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DEC. 17, 2022

HOME OF THE WEEK

**2655 Albatross
Whispering Creek, SC, IA
\$729,750**

2132 sq ft ranch w/ walk-out lower level. Main floor: 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, laundry and 3 stall heated garage. Your first step into this front entry and you are stunned by the wall of windows, hardwood floors, wooden beam tray ceiling and contemporary design elements and gorgeous built-ins alongside the gas fireplace. This open concept is total function and luxury all in one. There is a covered concrete deck right off the dining area which is fabulous for entertaining or enjoying that quiet cup of morning coffee. Primary suite features large walk-in closet & the luxurious bath has dbl vanity, tile walk-in shower and soaking tub.



10 YEAR TAX ABATEMENT



For more information about the Home of
the Week, contact:

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STYLE AT HOME

HOLIDAY STYLE 2022:
FROSTED FOREST

KATIE LAUGHRIDGE
Tribune News Service

The tradition of Christmas decorating is always something to look forward to, at the shop and in my own home. And it's so much more than putting up a tree. There's something special about the way the year draws to a close. You deck your halls with festive accents and let the spirit of the season fill your home. I love a design that tells a story about your home, how you celebrate the holidays and the people who live there. This next Christmas vignette is as beautiful as freshly fallen snow.

Frosted Forest is elevated and elegant, while still feeling earthy and organic. We felt the look was a perfect fit for the room, where the walls wear bold rich color and the look carries an air of formality. The added holiday organic elements and the monochromatic color story look great in this formal space, and because there is no overwhelming color, you don't have to worry about it clashing with your decor at home.

Decorating the tree

So many details come together to make this design truly special. The birch logs and painted wooden snowflakes burst out of the tree at varying angles, bringing dimension to the look, creating focal points on all sides of the tree. Green is a Christmas classic, and this vignette features many varying shades, from lemongrass to deep sage. Elegant winter whites and glistening gold round out the color palette.

This Christmas look is a perfect opportunity to play up your frosted picks. Flocked trees are making a comeback (though we believe they never truly left in the first place), and this style is one where it really adds a little something extra. The flocking allows the greens to pop, whereas they might have gotten lost nestled in the tree. The ornaments bring varying textures and shades with them, all so different, but when paired together they create a cohesive and stunning display.

Decorating a wintry table

If you're planning on hosting the holiday feast this season, the table should be as memorable as the menu. When decorating a holiday table, the first piece of the design puzzle I try to figure out (after I consider



A glistening gold place mat and charger are the base for a green, brown and white organic-looking place setting.

the flow of people and food) is the centerpiece. Then it's down to the plates, linens and other holiday table decor like napkin rings and place cards. I search for items of varying heights to create visual interest. In this tablescape, I've featured elements of varying height to create movement, including hurricanes and votive holders, golden deer and stately stag busts. No matter where you look, seasonal beauty abounds. You can achieve a similar look at home by scaling down the size and number of items.

Pull out all the stops for holiday and special occasion place settings! Here seen in an intricately beaded place mat and accompanying charger, gold is the foundation on which this place setting is built, a perfect complement to the metallic design elements found in the centerpiece. The theme of green and white carries through the plates and linens, and the wooden-handled silverware mimics the natural elements found throughout the theme. Placing decorative drinkware on top of your plates, like this ridge coupe glass, can give you additional height, as well as the opportunity to include a design element, like the perfectly placed pine cone. It also gives you the room to go big with your centerpiece – just ensure there is space to place it once the meal has begun.



HANDOUT PHOTOS/TNS

An intricate tabletop display is flanked by organic place settings on this wintry table.

Decorating the Christmas mantel

The mantel is the perfect place to play up greenery. Here flocked picks and branches are added to a long-needle garland peppered with ornaments and ribbon and perched atop this beautiful mantel. Incorporating additional picks allows for fuller volume of your garland and the greenery to spill over the front of the fireplace, giving the design a more organic feel. It also allows you to mix up your designs from year to year without feeling stale or stagnant while still

maintaining the same base garland.

Many elements came together to give this room an elevated and elegant yet earthy and organic look. The overriding principle here is to play around with texture, material and shape to deliver precisely the look and atmosphere you want.

Adapted from nellhills.com. Katie Laughridge is the owner of Kansas City interior design destination Nell Hill's. For more information, contact Katie at info@nellhills.com.

