

The image shows a close-up, low-angle view of a wooden floor with a dark blue, ornate metal railing. The railing features curved lines and circular accents. In the lower right corner, a wooden staircase with light-colored treads is visible. The overall scene is well-lit, highlighting the textures of the wood and metal.

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By Design with Lisa McDonnon

Trend Spotting:
What's Next in Home Design

When you ask an interior designer, What's new? don't expect a perfunctory answer. It's our job—and our passion—to stay ahead of decorating trends. Recognizing emerging design ideas is what we live for, so our antennae are always out, ready to pick up those early signals that something fresh and inspiring is in the home-décor air. Here are four trends I'm particularly excited about for 2012 and beyond.



Lightest lavender: The Apartment suite, designed by David Collins, in The Connaught, London

Color!

Pantone just unveiled its 2012 Color of the Year, “Tangerine Tango,” a vibrant reddish-orange that, as they say, “provides the energy boost we need to recharge and move forward.” We’ve been using variations of this exuberant color in our designs for Orange County luxury homes, and having a lot of fun with it.

In general, you’ll be seeing the continued use of clear, lively colors like orange—yellows and blues are still hot, too—juxtaposed with warm neutrals. Soft, subtle grays, like Benjamin Moore’s “Horizon,” are a new favorite. But don’t be afraid to add splashes of brilliant color to your home; pillows and tabletop décor are great ways to do this, and are easily swapped out for something else if you tire of them. Think of it like getting new shoes and handbags for your home!

If you just can’t commit to strong color, you can still be on trend with quieter shades, especially whisper-



Henri Club Chair by Stuart Scott Associates; Taboret Side Table by Bugalow 5; Boka Persimmon Table Lamp by Crate & Barrel; Orange Maze Pillow from Square Feathers

soft lavender, which emerged as a trailblazer last year and continues to be hugely influential. It’s a fabulous color to paint a master suite—try Benjamin Moore’s “Lavender Mist,” add crisp white bedding, a gorgeous crystal chandelier, and voila, you have instant glamour and romance!

European Kitchens

We’re seeing a continuing trend toward sleek, ultra-modern kitchens, heavily influenced by sophisticated European tastes. Signature elements include high-gloss cabinetry, integrated appliances, elegantly simple door styles, and thicker, blocky countertops.

Alternative countertop materials are gaining popularity, with manmade surfaces like Caesarstone and Silestone making frequent appearances, while natural materials such as wood, marble, and concrete are replacing long-favored granite.

I also love the new surface treatments that are showing up on both natural and manmade



European-style kitchen from Porcelanosa



Dutch Renaissance Armoire, with door detail, by Langin Designs

countertops—leathered and pebbled textures that not only look terrific but also offer greater durability than the honed or polished finishes that have been the norm for some time. And look out for large-format porcelain tiles in interesting new textures, including some that look just like wood—you won't believe your eyes!

Local Artisans

Just as locavores want to eat organic food grown in their region, so more and more homeowners are looking for custom-made furniture and decorative objects produced by neighborhood artisans. It's a way of acquiring unique pieces, little treasures that are not only beautiful to look at and use, but that also contribute to the local economy, increase the sense of community, and help with sustainability.

