

what the pros know

Architects and designers from around the country

share their secrets by Jeannie Matteucci

Choosing the right surfaces for your home can make an ordinary space come to life. We asked six designers and architects from around the country to share their thoughts on some of their favorite new treatments for walls, floors, ceilings, and countertops—and the best trends they've seen coming down the pike.

*Katie Anderson, Interior Designer
San Francisco, Calif.*

"Familiar materials used in an unexpected setting can really make a strong impact. I'm a big fan of using quirky materials, like rubber flooring; it's incredibly durable and flexible—it won't crack like tile when the earth moves or settles beneath the floor, a big consideration when you live in an earthquake-prone place. I've also used rubber as a wall treatment and for bathroom countertops. It's inexpensive and comes in all kinds of colors like gold, teal, black, and yellow. Rubber is ideal for any room that has a lot of water use, like a laundry room. I'm also interested in using resin for countertops—but not in a kitchen, where the acids from foods could mar the surface. In a bathroom resin is a dramatic choice because it has a translucent quality; you can light it from underneath so you have a glowing, floating countertop."

*Beata Galdi, Interior Architect
New York, NY*

"Finishes and colors are so important to the harmony of the space and the effect it has on the occupants. I like using natural materials like glass, stone, and metal in interesting ways to create a balanced environment. I'm using more glass on walls, floors, and countertops now. It allows me to play with light within a space, creating interesting reflections and illusions. I often layer glass with other materials like wire mesh to lend texture. Metal, fabric, or paper sandwiched between glass shows the materials in a different way, and is ideal for wall treatments in bathrooms or for a backsplash in a kitchen. The new technology of nonslip coatings also allows me to use glass for floors. I love injecting glass panels into wood or stone floors. There are now glass tiles on the market available in a wide range of styles, sizes, and colors, but I prefer to use large sheets of glass because they allow me to achieve a simple elegance without obvious seams."

*Robert Endres, Interior Designer
Perlmutter & Freiwald Inc.
Franklin, Mich.*

"I think details make a room beautiful. I love texture, and I add it whenever possible because it makes a space feel warm and comfortable. I used to love pattern on walls, but now I'm into rich colors like chocolate brown in a semi-gloss or

gloss. You can add lots of drama to a room by using a deep, dark color like brown. Add a collection of black-and-white photos to a brown wall and it will look fabulous. Ceilings are also important, and a hugely forgotten area. If you have a typical 8-foot flat ceiling, you can create a step in the ceiling by adding an extra layer of drywall around the perimeter of the room to create a nice shadow. I also love doing bead-board ceilings for an old-fashioned, cottage-like look. But whatever you do, don't dot your ceiling with a bunch of recessed lights or it starts to look like Swiss cheese. They have their place in a task-type setting, but in a living or dining room a string of recessed lights is unattractive."

*Rory Ghidossi, Interior Designer
Kitchen Design Studio, Denver, Colo.*

"Right now, we're mixing materials like granite and stainless steel or natural stone and wood like teak. We're doing a fair amount of teak countertops these days around the sink and then limestone or granite around the rest of the kitchen. There seems to be a bigger selection of granite now, and the fabricator can hone the granite to give it an old-world feeling, instead of the high gloss that's so common. Stainless-steel countertops also have a nice look—and they're very hygienic for food preparation areas. Concrete is another option, and now you'll find many colors and pigments that can be added to the mix for a truly custom result. Laminate is also available in a wide variety of styles. Over the years, the look and feel of laminate surfacing has really improved. Just make sure whatever you choose isn't a temporary fad. You want something that will still be in style two years later."

*Delores Hyden, CKD, CBD
Showplace Design/Remodeling
Redmond, Wash.*

"We still find a strong emphasis on stone for countertops, but we're seeing the trend turning away from shiny

(continued on page 87)