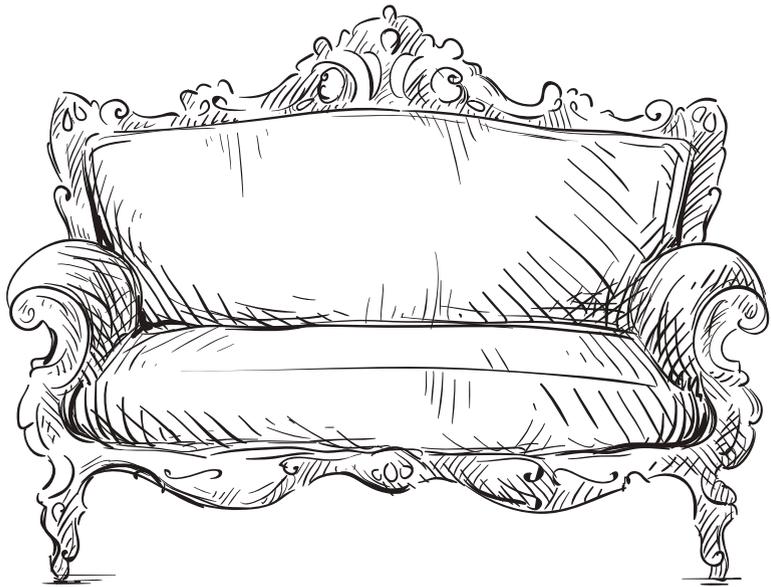
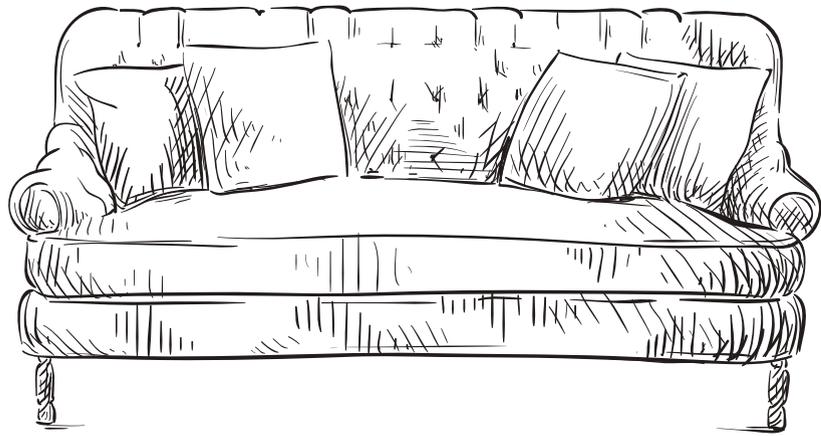


Furniture & Design TRENDS





What's Your Style?

Classic French with a modern twist or country modern with touches of contemporary metal? It doesn't matter which way your design arrow points as long as it ends with you feeling satisfied with your style.

We take our home design seriously. Just look at the dozens of television shows dedicated to home style, improvement and renovation. Remodeling has become big business, and not just out of necessity for homeowners. Rather we are choosing to update our homes to achieve a specific look and feel.

Although designs and trends change over the years, most people will naturally prefer one particular design over another or maybe even a mix of a few.

TRUST THE LOCAL EXPERTS

Your local interior designers are experts on home decor style, and they stay up to date on the latest trends. Their services can save you time, hassle and money in the long run.

Most people assume they cannot afford a personal interior designer, but many actually charge rates that are quite reasonable and affordable.

Although achieving a particular visual impact is the mainstay of interior designing, interior designers consider many factors that impact your comfort and safety. Some of

these include lighting, space planning, organization and fire safety and codes, according to the American Society of Interior Designers, as well as environmental impact.

Be honest up front with your designer about your budget, priorities and personal style. They have likely handled projects similar to yours and are ready for your business.

HOME DECOR STYLES

Educating yourself about the different home decor styles will help you identify your preferences. Choosing your personal home decor style is important, because it sets the tone and atmosphere for your home life.

Your style should be matched with colors and furniture pieces. This collaboration of carefully chosen color, fabric, furniture and art, as well as the small details, all contribute to the impact of the completed design.

Some of the primary design styles include coastal, Asian, contemporary, country, eclectic, English, shabby chic, traditional and ultra modern. Consult with your local interior designer to see which styles match your personality.

Buy Local

There are multiple reasons that your local furniture store is a great place to shop. Many of the businesses in your neck of the woods are owned by your neighbors and friends.

Not to mention, the quality products produced and sold by your local furniture shop can be second to none.