ASK THE PLUMBER



KOHLER/TNS

Comfort-height toilets allow users to exert less effort getting on and off the seat and can be used by most family members of different ages and abilities.

Aging-in-place bathroom fixture suggestions

ED DEL GRANDE
Tribune News Service

Question: Dear Ed: We decided to stay in our home longer and want to remodel the bathroom with aging-in-place plumbing fixtures in mind. We'll plan for what works best for us, but can you give us ideas for fixtures that are older age-friendly?

— Jean, Wisconsin

Answer: A concept called universal design for new and remodeled bathrooms allows most users to benefit from well-thought-out fixture choices. Using the concept, if you decide to sell your house sooner, the newly remodeled aging-in-place bathroom can be enjoyed by perspective buyers as well.

A few nice universal design bathroom fixtures I've worked with over the years include:

Decorative walk-in shower grab bars

Even though these "attractive" grab bars look like high-end shower accessories and add to the shower's design

aspects, they still serve the serious accessibility purpose of having a grab bar.

Comfort-height toilets

I like comfort-height toilets, which are a little higher than standard toilets. These taller toilets allow users to exert less effort getting on and off the seat and can be used by most family members of different ages and abilities.

Wall-hung vanities, sinks

Finally, wall-hung vanities and sinks are another good universal aging-in-place choice. Wall-hung sink fixtures have a little leeway for height and can also provide foot room to give your new universal design bathroom a step in the right direction.

Master Contractor/Plumber Ed Del Grande is known internationally as the author of the book "Ed Del Grande's House Call," the host of TV and Internet shows, and a LEED green associate. Visit eddelgrande.com or write eddelg@cs.com. Always consult local contractors and codes.

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DESIGN RECIPES

What's next in interior design trends

CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

What's new? What's next? When it comes to interior design trends, the answer is a myriad of timeless trends, as well as a number of new ones.

Curious? Here's a guide of what to look out for.

1. Round lines and soft edges

Rounded arms and chunky furniture are currently on trend in upholstery and even tables.

2. Acrylic and resin

As far as transparent surfaces go, both acrylic and resin are being infused into a number of modern furniture selections.

3. Tropical prints

Big leaves are in. Look for palms and tropical leaves, from greenery to artwork.

4. Pastel

No longer considered feminine or old-fashioned, pastel color palettes are both current and soothing.

5. Mirrors

Looking for a budget-friendly alternative to artwork? Consider mirrors. Hang them in groupings for an impactful look.

6. Indigo

Indigo remains a modern alternative to black. Use this rich color as a primary color in a room or as an accent.

7. Wallpaper

Cue the '70s music. Wallpaper was in, then out, and now it is certainly back in. Wallpaper is a way to add texture, color and pattern to nearly any space.

8. Black and white

One of the most timeless color palettes remains on trend.

9. Faux fur

From accent pillows to accent furniture, faux fur is a way to add texture and glamour.

10. Wood

From slab tables to accent furniture, wood can infuse both an organic and natural element.



Above: A triptych featuring indigo as its primary color takes center stage in this dining space.

SCOTT GABRIEL MORRIS, PROVIDED PHOTO

Left: Pastel pink and round furniture elements fill this elegant living space.

PROVIDED PHOTO/TNS

Cathy Hobbs, based in New York City, is an Emmy Award-winning television host and a nationally known interior design and home staging expert with offices in New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C. Contact her at info@cathyhobbs.com or visit her website at cathyhobbs.com.

ASK ANGI

What are some holiday cleanup jobs?

BRIGITTA SHANNON ROSE
Tribune News Service

Before long, you'll have eaten the food, unwrapped the gifts, given thanks, and sent the family and friends on their way home. When the busy season ends, it's time to look around, take a deep breath, and return the house to its pre-holiday arrangement. Here are six pros who can help clean up after the celebration ends.

Housecleaning

Average cost: \$30-\$50 per hour

Cleaning up after the family leaves involves more than just picking up leftover wrapping paper and taking out the tree. You'll need to wash all those extra linens used by guests who stay with you while you celebrate. The bathrooms will need some work to take care of the excess use by your loved ones.

Now is also an excellent time to give the kitchen a deep cleaning. Get rid of leftovers so they don't become science experiments at the back of your fridge. Give the counters and floors a good scrubbing.

