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You’re pregnant and on a mission: to set up the perfect room for your baby. You want it to be comfortable for him or her from newborn through the toddler years and beyond. Here are some helpful hints on flooring, wall colors, lighting, and more.

1. Lay down a rug on a wood floor

Think ahead to when your baby is learning to crawl, sit up, and stand. If he falls over a rug will cushion him. “The rug shouldn’t be super plush because it will collect dust,” Suzanne Hassler, an interior design consultant, says. It may also be a choking hazard. She suggests a dense wool rug with a tight weave. Avoid sisal, which would be irritating to your little one’s tender skin. “Wool is also generally easy to spot clean.”

Put a nonslip rubber pad underneath so it stays in place. “If furniture is sitting on the rug, that will also help keep it in position,” Hassler says.
2. Position a short bookcase next to the glider
Not only is it a convenient place to store books you can easily grab at reading time, but if it's about 36 inches high, you also can use the flat top to rest a bottle, package of wipes, and your phone. "If space is limited, have a basket for books on the floor," Hassler says.

3. Think beyond traditional decor
Instead of painting the baby's room pink, blue, or yellow, many parents are taking their color cues from other rooms of their home. "The nursery should be an extension of how the rest of the house looks," Hassler says. She likes the way a soft gray green or blue green wall color makes whatever artwork is hanging really pop. "The walls aren't the point," she says. The room should have individual items that give it a custom look that's not juvenile or matchy-matchy, for example, hang a print you love and build the rest of the décor around that. Or install a jumbo letter of your child's first-name initial.

4. Give your crib a set of wheels
When Grandma is staying over in the dual-purpose nursery/guest room, the crib needs to be easy to move out to another room. Get casters that have a locking brake so that crib and baby stay put pre- and post-move.

5. Install safe shades
According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, corded window coverings cause a child to die from strangulation almost every month. The group recommends only cordless blinds and shades be installed in homes where young children live or visit. Major retailers offer hundreds of options, so it's easy to get the size and color you need. Besides being cordless, the best blind or shade blocks out light, which will help your baby snooze better when it's naptime.

6. Turn on the right lighting
Good lighting is essential in every room, and the nursery is no exception. Hassler recommends installing an overhead light on a dimmer, which will come in handy when your baby is getting sleepy and you don't want a bright light to wake him up. "I'd also wall-mount a plug-in sconce," she says, "and avoid floor lamps." Before long, babies become adventurous toddlers who touch everything.

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ALTRA TO HOST EDUCATIONAL MIXER FOR FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS

Being a first-time homebuyer is a daunting experience. That's why Altra is hosting a social mixer on April 4 focused on first-time buyers. The event will be held at Cambria Gallery, 400 S Broadway #105 in Rochester, and runs from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Attendees can expect to learn about home loan options, meet with a Realtor, appraiser, home inspector, title company representatives and more local experts to ask questions and gain important information regarding the home buying process.

Anyone who attends will also receive a home buying guide and $300 off closing costs from Altra. “At Altra, we want to help you live your best life so whether you have questions about where to begin with buying your first home, or if you are a repeat home buyer looking for new information and financing options, this event will help you on your journey to home ownership,” said Dennis Herricks, Vice President of Real Estate Lending for Altra Federal Credit Union.

Registration is required by April 3; visit www.altra.org or call Greg Johnson at 507-258-4500.
There comes a point in the life of any window treatment where cleaning no longer has the same effect it once did. Whether your blinds are turning grey and dingy, your shades are fraying at the edges, or your curtains are splitting at the seams, sometimes it’s best to start fresh. When you are ready to replace your window treatments, take some time to consider what type would function best in your space.

**Blinds**
Blinds are a classic way to keep the sun, and prying neighbor eyes, from your home. They come in a wide range of colors and materials, including wood, fabric, horizontal and vertical blinds, meaning you should have no trouble finding something to suit your décor needs. Blinds are quite simple to fit to any window, large or small, whether you’re looking to cover a bathroom or bay window, French doors or something in between. And with new technologies, blinds are becoming motorized and can even be synced to your smartphone, making them safer for pets and children and much more convenient for you.

