

A Home to Love

These custom projects can make your old house feel new.

BY SARA RAE LANCASTER



A peek inside our home says a lot about our personality, our interests and our lifestyle. So the last impression any homeowner wants to give is “dated.” But Milwaukee home experts can help their clients find that balance between personal taste and current trends.

If our home reflects our life, its design can show our hobbies and interests. That is exactly what Jim Hackbarth’s clients have in mind when they contact his business, Sonoma Wine Galleries.

“One of the newer trends I’ve seen is an increase in the number of millennials building custom wine cellars,” Hackbarth says. And these aren’t kids looking for a place to store their Two Buck Chuck. “Many of these individuals are very savvy when it comes to wine,” Hackbarth adds. “Some hold sommelier certifications and want to incorporate their passion for wine into their home.”

With this new client demographic

comes a new look for wine cellars. “The older generation wanted the traditional wood wine rack,” Hackbarth says. “But this younger generation is changing up the design style by either leaning to a more contemporary style or integrating reclaimed materials and painted wood cabinetry into their projects.”

If custom wine rooms help homeowners express their interest in entertaining indoors, extreme outdoor living spaces move those interests into the open. “People are looking for the opportunity to extend the details of the interior home, specifically the dining and entertaining area, outside for the summer,” says John Erdmann, president of Terra Tec Landscapes.

Covered areas with heat sources help extend those short-lived Wisconsin summers, while high-tech entertainment systems – complete with home theater systems – redefine the backyard barbecue.

“Everything is moving toward staying

at home and enjoying your home and yard instead of going out,” Erdmann says. So outdoor kitchens continue to be frequent requests, and they feature beverage bars, grilling areas, fireplaces and fire pits, often with built-in seating.

“People are busier today than they once were,” Erdmann says. “They want to relax at home and not have to run someplace if they want to get something to eat or drink or get together with friends.”

Let’s not forget the roof. It may not be the first thing you notice about a home’s style, but it’s still more than worthy of your attention. “My clients are realizing a roof is 50 percent of the look and design of their house,” says Cory LeFever, owner of LeFever Roofing.

LeFever is known for creating stunning cedar shake roofs, but his “high-end designers are using different colors and metals and incorporating those things with heavy cedar shakes and different shingles

to create different architectural looks.”

Many clients take creative risks, blending the traditional shake-style roof with more modern elements. “We are seeing a resurgence of copper and incorporating that with cedar shakes and custom metal work,” LeFever says. And so, an old roof gets new life.

Interior design is also finding ways to blend eye-catching design with personalization. It’s part of a design trend called the “new traditional,” says Emily Bachman, director of design and marketing at Warren Barnett Interiors.

“We aren’t viewing traditional the same anymore,” Bachman says. “Ornate furniture is being given a face-lift with bold, bright, geometric prints and unexpected patterns, mixed with cleaner lined pieces in the same space,” she explains, meaning that Grandma’s piece of furniture that once looked bulky and misplaced might belong in the living room after all.

Also making a comeback: wallpaper

Yes, the stuff that used to make potential homebuyers cringe is reinventing its reputation. “When people hear ‘wallpaper,’ it can be like hearing nails on a chalkboard,” admits interior designer Anna Miles at Haven Interiors. “But I’ve learned it can be the best way to add a pop of interest to a wall or smaller space.”

These splashes of unexpected patterns and color illustrate a fundamental truth of current decorating: Don’t be afraid to mix and match finishes. “When a room is so matchymatchy, it’s stale,” Miles says. “But when you bring in different wood tones or pops of color and bold patterns, it creates something interesting for the eye.”

One such approach, favored by Tara Wilke of McNabb & Risley Fine Furniture & Interior Design, is “bohemian inspiration,” with bold patterns, bright colors and furniture styles ranging from antique to modern. The look is “a laid-back and casual approach that can be highly personalized,” Wilke says. “There really is no

correct way to approach it, which appeals to many clients.”

“Modern vintage,” a spin on midcentury modern, appeals to many because of its subtle nostalgia, clean lines and craftsmanship. The reimagined look features barrel back chairs and sectionals with button backs and retro legs. The color scheme ranges from bold marigold and gray to soft grays with icy blue accents.

A third popular choice is the organically influenced “rustic modern,” which marries industrial accents with reclaimed materials. Think barn wood juxtaposed with natural fabrics such as cotton, linen and hemp, deep, cushy seating, and accents of refurbished antiques against creamy whites, soft grays and stone colors.

“As recently as 15 years ago, clients would come in wanting a specific look and didn’t want to interject anything outside of that,” Wilke says. “Well, that isn’t the case anymore, and it makes design so much more fun.” ♦