

2008 • DESIGN • ARCHITECTURE • DÉCOR • WINTER 2008

HOME

SASKATOON

At Home in the Winter

STYLE & FUNCTION

The Inside Story on Welcoming Spaces

Our homes are the enduring reflection of who we are, and that is most true when considering our interior spaces.

At Home in the Winter of Our Content



AS THE WINTER CLOSES IN, OUR INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT TO US. OUR INTERIOR DESIGN AND DECOR TAKE ON A DIFFERENT MEANING AT THIS TIME OF YEAR THAN DURING WARMER MONTHS AND SEASONS WITH MORE DAYLIGHT.

Even if we cherish outdoor activities, such as cross country skiing or travelling to vacation spots in more southerly latitudes, the fact is we still spend more time indoors than out. Our trips are short. We always return home.

We take comfort in the familiar things around us, and nowhere is comfort and familiarity more intensely felt than inside our homes. Our earliest memories centre around the home. It's where we were raised, so naturally there is a cultural influence on why we take comfort in these spaces. Our homes are the first place we felt safe and protected.

Elsewhere in this issue, designer Adrienne Zvacek alludes to this when she describes the way in which Saskatoon style blends urban and rural influences. We take what was familiar to us in the past and carry it with us as we advance. We create linkages between our past and our present. We need the continuity. Tammy Thorson-Manchur also reinforces this concept, when she says that our homes allow an expression of our individuality. We don't need to follow the latest trends.

In a way, that's what makes the newest design trends so interesting. As much as our homes provide stability, familiarity and

comfort, we also like the latest trends. Things that are new have a way of making us feel refreshed. There's always something invigorating about updating the look of our interiors, but we do it on our own terms. We make the changes when we are ready and do so to create a new environment with which we can quickly become comfortable.

Designers recognize this. Many of the newest design trends reflect past styles. Architect Bill Edwards notes that the great room, a design concept that many see as a new trend, actually is an older concept that is making a comeback.

Our domestic space affects us psychologically, too. It affects our perception of density, privacy and control, factors that directly relate to the ways in which we feel stress in our lives. Even when living within a dense environment, which we seek out to fulfill our social needs, we still desire privacy in our personal spaces to make us feel healthy and sustained. Our homes are where we exercise control over our lives.

The quality of light that enters our homes also has a significant impact. Just ask anyone who suffers from seasonal affective disorder. But even for those who don't, it's known that natural light improves mood. A wide spectrum of light at high intensity makes us

happy. In our Saskatchewan winters, we are exposed to less natural light but designers have a wonderful assortment of tools for compensating with an ever-expanding array of artificial light choices. Designing with light is becoming a growing trend.

Lamps and fixtures can make ambient light feel softer, spaces larger. Adding more control over lighting can help adjust the mood of the room, creating a more appropriate atmosphere for night and day.

Light technology may be even more helpful in the future. Coloured lights that subtly change tone according to the time of day, or your mood, can match your circadian rhythms and create a healthier environment.

Related to light, colours play a role, too. Lighter colours make our ceilings seem taller, our rooms wider, our spaces more open. Darker colours feel lower, smaller, narrower and enclosed. Colours also influence the way we perceive humidity, temperature and aroma. Orange isn't just a "warm" colour, it actually makes you feel warmer. Pink makes you believe that whatever you're eating at the moment is sweeter.

Our interiors provide stability in our lives. The outside world can change, but we expect our homes to welcome us back into our familiar environments.

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