**Shutters**
Timeless, gorgeous and showstopping are great ways to describe shutters. When haven’t you stopped to fawn over shutters on that cute house down the road? Designed to last, they also come in a range of materials and slat sizes. You can even get different styles, like plantain shutters, café shutters and indoor/outdoor shutters. They can be custom color matched to coordinate with your interior design or furnishings. Not only do shutters lend a sophisticated air to your home, they provide light and privacy control along with extra insulation from the heat or cold.

**Drapes**
If you want to make a bold statement with your window treatment, drapes are the way to go. Whether you are looking for panels, valances, cornices or just updated hardware, drapes can be a standalone window treatment option or paired with shades, blinds or other treatments. Either way, drapes double as a design element. You can choose custom fabric, colors, and patterns to create everything from an elegant to an eclectic look to your room.

*It is always prudent to give each room its priorities.*

**Window treatment tip of the month**
Soften up direct light to save your furniture and your flooring. Traditional wood blinds or fabric shades will let in enough light to keep the room bright, but will keep your flooring and furniture from wearing unevenly.

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One of the easiest ways to add lots of charm and increase your home’s curb appeal is to paint your front door. Choose a color that complements the colors of your home. It’s best to use an outdoor paint that won’t fade or wear easily. You can also repaint the existing lock and knob instead of replacing them. Simply use a can of outdoor spray paint with a metal finish, such as brushed bronze or something in the nickel family.

If you’re having trouble deciding which colors might work best with your existing color scheme there is an app called Front Door Paint which allows you to take a photo of your home and change the color of your front door. This can help you visualize what the end product will look like before committing.
Give Your Garage Door a Makeover

There are lots of ways you can go here, the obvious one being to completely replace your garage door if it’s damaged or not operating properly. On the other hand, if you aren’t experiencing problems with your overhead door, consider the following options.

Your first step might be to simply give it a good scrub. Borrow or rent a power washer if you don’t have one and make sure you’ve removed as much discoloration as possible. Sometimes a dirty garage door is just too far-gone to wash; in that case you’ll want to pick up some paint that matches the color of your siding or trim and repaint the surface.

Now that the surface is gleaming, you can take things a step further and add hardware to your overhead door to give it a carriage style look. If the front elevation of your home is a bit dull, consider adding a trellis above your garage door in a color that matches your trim.

Wash the Siding and Windows

You’d be surprised how dirty the outside of your home can get, especially if you live in a rural area. Washing your siding and windows will give your house a really fresh look that makes the property appear much newer than it really is. Be sure not to use a power washer on your siding – a simple garden hose will do just fine and won’t damage your vinyl siding.

Washing windows is a common household chore; however, the outsides of your windows don’t usually get as much attention. While you’re giving the exterior a good scrub down, get your windows as clean as possible.

Revive Your Flowerbeds

If your flowerbeds are overgrown or just plain dead, tear out what remains and plant some fresh flowers. Choose flowers that are easy to keep alive and are an attractive complement to the colors of your home. It’s best to go with a flower size that can be seen from the street.

Replace Your House Numbers

Your house numbers, if not engraved in brick, are very easy to replace. Shop around online for numbers in a modern font that’s a bit larger than your existing pieces. You can affix the new numbers directly onto the exterior of your home or even better, you can attach them to a flower box that hangs near the front door. Still with a color or finish that contrasts with the color of your siding so the number is bold and visible from the street.

Update Your Light Fixtures

Chances are your light fixtures are original to your home. It’s an easy thing to forget about because it’s not something you’re always staring at, but exterior lighting can do just as much good as interior fixtures can. If your lighting is broken, inoperable, or loose, consider repairing or replacing them altogether. Be sure to get a matching set for the entire house and not just the front.

If they’re still in good working order, grab a can of outdoor spray paint in a metal finish that coordinates with your home. Replace the bulbs and you’ll have taken 10 years off of the life of your home’s appearance.

