

# A desire for casual living shows up in design



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Now that we're firmly snuggling into the new year, what can we expect from the interior design world in 2019? Beyond just colours or furniture styles, let's take a closer look at the long term concept of home as it is evolving.

When we examine how we really live, and use the space in our homes, we can see how our lifestyle affects everything from structure of the house to how rooms are laid out.

For instance, a separate dining room may not fit every lifestyle. Taking food to another room designed just for eating isn't as desirable for some as having a multi-purpose space.

Some use it for tutoring children, or a music room, others have installed a library wall. We're not afraid to convert what is already there.

At the same time, kitchens are bigger, becoming the front and center focus in the house, we're investing in high function and design, making the kitchen more inviting, less



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILLIAN JACKSON

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utilitarian than the past. It allows the big table to move into the kitchen, not next to it.

With that said, appliances are moving out of the kitchen! We are seeing wine fridges, induction hot plates, dishwashers and coffee bars moving into other rooms including bed-

rooms, basements, the den or family room. Now you can prep snacks, enjoy your morning coffee or have a glass of wine without running to the kitchen.

Wireless technology is changing how we view, listen and communicate at home. Computers and TV's are eve-

rywhere! Smart devices help us make the way we use power much more efficiently and technology is being built into our tables, furniture, etc.

Low wattage lighting, or LED with CRI (Colour Rendering Index) offers much truer lighting that is also

energy efficient, replacing the cold fluorescent look of some bulbs. Our smartphones are tools to set all our technology at home, remotely.

Formal living rooms that go unused are a waste of square footage and money. People are repurposing rooms to suit today's more casual style. Even the sofa has changed.

No one sits with both feet on the floor anymore. Sofas are deeper, designed for relaxation, lounging (just try getting both feet on the floor!).

Ceilings are getting more interesting, especially with open concept homes. Beyond crown moulding, we are seeing more detailed planes, like added bulkheads that help delineate areas.

Waffle designs, hipped roof shapes and valleys in geometrically intricate designs distinguish cookie cutter houses and add interest and personality to your home.

Laser cut styrofoam that's plaster coated is replacing plaster moulding ([www.mouldexmouldings.com](http://www.mouldexmouldings.com)) and giving us much greater flexibility and design opportunities.

Manufacturers are making more durable, photograp-

ically real products in high quality laminate and vinyl replacing old-school, cheap looking surfaces ([www.karndean.com/en-ca/floors](http://www.karndean.com/en-ca/floors)) and Canadian pre-finished hardwood flooring ([Vintageflooring.com](http://Vintageflooring.com)) continues to be a great choice and investment for the home.

We crave access to the outdoors so glassed-in sunrooms, screened in porches and balconies or loggias that invite seating and cooking outdoors will grow in popularity. Outdoor kitchens are here to stay.

Nana Wall Systems (<https://www.nanawall.com/toronto-showroom>) aren't just for California climate, they give us uncompromising backyard views and access year round.

Generally, today's housing trend is to live in what suits our lifestyle. Why invest in the extra square footage if it doesn't work for you? If it's not big enough, or flexible enough, we're seeing renovation on the rise, improving what we have for the long term.

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## Turn up the heat — with style



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As the days now are colder, minds are starting to wander to cozy evenings curled up by the fireplace. But this fabulous interior feature is so much more than just a cold-weather comfort.

As a designer, I love incorporating fireplaces into many of my designs. The fireplace is the obvious focal point and gathering place, and thus it demands some thoughtful consideration on a few matters.

Here's what should be considered when selecting a fireplace for your home.

### Styles galore

There are about as many different styles of fireplace as there are personalities. Look around, and remember that your fireplace will likely dictate the overall style of the room, so choose carefully.

Contemporary styles are enjoying their heyday, with some really beautiful linear fireplaces, see-through designs,

double-sided and three-sided units, with crystals, river rocks or driftwood log inserts.

While contemporary is certainly cool, there's something to be said about a classic style of fireplace. These choices tend to age well, often featuring a universal neutral tile and stone options from companies like Erth Coverings offer the best options that won't soon go out of style. Go to [erthcoverings.com](http://erthcoverings.com) for inspirational ideas.

Did you know? The fireplace mantel was originally intended to catch smoke and soot. It's become feature piece, A heavy mantel is wonderful to display collections, photos or art — or stand up all on its own merit.

### Warm surroundings

Since the fireplace is an instant focal point in a space, it's important to ensure its surroundings complement and highlight it well. The classic layout is to arrange furniture in a U shape, facing the fireplace, inviting people to sit, chat.

Accessorize the area with cozy blankets, pillows and a snug rug underfoot for the ultimate in cosy comforts. When



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springtime rears its head again, you can swap these heavier, thicker textiles for lighter, airier ones. Above the fireplace, hang a mirror or art that echoes the size of the fire box, which will achieve balance.

### Easy installation

As important as the fireplace itself, is how it is installed. In this regard, "out of sight, out of mind" is the goal. Ensure to consult with a

installer, who can advise you on what's possible, and how much it'll all cost.

To ensure the right product is selected and installed, work with a qualified fireplace expert, like Kastle Fireplaces, which I recommend for their expertise on everything from safety and best size of unit to use to give lasting peace of mind.

Designer Find: The latest must-see is the Valor radiant gas fireplaces, which employ



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a unique hidden ducting system that draws heat up and recirculates it in the room. The walls and general area around the fireplace are cooler, reducing the risk of fire or damage to surface materials and valuables like artwork or electronics.

If the thought of curling up by the hearth, listening to the crackling fire, and enjoy-

ing the ambiance warms your heart, a fireplace you love will be well worth the investment.

— Sara Bederman is principal designer for Sara Bederman Design and is known for creating stylish, thoughtfully curated and livable interiors. Visit her at [sarabederman.com](http://sarabederman.com).