There are multiple benefits of shopping locally, including the fact that your dollars can advance your community's growth and help tap into your sense of community. Many local businesses can only survive with your consistent patronage, so make sure to choose local furniture and design services as often as possible.

LOCAL ECONOMY

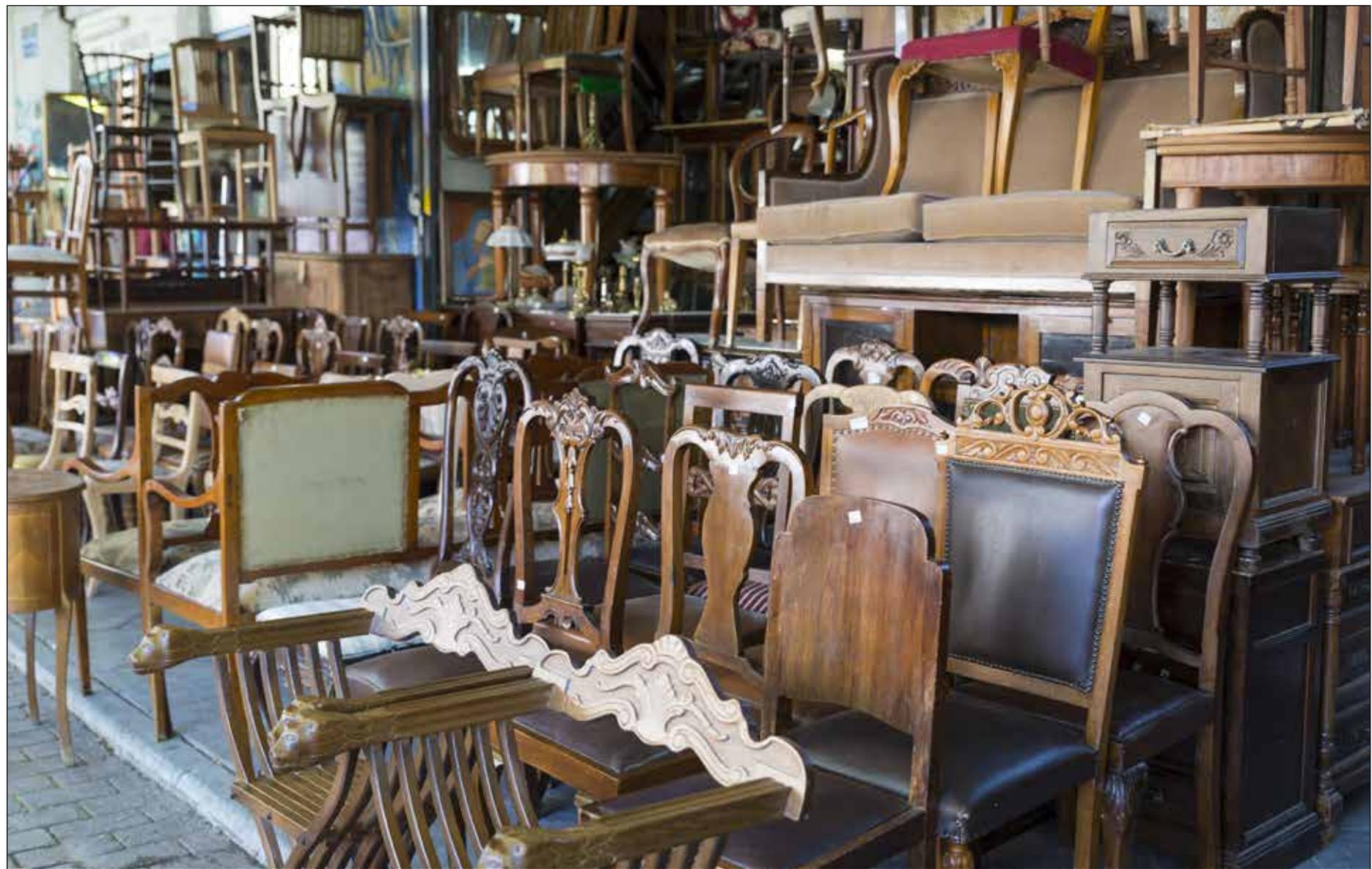
Supporting local businesses puts money back into the area economy. That in turn improves the quality of life for every resident — including your family.

In the long run, your business will mean more local jobs because independent local furniture businesses employ area residents to help them run their companies.

Local retailers and distributors also carry a higher percentage of locally produced goods than chains, and that means American-made products can easily make their way into your home.

QUALITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICE

Your local furniture busi-



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ness owners usually don't mass produce their furniture, so the quality can be exceptional. They take the time and effort to truly create custom, well-crafted pieces such as popular outdoor wooden furniture or heavy, rich dining

room tables.