Reface Your Foundation Walls

If you’ve got a large portion of your foundation wall that’s visible from the street, you can reface it with an attractive stone tile. It’s not necessarily a budget-friendly update, by the effects of this upgrade are remarkable. If an exposed foundation wall is the only thing holding up the sale of your home, then this is something to consider.
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Paint can bring a space to life, but sometimes a room needs something a little bit fancier. Enter wallpaper … again.

With the current resurgence in wallpaper’s popularity, many people are once again rolling prints into their home décor. However, if doing a whole room in wallpaper isn’t your thing, savvy designers are finding some “off-the-wall” uses for it.

Wallpaper has long been used to line the insides of hutches, cabinets and bookcases, providing an unexpected pop of color, says Molly McDermott Walsh, VP of marketing, Farrow & Ball, New York City. More recently, people have begun to paper the ceiling to create a “conversation-worthy” effect, she says.

An experienced do-it-yourselfer can single-handedly paper walls, but for ceilings, it’s better to have a helper so one person can hold the roll while the other smooths out the paper. Do-it-yourselfers can capably hang wallpaper, but if it’s badly installed or misaligned, "it looks horrible," warns Florence de Dampierre, author of “Walls: The Best Decorative Treatments.” Some newer wallpapers “are stronger and easier to line up,” she says, and some even go on dry.

Installing wallpaper to one section of the ceiling over an open floor plan, and framing the section with molding, helps to delineate the space beneath it for a specific purpose, says Walsh: “When it’s over the dining area or the play area or the media area, it really creates a zone.”

There also are many new, unique options from which to choose. “I’ve seen wallpaper now that’s actually made from pheasant feathers, gold leaf, leather. The list goes on,” says Jamie Beckwith, designer and creator of the Jamie Beckwith Collection, Nashville.

Wallpaper has a broad price range, as well, with a mid-range cost of about $45 per roll. But with renowned designers and artists putting their work (in some cases, hand-painted originals) on both wallpaper and tile, the sky is the limit when it comes to price.

Before wallpapering, a big part of the process is getting the walls back to good condition. The prep work can be extensive as opposed to just painting. Flat paint minimizes the appearance of flaws, “so you can almost get away with not repairing all the defects,” Beckwith adds, whereas wallpaper requires a flawlessly smooth surface for proper adherence.

That’s not the only way interior design has gone topsy-turvy of late. Instead of paint or paper, people are installing upholstery on the walls. Sometimes, the fabric is stretched over a layer of batting and tacked down in places for a soft, quilted look and feel. Alternately, upholstered panels can be hung on the wall, and a certain type of wall upholstery has paper backing that installs like wallpaper.

The latter two application methods are easier for DIYers. “Generally, though, I would always leave wallpaper to professionals and that’s doubly so for wall upholstery,” says interior designer Katherine Shenaman of West Palm Beach, Florida.

Fabric brings color, pattern, texture and dimensionality into a room; paint and wallpaper fall flat by comparison. Cleaning fabric-covered walls is challenging if not impossible, so kitchens, bathrooms and high-traffic areas aren’t wise choices for wall upholstery, Shenaman says. Fabric harbors odors and dust, so upholstered walls offer little joy or comfort to allergy sufferers, she adds.

On the plus side, upholstered walls dampen sound and look “really cozy and nice” in a bedroom, Shenaman says. A small nook with lushly upholstered walls “ends up feeling like a little jewel box,” she adds.
to Florida to find their condo

So with more firm footing

finished. Through a very lonely,

finishes a row or changes

people in her class find this
Soft, textured wall hangings are one of the latest crazes to hit the home décor world. Customizable in color, size and style, these art pieces work well in any room of the home. But store-bought weavings can be expensive and lack character; that’s where Katherine Walker of Simply Woven sets herself apart.

A Rochester native, Katherine discovered woven wall hangings while living in Florida two and a half years ago. “I saw them in Anthropologie and they were too expensive to purchase,” she recalls, “so I taught myself over a long weekend.”

