

Special Focus: TRENDS & TRENDMAKERS

Vivid color, attention-grabbing texture and fearless individuality are a few of the hot new developments in home architecture and interiors. New England's design experts give us preview of these trends—and a whole lot more. **By Regina Cole**

Architects,

interior designers and showroom owners can tell us what sorts of changes to expect in the world of design because they create the trends that shape the industry. Since change is life's one given, we pay special attention to these trendmakers; they not only know what we can expect to see in the future, they can also tell us why.

We chatted with some of New England's best industry professionals to get a sneak peek at what's ahead. They see a complex landscape in which increasingly sophisticated homeowners are eager to incorporate trends from the worlds of science and art, as well as design, into their daily lives, but to do so in entirely individual ways.

One trend clearly demonstrates that sensitivity to the environment is growing.

"Our clients are well schooled in matters of energy conservation; they come to us with a high level of knowledge," says **STEPHANIE HOROWITZ** of ZeroEnergy Design, a Boston architectural firm that specializes in green architecture and mechanical design. "We are getting requests for root cellars, to augment food storage upstairs, as part of a general move toward increased self-sufficiency."

High-performance European windows, energy monitoring systems and passive house technology are all strong trends that continue to gain traction. Passivhaus, a ratings system developed in Germany, applies especially stringent standards. "It's a great fit in a cold climate when you can get free heat from the sun," says Horowitz. "For many, a passive house is an aspirational goal, but it's a widely embraced goal."

The environmental concerns of today's homeowners find expressions from structure to the surface finishes of most products. "We see a lot of interest in low-VOC products; people care about how much their paints or carpets are off-gassing," says **SHANNON ALTHER** of TMS Architects of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. "They also like to re-use old building parts, something that was espoused but seldom done until now, espe-



COURTESY OF POWERHOUSE DYNAMICS

ABOVE: Systems like the Powerhouse Dynamics eMonitor allow homeowners to track energy use while on the go. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: Architect Bradford Walker says contemporary styles are holding their own in formerly traditional New England, as in this Massachusetts riverfront home he recently designed. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: This office created by Shannon Alther of TMS Architects features flooring reclaimed from an old Detroit Pistons basketball court and furniture constructed from bleacher wood that would otherwise have ended up as landfill.





RIGHT: A dining room by Providence designer Kelly Taylor shows the versatility of today's LED lighting. LEFT: LEDs are also instrumental in a resurgence of traditional fixtures such as these Tech Lighting sconces, according to Lucia Lighting's Lucy Dearborn.



style. It used to be something you had to have a taste for; now, people embrace what was exclusive before."

She likens today's interior design trends to the way couture trickles down to affect mass fashion. "Choice and exclusive designs are very quickly reinterpreted and produced for a mass market," Kaplan says. "Along with that comes more of a tendency to mix high and low."

ANTHONY CATALFANO of the eponymous Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, firm echoes Walker when he sees the same move toward texture from his perspective as an interior designer. "Additionally, color is coming back in a big way," he says. "Brighter, more saturated colors, particularly turquoise, hot pink and emerald green, will be more and more popular. People want a bit of sparkle, too—a little metallic is fun!"

KELLY TAYLOR, who operates her interior design firm out of Providence, says that the shift toward sustainability is driving the biggest design trends. "We lost 100-watt incandescent bulbs in 2012, which encouraged manufacturers to ramp up innovation with LED lights," she says.

"Recessed LED lighting is amazing now," Taylor continues. "You end up with a better look, much better quality than with the old incandescent recessed lighting, and you replace bulbs every five years instead of every six months. When you look up, you see glass, not a bulb and space around it. And the light is so much nicer and richer."

She notes that while the new lighting technology was originally most suited to modern styling, the industry is evolving to the point where traditional designs can now make use of it, too.

"The emergence of energy efficiency and LED lighting makes the world more fun if you're in the lighting world," adds **LUCY DEARBORN**, president of Lucia Lighting in Lynn, Massachusetts. "You get 90 percent energy savings with very little emission of heat in a small package, and it lasts a long time. And, LED lighting can easily be colored."

Dearborn sees the new technology driving a creative evolution in which traditional lighting forms reemerge. "Everything was recessed in the '70s and '80s. Now we are seeing interior designers, architects and homeowners using decorative lighting fixtures again. They are returning to lighting not only for function, but also for decorative elements. I am happy to see wall sconces