The owners also know the preferred styles of the locals. They choose quality furniture that suits the local environment, such as coastal living or the countryside.

Even if your style doesn't fit

the local flavor, they generally carry options for all tastes or can order whatever pieces align with your preferences.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

A lot of local furniture business owners are our neighbors,

which means they invest their savings and lives pursuing their American dream in your neighborhood. They play a key role in your community as they support local charities or serve on local boards. Your support reinforces their efforts.

Light it Up

A house filled with sunlight is cheery, warm and inviting — and it just makes us feel plain happy. Natural light also reduces lighting energy consumption by 50 to 80 percent, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

There are many ways to incorporate more light into your life. You just need to know where to look.

WINDOWS

Windows and skylights are the most obvious ways to let natural light into our homes. Of course, you need to consider any side effects of heat gain or loss and glare, but these can be controlled with energy-efficient glass.

Your interior designer and contractor will consider placement and orientation in regards to how the windows relate to the sun's movement. These simple strategies can help you enjoy the best of all worlds.

OPEN CONCEPT

The latest home trends favor open concept layouts. These larger spaces usually contain more and larger windows, so they are considerably lighter than older homes that often feature separated and enclosed rooms.

Open to some remodeling? Talk with your local construction experts about creating a design that takes out non-load-bearing walls to open up your place a bit. You can even add open-tread stairwells with an operable window or skylight at the top. These touches will provide a ray of new light throughout your home.

BLINDS & CURTAINS

Blinds and curtains contribute to color, design and the overall look of a home. They also are important for privacy and safety. They also can con-



trol the amount and direction of natural light.

Blinds come in a variety of materials, such as plastic or wood, and many colors and prices. There are

vertical, horizontal and assorted pull down blinds.

Curtains are one of the finishing details of any room. Some, such as sheers and valances, let in significant

light to filter through, while others block out light almost totally. With this kind of control, you can pick and choose when to brighten up your home.

Finding the Perfect Vanity

Your bathroom vanity can be the first thing you see upon entering your bathroom, so its design and functionality are important.

Serving several purposes, your vanity can come in many styles, colors and finishes. Pick out one that goes with the overall style of your entire bathroom while taking into account existing space and design work.

REPURPOSING

One budget-friendly option is to redo your existing vanity or a stock vanity by painting it and adding new hardware. Repurposing an old dresser into a vanity will add a vintage element and save money.

For an unexpected bathroom vanity design, think outside the box. Old work benches can even be converted into vanities. An open vanity in an unexpected color lends personality to a modern bathroom design. A wide variety of vanities are available at your local home improvement store. Choose one that speaks to your tastes.

SINKS & COUNTERTOPS

You can't have a great-looking vanity without a fully functional sink and beautiful countertop. For optimal usage, work with your contractor to add a double sink to your vanity — especially in the master bathroom. This provides more space and func-

tionality and can even allow you to place a makeup station between the sinks for separate and additional grooming space.

As for style, the look of your countertop, sink and faucet is up to you. The choices for bathroom countertops include marble, granite, quartz and laminate. Under-mount sinks disappear into the vanity for a modern look. Again, work with your local interior designer or home contracting expert to incorporate the best vanity for your space and style.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A basic and practical addition to most vanities is the mirror above it. Large mirrors reflect natural light and make a room seem even more spacious. They come in a multitude of shapes, sizes and finishes.

You can add storage to your vanity area by hanging a surface-mount medicine cabinet with a mirror. Vanities come in styles with drawers and shelving. Baskets on top can add additional storage. Creatively mix textures such as wood, marble and glass, as well as color, in your vanity area to create that special place to get ready in the morning.



Bring Nature into Your Design

A popular home decor trend is bringing nature back into the design of your entire house. It is not a new concept, however. Humans have always loved the peace and comfort of nature.

There are multiple ways to welcome the outdoors into your home improvement project or new build design.

MATERIALS

Choosing natural materials that go with your personal home decor style is the first consideration. Your local interior designer and home improvement experts can help you design your room around natural elements that appeal to your style.

Natural materials can be used in almost every aspect of building or redesigning your home.

Wood and brick are common for building. Cotton is a favorite for bedding and leather for furniture. Quartz and granite are good materials for countertops. Wood is still one of the most versatile elements, coming in a variety of finishes, species and applications. It also can be reclaimed and refinished from older buildings.

If natural materials are too expensive for your budget, there are pre-engineered, laminate and veneer stone applications that offer the look of nature.

