

Homes & interiors

Inspiration to help transform your living space

NEW AGE DINING

EAT IN STYLE Al fresco dining can be great fun and an enjoyable experience.
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TALK LIGHT

RADIANCE Spruce up your home with a variety of interesting light fixtures.
On Page 4



Small home, big space

SPACE PLANNING
With space being a big constraint these days, it is of vital importance to be well organised to make the most of the space available, writes Bindu Gopal Rao



SPACIOUS Using lighter hues on walls can make any room look bigger. PHOTOS BY HOME ETTU

As homes shrink, there is a need to make the most of your space. While this is easier said than done, a little help from experts will ease your concerns. So, here are some ideas to make your home appear larger than it is.

Get organised
The most important point to keep in mind is to buy only stuff that is needed. Says Rahul Jagtiani, Managing Partner, Plush-plaza.com, “Kids’ furniture, such as bunk beds, as well as home office furniture can

be designed in such a manner that they fold up against the wall and are completely concealed, thus giving your room a very neat and tidy look.”

“One trick to optimise space is to paint the walls in lighter hues as they make the rooms appear bigger than their actual size by reflecting more light as compared to the darker hues,” says Rajiv Rajgopal, Director, Decorative Business, AkzoNobel India Ltd.

A thorough planning about the arrangement of furniture can also save a lot of space.

“SPACE OPTIMISATION TOTALLY DEPENDS ON ONE’S CREATIVITY AND BUDGET...”

“It will not take much of your time, but diligent consideration and thoughtfulness could give you some extra space for years to come, which is a rare possession in the modern world. Keep your budget in mind and it is better to go in for few at a time rather than buying cheap ones that will not last for long,” says Ashish Shah, COO & Co-founder, Pepperfry.com.

The specifics
The first and foremost step is to create a zone. Think about all the things you do in a particular place—work, sleep, relax,

eat — and then establish separate zones for those activities.

“You can design rooms with multiple seating areas, a tented or curtained bed, a window seat or built-in banquette, or even just a smartly placed table and chair. Find a table that can function as both a desk and a dining table. Get daybeds or deep sofas that can double as guest beds. Invest in pieces that can be rearranged to transform the use of a room, murphy beds, folding chairs, collapsible or flip-top tables,” advises Nomita Kholi, owner & proprietor, Wis-

ma Atria Interiors. To optimise space, you have to begin with proper planning and visualising the place with the furniture as per the space and size.

Space optimisation totally depends on one’s creativity and budget. “For instance, one can maximise space in bedrooms by the proper usage of closets and invest on closet organisers that separate the type of clothes, accessories, shoes, and more. By using a combination of storage components, you can create a user-friendly closet.

Besides this, you could look at placing a small study table under the staircase to ensure the space is innovatively used,” explains Arun Kumar, Founder and Managing Director, Casa Grande Private Limited. The principle is simple for most discerning – keeping your space open and smart.

“So, flush fitted wall cupboards for storage solutions; sleek, minimalistic, straight lines on side boards, tables, sitting and relaxing chairs and couches, even beds, linen and upholstery,” says Deepak Whorra, Partner, Whorra Enterprises and Director, Episode. Get the measurement of the area you plan to place the furniture in right and then arrange them.”

“The ceiling heights, wall dimensions, room height ,width, depth, all needs to be sized. Even the furniture have dimensions and thus, we have to be careful while doing space planning,” says Shivika Bhasin, Manager, Hulsta & Rolf Benz (India).

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Drama in black & white

MONOCHROME
Do up your home in a classic combination of black and white and enjoy the charming effect it gives to a space, writes Sharmila Chand

Wondering what is one of the latest decor trends? It is monochrome decor. Classic, clean and inherently chic, nothing quite makes a statement like black and white.

Think of abstract art designs from the 50s with geometric shapes, think of a sleek black coffee table with geometric runner, think of the black-and-white checkerboard marble floors. The high-contrast combination can add sophistication and drama to any room.