Hiring a cleaning service can help with these chores. A cleaning pro can help restore your house to its pre-holiday orderliness and save you the energy you might not have after a busy holiday season.

Window cleaning

Average cost: \$220

Windows, especially on doors, can acquire a lot of handprints (or noseprints if furry family members come to visit). Cleaning the windows will help remove the prints and let in more of the winter-time sunlight. Hire a window cleaning service to help you with this task, especially if you have windows that are hard to reach.

Yard cleanup

Average cost: \$150-\$200 per acre

Between cars parked in the yard (hey, parking is at a premium in some places!), children building snow forts and snow



people, and general foot traffic, your yard can see some extra action during the winter holiday season. Call a professional to help with any cleanup your lawn might need, especially if the season is warmer (or rainier) than usual.

Decluttering

Average cost: \$55-\$100 per hour

According to the Cleveland Clinic, removing clutter helps reduce stress, especially the type you can feel during the holidays (let's face it — we're all busy during this time of year). While you take down decorations, think about ways to store them better and make room for your new gifts. If you're struggling with how to arrange places for your recently acquired loot, hire a professional organizer to help you. Don't forget to make a pile to donate as you clear out the old and make way for the new.

Whether you have a large family or work gathering or a small celebration with a few friends, take the time to put your home back into its usual order after the holidays.

Upholstery and carpet cleaning

Upholstery average cost: \$170

Carpet average cost: \$180

Your couches and chairs see a lot of traffic and use during the holidays. Between crumbs falling into crevices and potentially staining spills, upholstery can take a lot of abuse during the festivities. Your carpets and floors also see a lot

of traction, especially if the weather is particularly wet or muddy. A professional carpet and floor cleaner can help you clear out those holiday messes on your chairs and your rugs.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

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DAKOTA DUNES, SD

251 LaCosta Lane • \$550,000

Lovely LaCosta Lane, 3044 total SF custom built ranch townhome on a private lot backing up to greenway, 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, and 3 stall heated garage. From your first step into the front entry you are stunned by the wall of windows, hardwood floors, wooden beam tray ceiling and contemporary design elements and gorgeous sunroom alongside the electric fireplace. The open concept is ideal for entertaining or enjoying that hot cup of morning coffee. Primary suite has walk-in closet and large walk-in shower and soaking tub. The walk-in shower and soaking tub.

WYNSTONE, JEFFERSON, SD

701 Red Cedar Court • \$425,000

Multi-level 4 bdm/3 bath home, 3 stall heated garage w/ hot & cold water and great 2 story views to the west from living and bathroom. Main floor primary suite, walk-in shower & closet, dbl vanity, open kitchen w/ island, and LR w/ fireplace & tile surround, main floor laundry and guest 1/2 bath. Upper level has 3 large bedrooms, 2 w/ walk-in closets and full bath w/ dbl vanity. Convenient Sioux City neighborhood and Sgt Bluf School. 10 yr tax abatement. HOA \$250 per month includes Club House, fitness center & pool, snow removal, lawn care, mowing/fertilizer, irrigation. Design elements subject to change and availability.

ELK CREEK, SC

5224 Lynx Court • \$475,000

New Floor Plan - Story & 1/2, 2441 sq ft, 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath, oversized 2 stall heated garage. Main floor primary suite, walk-in shower & closet, dbl vanity, open kitchen w/ island, and LR w/ fireplace & tile surround, main floor laundry and guest 1/2 bath. Upper level has 3 large bedrooms, 2 w/ walk-in closets and full bath w/ dbl vanity. Convenient Sioux City neighborhood and Sgt Bluf School. 10 yr tax abatement. HOA \$250 per month includes Club House, fitness center & pool, snow removal, lawn care, mowing/fertilizer, irrigation. Design elements subject to change and availability.

IF YOU AREN'T WORKING WITH AN AGENT, YOU ARE MISSING OUT.

Pamela J. Kavanaugh Edwards

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How to decorate with confidence, according to an interior design pro



Finding your interior design style will likely take some experimenting.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

HUNTER BOYCE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

As the housing market continues to take a hit from rising mortgage rates, many homeowners are taking down their "for sale" signs and rethinking how they can beef up their home values. Meanwhile, the holiday season is here — meaning many more homeowners are making preparations for hosting family gatherings.

In other words, it's a good time to try interior design.

