

EDITOR'S TRENDS



Johan van Zyl – editor, *VISI*

Seasonal fads – the what's hot (or not) variety – leave me cold. I maintain that these are mere marketing ploys, tricks to convince consumers to buy irrelevant knick-knacks that they are led to believe will position them at the 'cutting edge,' for no time at all! Broader social movements such as those identified by *VISI*'s favourite trend forecaster, Li Edelkoort of Trend Union in Paris, are not only more interesting but also more enduring.

1 NATURAL INSPIRATION

We will be more inspired than ever before by the way the natural world functions and will therefore continue exploring mutually beneficial relationships between ourselves, animals, plants and the soil. However, this bond will be more intuitive and less egocentric than in the past.

In her first-ever architectural presentation, "Biomimicry and architecture beyond 2012", presented in Cape Town in March 2010, Li Edelkoort showed how the use of natural materials such as wood, grass, fibres and soil in weaver birds' nests, anthills, beehives, spider webs and cocoons will inspire architecture. A good example is the Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre, an anthill-like group of vaulted structures in the Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage site in Limpopo, which earned architect Peter Rich the 2010 ABSOLUT *VISI* Designer of the Year Award. (The building also won the World Building of the Year at the World Architecture Festival in Barcelona in 2009 and the David Alsop Sustainability Award at the international 2009 Structural Awards.)

I think Mapungubwe (along with other nature-inspired structures such as the Soccer City calabash and Mokena Makeka's upturned protea pitch for Green Point stadium) indicates that South African architecture is now manifesting the organic trend that first began germinating in less permanent design forms a few years ago. This indicates the consolidation of the movement into what will be a long-lasting way of design and way of life. This architectural trend also represents the merging of both worlds: the technological and sophisticated with the natural and nostalgic – we won't abandon the former for the latter but will rather use the best from both worlds to inspire a new era of creativity.

2 HOME-GROWN

There is a "locavore" hiding inside all of us and "think global, act local" will be one of 2010's mantras as we let it out. Post World Cup, once we have exited the world stage, we will be left with renewed confidence in the value of our design capabilities and we will continue celebrating our

indigenous food, fabrics, creative talent and natural resources, such as mohair.

3 FARM FRESH

Farming, particularly in an urban context (from guerilla and vertical gardening, to growing vegetables and herbs on balconies and making compost with table scraps), will continue as part of the escalating sustainability movement. I do find the popularity of the online game FarmVille (in which people tend to their virtual farms) somewhat disconcerting. According to Li Edelkoort this reflects the growing need of city slickers to tend to plants and animals, although reality is much harder work of course, and above all, real and relevant.

4 THE NEW FAMILY

The end of the era of the individual is nigh. There will be a definite shift in the way we view the world and the concept of family will be expanded to incorporate more than mere blood ties. Relatives, colleagues and playmates will assemble to form units of strength and camaraderie. In design, items literally cut from the same cloth, yet each individualistic in character, will create strength in numbers.

2010 might also be remembered as the Year of the Braai, it satisfies the rekindled need for togetherness, creating families of participants by bonding individuals into a single unit.

5 BITE-SIZE

I quite like the London and Cape Town based, brand and design consultancy Coley Porter Bell's statement that 2010 will be all about portion control. The cultural desire of the so-called "snack" generation is to live a bite-sized lifestyle – bite-sized products, information and entertainment. As a result, designs have become increasingly compact and the complex made simple. This is evidenced in the growing popularity of the iPod, Twitter, text-message-like abbreviated language, and the use of emoticons.

An increased awareness of the environment's fragility in combination with the recent recession has had a huge influence on design trends in both interiors and gardens. Going green used to be seen as new and progressive whereas now it's the norm. In architecture, passive design principles of good insulation, natural ventilation and solar power are making homes more energy efficient.

Mary-Jane Harris – editor, *GARDEN AND HOME*

Homeowners are more conscious of sustainable sources when buying furniture and are checking energy-efficiency ratings when choosing appliances. Even fabrics, which are notoriously difficult to produce in a totally green way, are now being made from recycled plastic and eco-friendly materials such as bamboo. Indigenous plants, rainwater tanks, vegetable patches, natural aquatic elements and grey water filters are becoming regular features of many South African gardens.

The concepts of recycling and reusing are also having a pronounced effect on interior trends. Concern over the amount of furniture in landfills has homeowners looking at old furniture in new ways. There's a revival of interest in vintage furniture and, as they are an effective and inexpensive way of giving old furniture a new look, paint effects and decoupage, like other handicrafts, are back in vogue.

Economic uncertainty has made everyone more aware of what is really important in life. There has been a return to family values and a desire for simplicity. In interiors there is less conspicuous consumption and more emphasis on comfort and togetherness. Your home should reflect who you are rather than showing off what you have and homeowners will be looking to invest in antiques, quality furniture and original art; additions that will last.

In times of uncertainty societies tend to look backwards at what was safe and secure. One's heritage and one's roots become more important, resulting in renewed interest in ethnic designs and traditional crafts, such as quilting and patchwork. Country style is back, along with its connotations of healthy, simple living. Neutrals will still be the most popular choice as far as colours go and the new look that is emerging is rustic but with contemporary touches such as metal tables with solid wood surfaces and large, over scaled standard lamps and pendant lights. Cross-cultural influences are still very strong with fabrics like ikats and zuzanis being combined with African artefacts and Chinese antiques. Wallpaper is still very popular, as are rugs and these are now being layered to create a feast of colour at floor level.

With homes getting smaller, gardens, patios and balconies are becoming extra living rooms and are increasingly being designed as such, utilising components like comfortable furniture, UV and weather resistant fabrics and flooring and low-maintenance plants that provide colour and texture.



The desire for a more intimate connection with nature is now facilitated by technology, with the fully automated garden becoming a reality. In the morning when you want a quiet moment to relax, you'll push the button on your universal remote to start the water feature. When friends come round to watch rugby, you'll use the remote to switch on the weatherproof outdoor TV and lower blinds to screen it from the sun's glare. Later you'll adjust the outdoor lights to create the right mood, get the fire pit glowing and play music through your outdoor speakers – all at the touch of a button.