So how do you start decorating with a black and white palette? Well, the experts say, the first step is to decide how you want the room to feel. Do you want a calming effect or a dramatic one? Traditional look or a more contemporary one? From floors and walls to furniture and accents, you can have as much or as little of black and white as your heart desires.

Depending on your personal choice, you need to look for and pick the right options. Says interior designer Ashiesh Shah, “If you choose black and white, it says a lot about you as a person. The high contrast reveals that you have a bold, daring and interesting personality.”

Monochrome exudes elegance in home decor. We suggest some simple ways to incorporate this trend.

Kitchen in white

A white kitchen has a tremendous calming effect. Do up your kitchen in pure white, with black artwork on the walls. It is elegant and timeless.



White cutlery always looks classy
Says Vaishali Sinha, cutlery designer, “Striped black and white crockery looks elegant. Black and white paisley dinner plates are a superb gift anytime of the year.”

Graphic patterns — young & snappy
Graphic patterns in black and white can extend from the foyer of the house to the kitchen. It can be in the form of patterned floor and striped wallpaper, that will give monochrome panache to small spaces.

White & black accents
Squares, stripes, checkerboard, diamonds and chevron symbolise the chic and the cool. According to interior designer Celerie Kemble, a white coffee table and armchairs against white lamps and black lampshades create contrast. You can have a splash of the monochrome trend with vases, throws, cushions or blinds.

Monochrome furniture
The colour black adds a focal point that grounds, anchors and adds a sophisticated look to a room.

Black in accessories, light fixtures, paint, or in one bold piece of furniture is eye-catching and sharpens any decorating scheme. Black by itself is striking! But to get real drama and spark, pair black with white. Furniture with monochrome geometric prints always draws attention.

“BLACK IN ACCESSORIES, LIGHT FIXTURES, PAINT OR IN ONE BOLD PIECE OF FURNITURE IS EYE-CATCHY AND SHARPENS ANY DECORATING SCHEME...

Exotic rug in black & white
A monochrome rug can bring visual energy to a room by making a statement on your floor. Pair it with a simple modern white couch and other solid black or white furnishings.

“Black and white together always look very stunning. It is interesting to use both these hues in carpets or rugs for simplicity to add that extra drama and to build momentum in the whole living area,” explains Ayush Choudhary, MD of Cocoon Fine Rugs.

Black & white flooring
Flooring is a good place to start decorating with black and white. Go for beautiful black marble set off with tall white baseboard mouldings. Or try white ceramic tiles with a black border; vinyl tiles laid in alternating black and white squares, or a painted black floor with white border stencils or white with black stencils.

The black-and-white checkerboard marble floors lend a classic look and a little whimsical element. When combined with the right accents, it makes decor interesting and unexpected as it infuses some drama and glamour.

Do up the walls
Walls painted stark white or a soft, ivory white serve as a perfect backdrop for any art work, framed photographs and prints.



EFFECT The black and white colour scheme looks great with sleek metals.

The dark wood or painted black frames suit the best. Select stark black and white matting for your artwork or add a punch of colour with red, gold, or black mats. Its retro look is endearing, and yet it feels so very contemporary and sophisticated.

Monochrome bathroom
Bathrooms too can have black and white as the main colour scheme. It looks elegant with a black marble countertop and white sink. Co-ordinate it with silver vintage look or metallic accessories and fixtures. Choose towels with black ribbon or braid with subtle designs.

Monochrome theme, when it comes to decor, gives the place a very modern and an edgy feel. Black and white works well, specially if you have the contrast of a beautiful bright garden that can be seen from your windows or French patio doors.

The use of black and white in decorating gives a fresh, clean and elegant look to any room.

Useful tips to remember

- The look of black and white can range from minimalist chic to wild safari. First do your homework and decide what kind of style or impact you want – modern, rococo, minimal and plan ahead to avoid any disjointed, messy and chaotic look.
- Experts say, a black and white

themed room has a better impact if you add in a third accent colour. It could be aqua, coral, natural green or canary yellow.