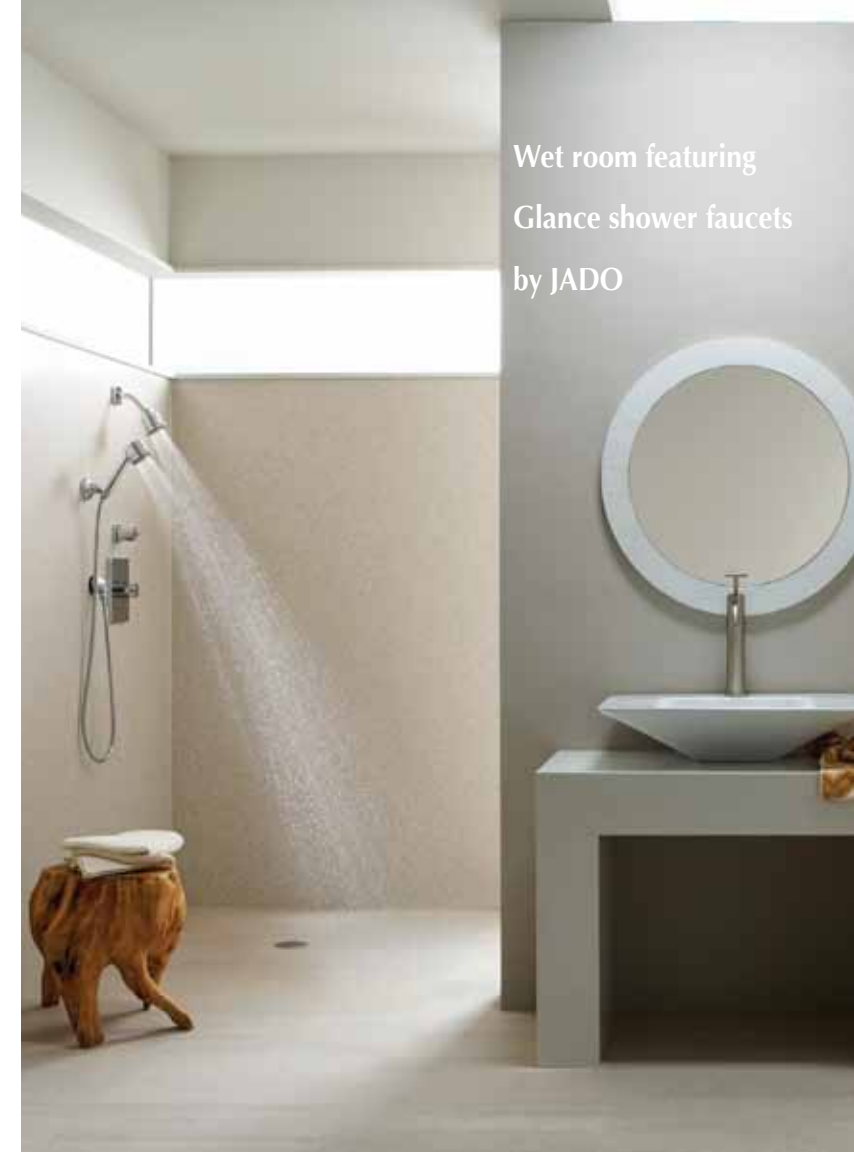
Orange County is full of talented craftspeople. Some of my personal favorites include: French-born Francois Langin, whose Santa Ana-based firm, Langin Designs, Inc., produces exquisite custom furniture and

interior-fitted cabinetry; Del Mar Lighting, which has a showroom in Tustin and creates imaginatively designed and superbly crafted light fixtures for residential and commercial projects; and Tony Clark of CLARK Functional Art in Costa Mesa, who designs and builds one-of-a-kind works of art including slab tables, tree trunk tables, and Nakashima inspired tables that are just breathtaking.

Bathroom Trends

I'm wild about the increasing use of wet rooms—bathrooms in which the traditional shower stall has been removed (sometimes along with the tub), and a large part of the space turned into a wall-to-wall shower area. A fabulous way to de-clutter a big bathroom, it's also a brilliant strategy for making efficient use of a smaller one, whose limited dimensions will seem to expand magically. And if you install wall-mounted toilets, sinks, and cabinets, cleaning becomes easier, too!

If space isn't a problem, you can indulge in another contemporary bathroom trend I love: the stand-alone



Wet room featuring
Glance shower faucets
by JADO

bathub. Is there a more glamorous feeling than soaking in beautifully shaped freestanding tub, like the white Carrara Duo bathtub by Neutra? Apart from its great looks, it provides you with the ultimate modern luxury: an expansive sense of time, space, and quiet relaxation. And that's worth its weight in marble! ■

With degrees in both fine art and interior design, Lisa Rachelle McDennon opened her own full-service interior design firm in Laguna Beach 11 years ago. Specializing in high-end residential and commercial projects, she has won numerous awards and has been featured in many publications, including being named one of House Beautiful's "New Designers to Watch."

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Duo bathtub by
Matteo Thun
for Neutra