She began making weavings, often gifting them to friends when she had too many to keep. After a trip home to Minnesota, Katherine and her husband returned to Florida to find their condo covered in black mold. Everything was ruined, including all her weaving supplies. “I didn’t think I’d ever do it again,” she says. The two uprooted and spent the last year traveling around the world (they run a podcast publishing company, so they’re able to work remotely). They spent some time in Mexico, where Katherine sourced authentic, freshly dyed wool. “That inspired me to keep doing it,” she says.

The pair made their way back to Minnesota last fall. “We love traveling, but at the end of the day, we’ve realized that people are also what matters,” Katherine says of their decision to return to southeast Minnesota. “People think we’re crazy for wanting to come back to this area, but we know people here and have those relationships built.”

So with more firm footing under her, Katherine returned to weaving. Around this same time, Katherine found out she was pregnant but simultaneously was told she wouldn’t carry the baby any farther. “I just continued weaving after weaving after weaving… I liked weaving because it brought me comfort to see something complete and finished. Through a very lonely, traumatic time, weaving is really what brought a lot of joy and happiness,” she says.

That’s when Simply Woven took off. Katherine sells pre-made woven wall hangings on her Etsy shop, and also takes custom orders. Recently, she began teaching workshops.

For $45, Katherine provides all the materials, including the loom and needle, necessary to make a woven hanging between 9"x12" or 11"x13" (larger weavings are available, though they cost more). She has opened up her home in Lake City for workshops, and she also travels to homes or studios to teach classes of 5 to 6.

One thing Katherine loves about teaching workshops is seeing other people’s creativity. “I like classes because I’ll pick out yarn or wool I never would put together myself, and you see other people’s creativity and how they put things together in a way I never would.”

Since starting to teach workshops, Katherine has noticed some people struggle with the imperfect nature of weavings. Sometimes Katherine finishes a row or changes colors three-quarters of the way across, or leaves leather pieces hanging from the ends, quirks typical of this art form. But sometimes, people in her class find this un-uniformity stressful. It’s an exercise in letting go and moving on in order to complete your piece, which becomes cathartic.

By teaching small classes, Katherine tries to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, “without any pressure to perform or to do as good as the person next to them…just allowing them to go at their own pace.” She has created a safe place for learning, so students can create a woven hanging that speaks to them, whether their pieces stick out at the ends or are lined up straight.

As a self-taught weaver, Katherine is well able to learn new techniques through books and online videos. This gives her the opportunity to teach people multiple times, because each time she can bring new techniques into the workshops, so students come away with something new.

Next month, we’ll have basic step-by-step instructions from Katherine on how to make your own woven wall hanging.

**How to hang a weaving**

Because they aren’t traditional art, they’re more three-dimensional with their added textures, woven hangings can be tricky to place in your home. Katherine recommends a standalone statement piece for larger weavings, or using 8x10 or 11x14 sized ones as part of a gallery wall. “I’ve seen a lot of little ones above a bookshelf in a nursery or over a crib,” she adds.
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APOTHECARY JARS ARE JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED

by COURTNEY EDELHART | CTW FEATURES

Isn’t it great when form and function combine for the perfect home décor accessory? One of the latest décor trends is apothecary jars, cute antique pieces that not only add charm to your home, but also serve a purpose.

Glass apothecary jars can be used all over the home as accessories, storage, or both. In bathrooms, apothecary jars are perfect for cotton balls, swabs and other personal care items. In kitchens, they make lovely food containers for display on countertops or in the space between the top of a cabinet and the ceiling. They’re available in all different shapes and sizes so they can be very pretty assembled as a diverse group or matched up with others the same size and filled with something colorful like candy.

The need for medicinal storage dates back centuries. Archaeologists have discovered similar containers dating as far back as Biblical times. Drugs from Africa and the Far East were stored in earthenware pottery and carted along trade routes, says Greg Higby, executive director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The stylish shapes of apothecary jars emerged from necessity – curved walls made liquids and powdered substances easier to pour, lids were made as air-tight as possible and showy shapes attracted more customers. “They were symbolic of the trade, and would be displayed in open air stall type shops,” Higby says. “Remember that most people couldn’t read, so you tried to get [a container] indicative of the contents. The more stylish jars let people know that you had some exotic spices and herbs inside.”