- Black and white colour scheme looks stunning in combination with sleek metals. So pick up artistic metallic pieces which are both functional as well as decorative. For example, a black metal table base with glass top, black iron candlestick and light fixtures in the dining room, black iron bookends in the family room are ideal.
- If you want to have black and white theme in your bedroom, it is better to add it to the pillow shams or the wall behind the headboard. Often, such a bold scheme like black and white is not conducive to sleep, so it's best to use it on surfaces that you don't see while you're trying to sleep.
- When it comes to accessories, buy pieces that are all white or all black, rather than a mix with a black-and-white pattern. That way you can choose to mix them, or have your displays for all white items at one time and all black items at others, which gives you three different looks.

Also, when you are tired of the black and white theme, all white items will still be classy and blend with any new theme.

Optimising space

>>>Continued from Page 1

Furnishing plays a pivotal role in giving any space that perfect look. Making sure the furniture used complements the space is essential; even one piece more could make a space look overdone. “This may also take away space which can be used for things like a movable side table which is integral while entertaining people at home. This piece could be taken off when not required,” says Bhakti Hegde, Director, Chartered Housing.

Space savers

One of the best ways to optimise space at home is to look for innovative space saving solutions or products which can help you utilise vertical space of the walls or empty air space which cannot be used for anything else.

“This way you can utilise the three-dimensional space to create additional area over and above the carpet area of your house. The other important aspect is to organise things in a proper way and in their respective locations,” says Umang Srivastava, Joint Managing Director, Bonita.

Explains Ajith Karimpana, Furlenco, “Modular seating (small seat units joining to make a large seater), having as much floor space exposed as possible, folding or stackable chairs and stools, nested tables and small sized dining tables help optimise space. Traditional sliding doors like in Japan and Korea are coming back in use instead of hinged doors.”

Try to use as much of the vertical space as possible. “You can have shelves on the walls, or small wall storages. The tops of the wardrobes can be used effectively. Odd niches in your homes can be converted into vertical book racks, or shoe cabinets, or you can even create pretty little settee there,” says Subodh Mehta, Senior Vice President, Godrej Interio.

When decorating a small space, the focus should be on tricking the eye and creating an impression of vastness. “One can do this by playing with decorative dexterity. For instance, one can use floor-to-ceiling curtains and see-through furnishings to create an aura of large space.

Simple decorative elements such as wall mirrors and glass table tops can brighten your room with projected lighting, and can thus bestow your interiors with the impression of spaciousness,” says a spokesperson from Commonfloor.com.

And you can even implement ideas in the smallest space of a home – the bathroom. Says Harsh Bhutani, Executive Director, Bravat India Pvt. Ltd., “Use of wall hung cabinets creates floor space and also helps to store toiletries in a neat manner,



making the bathroom look spacious. Also, built-in bathroom storage between pillar spaces or unused areas in the bathroom can substitute for cabinets.”

Adding glass in a room makes it look larger, brighter and livelier. Glass reflects light and illuminates surfaces, thus enhancing the interiors.

Says Aditya Bhutani, COO, AIS Glassxperts, “Mirrors are one of the simplest and most attractive ways of creating illusions of space. Mirrors reflect the room and make it look bigger. Use of mirror tiles on an entire wall gives the impression that the room size is double than what it really is. Glass shelves are light and unobtrusive and ideal for interiors if space is a constraint.”

Ideas & more

Opting for furniture that is not only sleek and comfortable but also provides multiple usage is a great way to create space illusion. When it comes to small spaces, smart storage is the key. “Furniture with casters can be moved around easily to make space. A sofa-cum-bed, corner desks and bookshelves are some pieces of furniture that improve the function of small spaces. The sofas in a living room can be sofa-cum-beds,” says Umesh Rao, Founder & CEO, Vector Projects (I) Pvt. Ltd.

