

YOUR HOME FEBRUARY 2009

TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

Color MATTERS



Gray is the new neutral, blue is the new symbol of the environment and yellow will add energy and optimism to your surroundings. At least, those are the latest trends reported by the Color Marketing Group (CMG), a not-for-profit association of color design professionals.

Experts at CMG say the top color choices for 2009 are influenced by the public's concern about the economy and their optimism for the future. People are looking for colors that are safe, familiar and comforting. Consumers also increasingly are drawn to colors and products that reflect a growing desire for an environmentally "greener" world. CMG reports these top color trends for 2009:

- Purple is a hot color for 2009, influenced by the recent presidential election (think Republican red mixed with Democratic blue). For example, grayed-out violet works equally well as an accent or as a neutral.
- Blue is the new "green" to create environmental awareness.
- Complex neutral colors, like cooled-down, grayed-out browns and grays, satisfy the urge toward classic colors in an economically challenged time.
- Bright vivid yellow will be a stand-out accent color that provides energy amidst the sobering effects of the gray neutrals.
- Bright accents influenced by far-away countries like India, China and Turkey will add an exotic touch. Look for colors that are prominent in these countries, including shades of orange, red, yellow, turquoise and teal.
- White is showing up more in corporate board rooms. It represents purity of thought, motive and result, which is expected from many businesses.

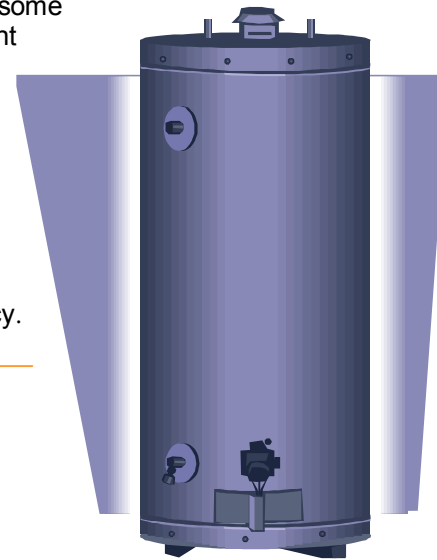
Appliance Overload

When shopping for new appliances, remember that looks aren't everything. Features, capacity and energy-efficiency are important factors as well.

Before buying a new appliance, keep track of your appliance usage for one week. For example, note the number and size of your laundry loads, what items you reach for most often in your refrigerator or what meals you cook on the stove. This will help you determine what features will be most beneficial. Also include a list of problem areas, which will help you choose a new appliance that offers better solutions.

For a variety of appliances, available space can be a major stumbling block. Before you make your choice, be sure to measure the footprint, height and width of the appliance area, as well as the door swing or space needed to open doors, drawers and lids. Also measure any doorways or hallways to make sure the new appliance can pass through when it's time to install.

Energy-efficient models of some appliances can offer significant savings. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, appliances account for about 20 percent of a household's energy consumption. Appliances that feature the Energy Star label have been tested to meet standards for energy efficiency.



fast fact >> >> >> >> >> >> >>

Alexander Graham Bell applied for a patent on the telephone on Valentine's Day in 1876.



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