For those new to the craft, interior design may feel somewhat intimidating, but it doesn't have to. Studio 11 Design founder Kellie Sirna is here to alleviate all of those first-time designer woes so you can decorate with confidence this year.

For many, the first step to interior design is cursory research on the internet — a spectrum of ever-changing design trends and decorating tips. Don't get bogged down by all the trends.

"The internet can definitely appear like a very wide and deep rabbit hole when it comes to the litany of design trends out there today," Sirna told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

"One of the key ways to avoid falling into this seemingly never-ending well is to focus on what you like and what appeals to you naturally."

"When you start from what you know, you can go anywhere. It's when we try to start from a place that isn't truly authentic to us that makes it challenging to forge ahead. That thought may feel a bit grand when applied to design, but it holds true. When you acknowledge what your true preferences are, you've already started to funnel out things that can distract or shift that vision."

Finding your interior design style will likely take some experimenting. To make the most out of your experiments and build your design confidence, first focus on a few select living spaces.

"Two answers for two very different reasons come to mind," the Studio 11 Design founder said when asked about which living spaces beginners should experiment with. "The first is when building your design confidence, especially if you're working alone, I recommend starting with a personal space that is more private and

will mainly be utilized by you. In doing this, you take out the pressure of having to create something that friends, family and whomever enters has to love or be wowed by. You can instead use this room, from a design perspective, to test out different aesthetics or accessories to see what feels true to you.

"I recommend starting small and with something personal. Rather than taking on too much or redoing the entire house, perhaps start with your personal office, or even the laundry or mudroom. The latter may sound insignificant, but these are spaces you routinely use, yet they lack the grandness and expectation of a kitchen or a living room."

Experimenting in interior design doesn't have to break the bank. There are a number of ways you can take design risks without risking your savings.

"A truly inexpensive way to take a risk without endangering the bank account is to experiment with changing up room layouts, swapping furniture and accessories between rooms and redefining a room's purpose, swapping it with another,"

Sirna said. "Each of these depends upon a home's existing layout, furnishings and accessories, but none of them require a huge investment in terms of new pieces. Instead you're simply working with what you have, reorganizing it to create a new experience."

If you are willing to open up your wallet, contacting a professional can go a long way to helping you find your style.

"I recommend tapping a design professional if you have the budget," she said. "Not because you're looking for someone to tell you what to do, but because he or she is immersed in this world and likely aware of different brands, artists and creators that you may not necessarily be. This will drastically open the door design-wise. Additionally, a professional can help ensure a cohesive design scheme. It can be easy to lose perspective when designing a home or room so having an expert to provide a point of balance is key."

Fire-building techniques to prevent smoky room

JAMES DULLEY

Dear Jim: I have a nice wood-burning fireplace, but it is difficult to get a good fire started. Do you have any tips to help me so the room does not fill with smoke as it starts?—Seth N.

Dear Seth: There are some fire-building basics, but if you ask 10 old-timers about the best method, you will probably get 10 different answers. Although there are many effective and efficient tips for laying a fire and keeping it going, most have some basic fire-building concepts in common.

Before using your fireplace, have the chimney inspected by a certified chimney sweep. Many houses burn to the ground each year from deteriorated and dirty chimneys. This is more common if you have had previous problems getting hot, smoke-free fires started. A slow, smoky fire produces much flammable creosote which gradually builds up inside the chimney.

Most fire-building techniques for a hot fire, use newspapers, kindling or fire starters, some softwoods, and mostly hardwoods. The purpose of newspapers is to warm the chimney and get the kindling going. The kindling holds the flame long enough to ignite the softwood and hardwood logs.

Two common methods to lay a fire are the teepee and the English configurations. Both use crumpled newspapers placed under andirons or a grate. Always use well-seasoned wood when starting the fire. A small percentage of green logs can be added after the fire is raging.

Place kindling or fire starters in the center for the teepee method and stack several logs on end to form a teepee pattern. This creates channels of hot gases up between the logs to quickly get them started. Once they are burning well, additional logs can be added in any fashion.

The English method is preferred when using andirons. Place several logs on the andirons. Lay kindling across these logs and then place more logs on top of the kindling. It sometimes also helps to place a few pieces of kindling vertically down



into the newspapers and up between the logs.