Using large-sized furniture will hamper



SMART CHOICES Look for innovative space solutions for your home. PHOTOS BY BONITA AND HOME ETTU

“MIRRORS ARE ONE OF THE SIMPLEST AND MOST ATTRACTIVE WAYS OF CREATING ILLUSIONS OF SPACE...

optimisation. Says Supryia Sunil, CEO, Interiors, Concorde Group, “Geometry is god. Use colours, patterns, mirrors and lighting to set good mood and personalise it. Flooring makes a room feel more intimate. Consider carpeting rather than hardwood floors or tiles. Alternately, when you lay flooring diagonally across a room, the space instantly looks bigger.”

Adds Vineeta Singhania, Director, Confluence Consultancy Services, “If your bed isn't high enough from the ground to store bins underneath, buy a bed lift to raise it to make use of that under-bed space. You can also buy bins that are constructed specifically to fit underneath beds.”

Vivek Gupta, Owner, The Big Door says, “Racks and shelves can be as tall as the ceiling permits, with the topmost shelves stocking things that are used only seasonally. Opt for foldable furniture that can be easily moved. Also, furniture should be in proportion to the space available.”

Make optimum use of space for any furniture. The two basic shapes, square and rectangle, are the best as these make the most efficient use of space available. “Rather than just a centre table, one can go for storage in the living room or the lobby. Store your items in an artistic and unique manner like a mobile bar unit that will serve for both indoor and outdoor purposes,” says Honey Jolly, Design Head, Home Ettu.

A climate change tool for us

British-based engineering services firm Arup has partnered with Argos Analytics of the United States to develop a new tool that allows building owners to assess building and urban performances based on climate conditions.

The WeatherShift application comes at a time when the world is witnessing a rise in average global temperatures due to climate change, resulting in shifts in weather patterns.

According to Arup, these climate changes will impact the energy use, water stress and the comfort of buildings and their urban environments.

To meet future challenges, Arup and Argos Analytics have developed a tool that generates future climate weather data for 50 cities based on climate simulations run for the recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Fifth Assessment. Cities and building owners can use this data to assess the impact of climate change on a particular building or location.

The tool will also be used to

minimise building owners' risk from increased operational costs, so they can make more informed investment decisions during the initial design phases of major infrastructure projects.

Additionally, designers can plan buildings that can respond to impacts of climate change and maintain their core service.

The latest version of the WeatherShift application adjusts weather data for the years 2046 to 2065 and 2081 to 2100 at user-defined points on the distributions for both the RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 emissions scenarios.

Arup associate principal Cole Roberts said the company is excited about how it can use WeatherShift to benefit projects and clients. “Designs that have had to use historic data can now be complemented by future data derived from multiple global climate models,” Roberts said.

Argos Analytics' chief technical officer, William Collins said: “This is a perfect example of how climate science pairing with practice can improve our cities and communities.”

Geetha Balachandran

A cloud computing industry park

Construction work on a cloud computing industry park in the Chinese city of Karamay, in Xinjiang province, has just started.

The modular and cost-effective design is based on the China Three Star green building system and was developed by the well-known engineering consultancy Atkins.

The eco-friendly park will be spread across an area of 50,000 sq. m and will host many software companies, modular buildings and social spaces.

The partly prefabricated modular buildings will link together and reduce exposure to high temperatures in the region.

Atkins's Shanghai architecture design director Steven Smit said the company's challenge was to design collaborative contemporary spaces to help attract a new growth industry

to the region. “The innovative ‘binary’ master plan approach enables our client to grow the park in further stages within a flexible modular system,” Smit said.

“The project highlights Atkins's leadership as a multidisciplinary consultant, able to pull in skills from architecture, landscape design and sustainability teams.”

In addition to the latest development at Karamay, Atkins helped the city by providing development consultancy services to prepare the City Diversification Strategy in 2011.

The company also provided designs for the new transport hub, central business district, motor city zone, as well as a new park, lake and bridge in Karamay city. The first phase of the cloud computing industry park is expected to be completed next year.

Achal Narayanan