In time, furniture pieces evolved to serve the trade as well. Apothecary cabinets have many small but long drawers to store a wide variety of herbs and medicines. Few of these chests and cabinets are still used for medicine today, but they remain a practical storage solution for spices or anything else that’s small. They can store supplies related to fly fishing, jewelry making, knitting, and sewing.

Lakisha Chambers is a spokeswoman for Madison, Va.-based Plow & Hearth, a furniture and home and garden accessory retailer. It sells several apothecary cabinet reproductions. “The combination of nostalgic charm with all the conveniences needed in a modern media cabinet make apothecary cabinets appealing,” Chambers says.

The lower, wider cabinets also are popular as dining room buffets. The little drawers can be used for flatware, napkins and the like. But for those who don’t have anything small to store in these cabinets, fret not: the aesthetic is enough to justify the investment.
Many homeowners fret about affordable housing in their neck of the woods, worrying that new subsidized rental housing construction earmarked for low-income tenants will depreciate property values and gradually bring down the neighborhood. But a new report by Trulia indicates that those fears are unfounded and irrational.

Trulia recently studied more than 3,000 low-income rental housing projects, from 1996 to 2006, funded through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and located within the country’s 20 least affordable markets. Only two of those markets – Boston and Cambridge, Mass. – experienced a negative pricing effect on homes near affordable housing projects; 17 other markets were not affected by low-income residential projects, and one market – Denver – actually showed an increase in values for properties located near low-income rental housing.

“Given the prevailing narrative coming from those opposing affordable housing, we were surprised to find such resounding evidence that low-income housing development did not have an effect on nearby home values,” says Cheryl Young, senior economist for Trulia in San Francisco. “While a number of academic studies have made similar arguments, we were excited to use Trulia’s unique price data to bring these findings to a broader audience. In general, we found that the development of a project with below market-rate apartments simply isn’t enough to bring down local home values.”

J. Keith Baker, program coordinator for Mortgage Banking & Financial Services and faculty member at North Lake College in Irving, Texas, says NIMBYs (local residents who hold fast to a “not in my back yard” attitude) often mistakenly worry that affordable housing will bring in more large families to their neighborhood, straining limited resources for schools and roads, providing less funding to the local tax base, and overloading the local property tax system.

“In areas with lower levels of illegal
immigrant populations, the U.S. Census Bureau has shown that rental apartments have fewer children per unit, on average, than owner-occupied units.

Several state and city studies also reveal that multi-family housing developments did not increase school costs and that more affordable housing near jobs actually decreased the number of cars owned and miles driven compared to residents of market-rate homes,” Baker says.

What’s more, “research has shown that the effective tax rate – property tax paid relative to the market value – for affordable housing family complexes is significantly higher than for single-family homes and that affordable multi-family complexes more often generated a profit for local governments due to the greater efficiency in use of public services and infrastructure,” Baker adds.

Anand Kannan, president of Irvine, Calif.-based Community Preservation Partners – an affordable housing rehabilitation company – agrees that NIMBYs often are misinformed on this issue.

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CHERYL YOUNG, SENIOR ECONOMIST FOR TRULIA

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But new data show that the average cost for homeowners insurance can range from as little as $349 to over $2,000 annually, depending on the state in which you live.

Fresh research provided by GOBankingRates reveals homeowners’ insurance premiums vary considerably across the nation, with the median cost of policies in each state corresponding accurately with the median home values in that state. Put another way, states with higher-priced homes tend to have higher-priced insurance. The research further indicates that homeowners’ insurance costs are highest in Hawaii, the District of Columbia, California, Massachusetts, and Colorado; today’s cheapest rates, meanwhile, are found in West Virginia, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Indiana.
Even in higher-priced states, you could be forking over more money than you need to for coverage, especially if you didn’t shop around, say the pros.

“Just like you would with auto insurance, you want to make sure that you are getting the best rate possible and choosing a plan that fits you and your family’s needs,” says Kristen Bonner, research lead with GOBankingRates in El Segundo, Calif.

Chris Hackett, senior director of personal lines for the Chicago-based Property Casualty Insurers Association of America, agrees that it’s important to periodically review your coverages, limits, and premiums to ensure you’re not overpaying for your policy.

