

10 Top Window Treatment Trends

When your window treatments -- curtains, valances and cornices -- have seen better days, it's time to try these window treatment ideas from the latest design trends. Whether you find yourself in need of fresh window treatments, or are starting from scratch, [here are] 10 trends to help you turn any window into your new favorite focal point.

#1 - Organic materials are literally bringing nature indoors!

Exposed wood grain in blinds and natural woven shades are joining the ranks of bamboo as popular choices. Wood is making a comeback in decorative hardware, according to Deb Barrett, trend specialist for Grace McNamara Inc., while bamboo, birch and maple are the materials of choice for the newest finials and pulls.

#2 – One of the quickest ways to update a window is with colorful treatments.

We've seen white paired with black or navy. O'Reilly says blue is becoming the new "red" in the window treatment industry, with a variety of ocean hues in teal, aquamarine and soft green. Soft lavender and gray, dusty hues round out the soothing part of this palette. Persimmon, orange and gold will be popular jewel tones, while brown continues to dominate. "[Brown] has been, and continues to be, the new basic," says O'Reilly.

#3 – Luxe fabrics are exactly as they sound – opulent and showy with bold colors and textures that beg to be touched.

Luxury fabrics key in this category are silks, velvets, damasks, fur, leather and suede, according to Grace McNamara Inc. While the overall design trend leans toward simplicity, this trend will remain popular with those who desire embellishment and luxury. Linda Henry, editor-in-chief of *Window Fashions* magazine, says this trend includes "sparkling crystal, beaded tassels and lavish embellishments on every element of the window — hardware, trimmings and fabric."

#4 – Zen-chic bamboo in roman shades and decorative hardware will continue to be a popular trend.

Susan Schultz, trend specialist for Grace McNamara Inc., says decorative hardware had been dominated by metallics and sparkle for quite a while, but now is returning to wood and natural textures. Bamboo is also popular for its sustainable, environmentally-friendly quality.

#5 – Like luxe fabrics, velvet and grosgrain are a luxury trend taking cues from the fashion industry.

"Soft textiles are still driving the market and styles," says Barrett. "Fashion and interiors trends are almost simultaneous now, and because of that you are seeing couture fabrications and dressmaker details such as ruffles, cording, beading, lace, etc." Grosgrain, a strong, closely woven ribbed fabric usually made of silk or rayon, is used as a ribbon detailing on blinds and drapes. Velvet banding can also be used as detailing, or as ladder tape to cover up route holes for string in blinds.

#6 – Simple, sleek lines: Window treatments don't have to be fuss, and this next trend is anything but.

Simple, sleek lines are dominating window fashions in everything from flowing drapes to chrome decorative hardware. Creating sleek silhouettes against a window instantly lends a clean, modern look to any window and room. A quick way to get truly streamlined treatments is with popular panel-track systems. Unlike their ugly vertical

blind precursors, panel-track systems are made of fabric or woven-wood panels and can be used as room dividers or on window walls or doors, says Henry. Influenced by Asian shoji screens, these panel-track treatments can look contemporary or European depending on the fabric.

#7 – Bolder and bigger prints with texture are top choices for window treatment fabric.

Bright florals that attract traditional tastes and graphic geometric patterns that offer youthful spunk are some of the bold prints being seen on windows lately. "With pattern becoming more important, it will change the way a designer designs for the window and how the client views her [or his] window fashion," says Barrett.

#8 – Silk has exploded onto the scene and is still going strong.

Silk is a pricier option for window treatments, but the shine and luxury of the fabric instantly wakes up a dull room.

#9 – As society increases its obsession with gotta-have-it-gadgets, people counterbalance with organic and natural products in their homes, and window treatments are no exception.

"Technology plays such a huge role in our lives and yet we yearn for simplicity," says Henry. Window blinds can now be controlled via remote, a light switch or even the Internet. But just because your windows have gone high-tech, it doesn't mean they have to be stark and uninviting. Layering fabrics with high-thread-count cottons is one trend sure to cozy up a window. Handcrafted decor also has a lot of value in homes predominantly marked by sleek, chrome lines and the latest tech goodies. In fact, luxury spending has increased over the past few years. In 2005, 30.2 million households spent \$12,300 on luxury home goods. "Baby boomers are the biggest luxury spenders right now, but Gen Xers are spending more on home products," says O'Reilly. "So we're seeing a trend towards the more youthful crowd and younger look."

#10 – Green design is both economically and environmentally safe for window treatments and they are now offered as an affordable option.

Green design is becoming a popular trend from consumers looking to combat allergies to those looking for heat- or cold-repellant window panels. Shades and blinds have always been about keeping light out, but now they can also save you money on your heating bills. The honeycomb shade, a most popular window treatment, is tech meets nature. "They're made of a spun woven polyester that, combined with the shape of the bee honeycomb, creates a detour for the wind or the cold to not go into the house," says O'Reilly. For larger, sliding glass windows, the solar panels will reduce glare, UV penetration and heat transfer. Performance fabrics have also gone "green," with anti-microbial, anti-fungal traits woven into the yarn or offered as a topical spray. Stain-resistant and mildew- and mold-resistant fabrics are also popular picks for allergy sufferers. Even the environmentally conscious will feel right at home with non-toxic dyes on fabrics.

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