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A sleek style that says it all

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If there is one trend professionals are noticing about the way today's discerning home owners are designing and decorating their homes, it's that there is no trend. Many of today's savvy and sophisticated home owners are using their homes—from the exterior architecture to the interior decor—to make their own unique statements.

"I don't see a trend in decorative style overall," says Ronni Grossman, spokesman for Certified Kitchens of Edison. "People come to us with a wish list and we make it happen." For JoAnn Werdann, co-owner of Simply Elegant Interiors in Nutley, making a client's distinctive style a reality is her priority.

"In our shop, we like to make our first appointment with our client just a free consultation. We like to go to their home, discuss likes, dislikes and feelings they want the room to exude. It provides true insight to them and enables us to put their stamp on the design and not ours." In putting their unique stamp on their home, owners have several choices. For some, personalizing a new home means adding to it. Choices include entertainment technologies, custom designed bars or pool tables.

Pool Town of Howell helps add some recreation, fun and relaxation to the atmosphere with their professionally crafted and installed swimming pools and spas.



Photo courtesy of BCM Home Staging

Many updates to homes involve turning the kitchen into an extension of the family room.

Others may prefer a more open feel to their home, reducing items to make a statement.

"Today's buyers do not want a home that looks like it belongs to their parents or grandparents. They are looking for a clean, clear and bright home," says Barbara Cluck-Miksits, owner of BCM Home Staging, whose 25-year background in art, decorating and party planning allows her to bring to life a client's needs to stage a home for sale.

Many of the sophisticated clientele that she meets are not cluttering their homes with a lot of little trinkets. Instead, "they are minimizing the amount of furniture and accessories in rooms, bringing fewer but higher-priced items to make a statement." Other home owners are making upgrades to older homes to reflect changes in their lifestyle.

"It's gone beyond what do I need, to what do I want. There's a feeling that this is where I'm going to be; I might as well make it beautiful and enjoy my home," says Grossman. Many updates

to homes are turning the kitchen into an extension of the family room, she notes. "Kitchens are the heart of the homes, so home owners are not skimping to make this area beautiful." Additional seating, islands, wine captains, warming drawers, and more sophisticated, decorative lighting provide a welcoming space that integrates with the other areas of the home.

"I find the baby boomers are really driving this trend of fun in the kitchen. There's no skimping on detail. They're using higher-end appliance paneling and furniture detailing to incorporate visually with the rest of the house," says Grossman. People, Grossman also notes, are being a lot bolder with their decorative choices, something other professionals have noticed and incorporated into their services, as well.

"People's houses have not only become their castle, it represents who they are and they are spending more time there. Our desire is that every time they're in the room, they're glad they've gone through the process," says Werdann.