“It’s in your best interest to shop around periodically and get quotes from at least a few different companies. The property insurance market is very competitive, and you may be able to save a lot of money,” Hackett says.

When comparing quotes and policies, be sure to look closely at what’s included.

“Just because two policies from two different insurance companies are the same cost does not mean they are the same,” Bonner says. For example, a policy from company A may only reimburse your damaged property for its actual cash value – meaning its replacement cost minus depreciation; company B, on the other hand, may offer a policy that includes guaranteed replacement costs, which will replace or rebuild your property without factoring in depreciation.

“Consumers need to make sure their policy covers the risks they face, as the last thing you want is for something to go wrong and find out too late that your policy doesn’t cover it,” says Joe Vahey, vice president/product manager at Erie Insurance in Erie, Pa. “An actual cash value policy subtracts for wear and tear and depreciation, which could leave you short of funds if your home were destroyed and you needed to rebuild it.”

Hackett says you can score a premium discount if you get your home and auto policies from the same insurer (yielding a discount of 15 percent or more), take measures to increase your home’s security – by installing burglar alarms (possibly a 20 percent discount or more for a central system that alerts police/fire), smoke detectors (up to 5 percent discount), and deadbolts – and keeping tabs on your credit.

“Also, make sure you’re addressing any errors on your credit report to improve your credit score and attractiveness as a borrower, which insurance companies look at,” Bonner says.

Vahey recommends consulting closely with an insurance agent “to find a policy that provides the best value – meaning the best coverage at the best price,” he says. “An agent can help customize a policy based on your individual needs and make sure you’re receiving all eligible discounts.”

Lastly, be cautious before opting for the cheapest policy available.

“The extra money you might pay each month to make sure you are properly covered for your location, home type, geographic or weather-related concerns and property features could save you in the long run,” Bonner adds.

“...It’s in your best interest to shop around periodically and get quotes from at least a few different companies. The property insurance market is very competitive, and you may be able to save a lot of money.”

CHRIS HACKETT, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF PERSONAL LINES, PROPERTY CASUALTY INSURERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
New Construction Trends of 2017

by JENNA MARTINDALE | EDINA REALTY | LICENSED REALTOR IN MN

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've noticed the surge in new construction homes in the Rochester area. The sheer volume of new homes going up is staggering and also really exciting. Our diverse community has paved the way for new and fresh concepts in new home design. Here are a few current trends in the area.

Geometric Tile

In an effort to give homes more character while keeping functionality in our ever changing climate, new home clients are opting for very interesting tile choices these days. We're seeing lots of geometric patterns with bold and contrasting color schemes. This type of material selection is one that some may feel is too risky in terms of resale, so you may not see it in many model homes, but I can assure you that lots of our new construction clients are opting for it in their homes.

Nooks and Built-ins

Our city has a long and rich history, and we've managed to maintain many historic homes that offer ornate trim work, curved walls, and cozy nooks. Thanks to new construction, we're bringing that old world charm back into the housing market.

Our new construction clients are now spending more time with draftsmen to work into their plans things like cozy reading nooks, built-in storage benches, window seats, and bookshelves. This does wonders for the longevity of our local housing market, as these aspects of a home are timeless and highly functional.
The national and local workforce has been transitioning over the past few years to a remote working environment. This is apparent in the amount of requests we get from new construction clients for in-home offices. These are usually on the main floor in the front of the home, though we are seeing clients find new and fun nooks in the home for this space. No longer is the home office a spare bedroom; it’s a room fully committed to work with built-in bookshelves, room for lounging, and even fireplaces.

If you’re hoping to find room in your new construction home for an office you’ve got many, many options. It’s important to be aware of how and when you work. A centrally located office will make multitasking easier but will come with a fair amount of noise and distractions, while an office tucked in a corner of the home or second level might be best for work that requires lots of focus and privacy.

Consider building permanent shelving and desks. This will give your space much more functionality and charm. Adding a fireplace and lounge area will create a truly relaxing workspace that you may just stay in after your work is finished. And making the space functional for the entire family with a center island that serves as a homework or arts and crafts station will surely maximize the space.