PLANTS & VEGETATION

Plants and flowers are easy and relatively inexpensive natural additions to any home



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design. Many different varieties of plants and flowers can be grown indoors. A lot of potted plants and flowers need minimum care on our part, but their benefits to us are many. Plants filter the air we breathe while adding a living and colorful dimension to our design.

Your local nursery or home improvement store will have many choices of plants and colors. This should be the fun part of your design.

OTHER NATURAL ELEMENTS

Sunlight is often overlooked,

but it is one of the easiest, cheapest and most beautiful natural elements. Natural daylighting is cheerful and can change the mood of any space.

Adding windows is a common way of letting more natural light into your home. Your local contractor and architect

can strategically add or place windows almost anywhere you desire when building or renovating.

On beautiful, sunny days, open the curtains on those windows and let the sun and fresh air stream in to your home.



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Elegant Outdoor Spaces

An elegant outdoor space adds usable living space to your home for parties or just quiet evenings spent relaxing outdoors.

Choose outdoor furniture and accessories made of materials durable enough to withstand Mother Nature.

The key to finding the right outdoor design style is determining how you'll be using the space. The more guests you expect during the warm weather months, the more seating and entertaining room you will need. Consider this factor when choosing your new patio furniture set.

PATIO

Your patio is the foundation for your outdoor living space. It will need to be durable and well-constructed, but you also will want it to be attractive. You can install a new patio or just resurface your existing one. The most popular patio materials to choose from include concrete, flagstone, pavers and brick. Concrete is basic, but it works especially well on a budget.

For a completely natural look, noth-

ing beats natural stone for a patio. There are many different types of natural stone to choose from including flagstone, slate, bluestone and limestone. Natural stone costs more, but manufactured paving stones come in many different shapes, colors and patterns, as well. Bricks also come in different colors and are an option.

LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting defines the boundaries of your outdoor space and provides some security. Depending on the type of light, it also can change the mood.

Lanterns and outdoor candles provide subtle light and are great for romantic outdoor dinners. Solar lights are popular, too, and there are lots of options at your local home improve-

ment store. A fire pit can add light and heat — and of course you can roast hot dogs and marshmallows.

FURNITURE & GRILL

Outdoor furniture provides comfortable seating for everyone as they relax, chat or eat the night away. Many options are specifically made with materials that can endure the outside elements.

Wooden patio furniture is popular and can show off great craftsmanship. Other patio sets have comfortable water-resistant cushions, with lots of colors available.

Of course, a standard to any outdoor space is the barbecue grill. There are lots of charcoal or gas styles, depending on your preference. Let the party begin.

Mixing Metal and Wood

Kitchen trends today incorporate a variety of metals, finishes and woods. Don't be afraid to try it. A lot of those spectacular kitchens in magazines we buy have a mix of metal finishes, wood tones and painted cabinetry.

You can achieve the same aesthetic in your home. The first step is finding out which materials you'd like to incorporate. As you research, you will find that some materials are most costly than others. This is where setting and sticking to a budget is key.

CABINETS

Your kitchen cabinets are the core of your kitchen. They can be custom built or purchased prefabricated, which is a more cost-effective option for homeowners on a tight remodeling budget. Some homeowners prefer painted cabinetry, and nothing is more stunning than white cabinets alongside stainless steel appliances.

Mahogany is the premier wood for fine cabinetry but naturally the most expensive. Other choices include alder, birch, cherry, maple and hickory. Remember that the latest trends allow us to mix woods in our kitchens for a unique design.

METALS

The most current popular kitchen trend is the use of stainless steel appliances. They look nice with a variety of woods or painted cabinets, and they are very durable. However, there are a few homeowners and renovators who still prefer



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black or white appliances. These basic colors also look good with different woods and finishes.

Light fixtures and kitchen sinks also can be purchased in your favorite metal, such as brass or stainless steel. Hang your copper pot collection on an overhead mount for beauty and convenience. Even the small detail of the style, metal

and color of kitchen cabinet door handles can have a dramatic effect.

MIX & MATCH

The key to mixing woods and metals is getting colors to work together. This is all about how one tone enhances another. Just about the only thing that won't work is mixing warm and cool tones.

Black painted cabinets and woodwork can look great on a natural wood-tone floor. White subway tiles are classic and make the perfect backdrop for black.

If your appliances are stainless steel, put gold hardware on your cabinets. Your light fixtures can have a deeper tone. If you are creating a chic, contemporary kitchen featuring

white or gray, use shiny metals instead of brushed or patina tones.

If your style is traditional with warm whites and wood tones, use polished nickel or soft brass to complete the room. Don't forget the backsplash. This finishing touch can incorporate glass mosaic, travertine, marble, metal, slate and many more stunning options.