With either method, place some loose uncrumpled newspaper over the logs. Before lighting the newspapers under the logs, light the top newspaper sheets to create an upward chimney draft. Once the smoke draws strongly up the chimney, light the newspapers under the logs from each end.

Some people also recommend a back log. This is a large log laid at the back of the fireplace. It eventually burns, but its primary purpose is to keep the logs on the andirons and protect the fire brick. The front of the back log will glow red which radiates more heat out into your room.

You can buy small fire starters, which are basically tiny regular wax firelogs, but it is not difficult to make your own. Fill condiment cups with sawdust and then pour in melted paraffin or old candle wax.

For more decorative starters, place a pine cone in a cupcake paper, add a wick and fill it with candle wax. Make newspaper logs by wrapping sheets of newspapers around a broom handle, wetting them with a water/flour solution and allowing them to dry. They will stay together when dry.

Dear Jim: I run my dehumidifier sometimes to minimize allergy problems for my daughter. Is the water from a dehumidifier very pure and can it be used in a steam iron, car battery or in my goldfish bowl?—Janet H.

Dear Janet: A dehumidifier is somewhat similar to the last stage of a water distiller where water vapor condenses into water. There are no hard water ions

in the dehumidifier water so it should be fine for the steam iron.

There are chemical vapors in indoor air from cleaners and synthetic products. These may or may not also condense into the dehumidifier water depending upon

their boiling point. Don't use it in a battery or fish bowl.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, Newspaper Name, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

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SIOUXLAND HOMES
MAGAZINE

Is it wise to waive a home inspection?

RICHARD MONTGOMERY
Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Monty: We recently bought a home, and we agreed to waive a home inspection. There were multiple offers on the house. Our agent suggested we could have a competitive advantage by waiving the home inspection. Yesterday, a heating contractor told us we should replace the 20-year-old furnace. Since moving in, we have made a series of discoveries that have already cost thousands of dollars. For example, a \$4,000 leaking shower stall was the most expensive until this happened. Do we have any recourse options with the seller and the agent?

Monty's Answer: There is not enough information to provide specific help. If your state requires a homeowner to complete a seller condition report, it may be worthy of additional investigation. Is a seller condition report required? Did you receive a copy of the report? For example, did the owner state in the condition report that they were unaware of any issues with the furnace? And did the next-door neighbor tell you XYZ heating company was at the house often? It may be worth visiting XYZ to see if they will share any repair records with you. If repair records indicate the seller should replace the furnace, you have several options to consider: call the seller or the agent, or contact your lawyer.

The inspection waiver

Events of the past two years created an unprecedented real estate market. The Fed's below-market interest rates brought millions of homebuying consumers into the market. Then, a significant lack of supply created by the pandemic developed. These factors drove competition to the point that the fear of losing a home overrode the traditional homebuying process. Waiving inspections were only one surprising effect. Anecdotal, consumers were buying homes sight unseen, securing the house with over-the-top prices, and only viewing one or two homes. While this situation

has somewhat cooled, these events still occur in specific markets. The stampede caught up with many homebuyers.

Who is to blame?

As the stampede grew, the industry adapted. Real estate agents, appraisers, lenders and title companies were all confronted with different issues. Agents quickly realized that writing 10 offers-to-purchase only to be outbid by a competing buyer was costing them productivity. We may never know whether a creative

agent or a creative buyer spawned the inspection waiver idea. No database keeps track. We may also never know if doing so actually made a difference in a seller's choice. Suppose your situation is typical, which we will also never know. In your case, it

suggests that waiving a home inspection is not a good idea.

The pros and cons of waiving inspections

The pros are: It may make a difference in which offer a seller accepts. It may reduce the chance for a second negotiation. It may save you a small amount of money.

The cons are: It may not make a difference in which offer a seller accepts. It may not reduce the possibility of a second negotiation. It may cost you a lot more than the cost of the inspection.

What is the solution?

The solution is to avoid the temptation to use the inspection waiver as an incentive to influence the outcome. Remember if you succeed in obtaining the house that the agent will not participate in the cost of repairs that an inspection would likely uncover.

Richard Montgomery is the author of "House Money: An Insider's Secrets to Saving Thousands When You Buy or Sell a Home." He advocates industry reform and offers readers unbiased real estate advice. Follow him on Twitter at @dearmonty, or at DearMonty.com

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17 Spanish Bay • \$285,000

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