The formal dining room is dying a slow death in our local housing market. If it’s not being replaced by an in-home office, it’s being eaten up by an oversized kitchen.

Long gone are the days of a tiny center island or peninsula. Many families who choose to build their dream homes are designing kitchens that accommodate all of the families needs, from dining and homework to entertaining and more.

With the kitchens stretching into what was once the dining room, buyers can afford to grow their islands into really functional and beautiful focal points where the family spends lots of time. We’re seeing microwaves, second sinks, and dishwashers move onto these monster islands. These choices leave room for additional cabinetry, enlarged pantries, and high end appliances.

The way I see it, your kitchen will never go unused. It’s a gathering spot for all types of family activities, so investing more into this space is a smart move.

In-Home Offices

Modern Lighting

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In-Home Offices

Modern Lighting

Long gone are the days of a standard lighting kit throughout the entire home. We’re seeing families spend more time to find fixtures that bring charm and character to the home. Every type of style is being considered, though farmhouse and modern styles seem to lead the pack.

If you’re in the market for new and fresh lighting ideas for your new home, my best recommendation is to shop around both locally and online. Compare prices, styles, and functionality. Pay attention to how each fixture will play with the others in your home. You’ll want to create a cohesive and effortless look, which demands some restraint when you’re making selections. What I mean by that is you cannot choose five of your favorite chandeliers and expect them to mesh well together. Some of your lighting will have to take a back seat to let your very favorite piece make a statement. Overall, don’t be afraid to take chances on lighting as this is an easy fix if you change your mind down the road.

Bonus Rooms

When you’re thinking about building your dream home, a lot of time should be spent evaluating how your family lives in your current home. If movie night is a tradition or you’ve got a house full of sports fanatics, a theater room above the garage might be a smart investment.

Bonus rooms can serve whatever purpose you need them to, be it a hobby room, library, theater, or a room full of bunk beds for sleepovers. If it’s going to be used and enjoyed by your family, then it’s something to consider.
If you spend a lot of time doing the family laundry, you deserve a place to do it that’s not just functional but also a little fun. If you’ve never thought about your laundry room’s style (does it even have a style?), upgrades can be both easy and inexpensive, and will give the space real personality. Before long, you may look forward to laundry day.

First, paint the walls a happy color. Forget about using the leftover beige paint from the den makeover. A laundry room deserves a more cheerful hue like aqua or violet, especially when it’s in the basement. A vibrant color will elevate the room’s mood – and yours too!

It’s also important to make the room fit seamlessly into your home. If the laundry room is on the first floor, forget cheerful and consider painting it the same color as the adjacent room to create a sense of continuity and flow.

Just like any room in your home, add interest to the walls. Consider a tile backsplash above the washer and dryer to give the room some charm. Another option: a durable vinyl or washable wall covering that can handle moisture.

Most laundry rooms have a storage cabinet that keeps the detergent and dryer sheets out of sight. Show it some love with a fresh coat of paint. If you decided to paint the walls white, treat the cabinet to a pop of color like robin’s egg blue, suggests Donna Mondi, president of Donna Mondi Interior Design, in Chicago.

Also, add a counter or table. Trying to fold laundry on top of the washer or dryer isn’t ideal. You need something with a flat surface to sort.

Mondi also suggests taking advantage of vertical space. That’s valuable real estate, especially if the laundry room is small. Install open shelving to store cleaning supplies and hangers if there’s no room for a freestanding cabinet.

Since laundry can be a less-than-fun task, it’s helpful to have tools that streamline the process. The essentials are a stylish laundry basket to carry clothes to and from bedrooms and other parts of your home, a rolling cart if you don’t have a storage cabinet, plastic hangers, and a plastic washbasin to soak delicates. And don’t forget an iron and ironing board.

Keep aesthetics in mind when you buy hampers for clothes waiting to be laundered. A textural material like woven rattan looks much more attractive than something made of plastic, Mondi says. If you have an available space, install a clothing rod like you’d find in a closet to hang washed clothes that you can’t put in the dryer.

And just because you’re in the basement doesn’t mean it has to have a dungeon-like feel. Put up a flush-mount ceiling fixture plus under cabinet lighting, suggests Mondi, to illuminate where you’re folding. “The blues and blacks can blend together,” she says.
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Hacks to Make a Dark Home Brighter

by NANCY MATTIA | CTW FEATURES

Light-filled spaces are comfortable and welcoming and make you want to spend time there. Subconsciously or not, it feels healing to be surrounded by light. But if you’ve got a dark home where shadows overtake sunshine, the environment may seem gloomy and unfriendly. Fortunately, there are many clever ways to let some light into the cave you call home.

1. Install more light sources

Adding electrical lighting like a ceiling fixture with multiple bulbs is the easiest way to brighten a space, says Donna Mondi, president of Donna Mondi Interior Design in Chicago. Also, “adding up-lights in corners will brighten up the edges of a room,” she says.

2. Mix lighting sources

Get floor, table, and reading lamps to disperse light. Don’t forget about sconces, with shades that aim light both upward and downward.

3. Install a glass door

If you currently have a solid panel back door, replacing it with a clear glass door can help let in light. First, figure out what your priority is: privacy or light, Mondi says. “If you really don’t want people to see you, consider frosted or textured glass, which offers privacy and light, though not as much as clear glass.”
Replace incandescent lighting with LEDs

LEDs are brighter and produce a clearer light than traditional bulbs. But they’re still a hard sell: “People love incandescent light because they look better in it,” Mondi says.

Add mirrors

These shiny surfaces reflect light instead of absorbing it, creating the impression of a brighter environment. Hang them on walls in every room. If you position a full-length mirror between two windows, it will give off the impression of a third window.

Put a light-colored area rug on a dark floor

Break up all that brown wood with a rug that incorporates lighter colors. Mondi suggests picking a cream rug that’s not flat, but has some texture like a Flokati or other type of shag rug. Or install a light-colored cowhide rug – this trendy durable accessory is often offered in freeform shapes, a great way to add some splash to a room.

Think pale

White and other light colors work hard to brighten up a space, as they send light back and forth to other surfaces around a room. Mondi suggests either going monochromatic or choosing a pair of light complementary hues, such as pale blush pink with cream or light blue. “Paint the ceiling lacquered white, which will bounce around whatever light you do get,” she says. Decorating with silver metallic accessories (lamps, frames, bowls) will also make a room look and feel lighter.

Add or enlarge a window

This is a pricey option but incredibly effective – you’re giving up part of a wall for a little bit more sunshine. Though a kitchen or living room often is the beneficiary of an additional window, other spaces in your home – stairwells, entryways, landings – might also have a dark personality and could benefit from having more light.

Install a transom window

If you don’t have the budget for a new or enlarged window, think about adding a transom window to an interior (windowless) room. “It allows the light to come in without giving up an actual wall,” Mondi says. A transom is punched out of the upper portion of a wall and brings natural light from the outside room to the interior room. “It’s not as expensive as adding an exterior window,” she says. “It also keeps your wall intact.”
Beyond the name!

Dave Kinneberg
Realtor®

Why do you enjoy your job?
This is the ultimate people business and I truly enjoy immersing myself in it. I also get the honor and privilege to help coach people through many successful real estate transactions of all types. Whether it be the joy of a first-time home buyer, the next best investment, building a custom home, or helping a family sell their loved one’s biggest asset at the end of a life, I love helping make people’s lives better.

Family
I am married to my lovely wife Angela. We have three children: Andrew 9, Liam 6, and Norah 5. I was born and raised right here in Rochester with my younger brother Doug by my loving parents, Diane and Earl Kinneberg.

Quote to live by
“Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever” — Mahatma Gandhi.

Favorite place to visit in Minnesota
Any lake in northern Minnesota makes me happy. Nothing beats being out on the boat with family!

Favorite sports team
My beloved Minnesota Vikings of course (as painful as it can be I am very loyal). I am a huge supporter of our local guy #35 Marcus Sherels.
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