

Decorating your new home

By James Harris

How should I decorate my home? What is currently in fashion? These are the questions one asks when moving into a new home or building the house of one's dreams.

In Israel, many people find answers to these questions by following trends in the US or Europe or by reading interior design magazines. However, these trends are expensive and sometimes not very practical.

"A well-designed house has to look fashionable and chic, but it also has to be practical and comfortable," says Oron Milstein, proprietor of Studio Oron, a firm that specializes in interior design. "In Israel, many of the apartments are relatively small. I have been contracted by many clients who want their apartments to be more spacious. They are middle-aged couples whose children have flown the parental nest, so they require fewer rooms. The same holds true for those who bought an apartment that is too cramped for their liking."

There is no way that a 60-square meter apartment can be turned into a 70-sq. m. apartment, but a lot can be done to make it look and feel more spacious.

"A four-room apartment can be converted

into a three-room apartment," says Milstein. "Hallways and corridors can be dispensed with. Cupboards can be built into the walls, etc. The main thing is to create large spaces. Make the whole apartment as airy and as bright as possible, thereby creating spaciousness and clean lines."

A home should be practical and comfortable, and that means adapting one's home to the local climatic conditions. In the cold Nordic countries, large windows that let the sun in are practical. In a warm country such as Israel, large windows are less practical unless one wants to pay the expense of air-conditioning.

The same holds true for interior decoration such as furniture, curtains and carpets.

Milstein says, "There is one thing that every person designing a home in Israel should bear in mind. We are a Middle Eastern country that is hot and humid, with strong penetrating sunlight. I am happy to say that for the past few years design-wise, many home owners, especially those living in expensive single-family homes, are incorporating traditional local building practices, such as painted floor tiles and extensive use of local stones. These are the most practical and best suited to the local climate in the densely inhabited coastal areas."

The wooden floors and heavy furniture associated with northern Europe, where many of Israel's inhabitants come from, were very fashionable in the past. While they were well suited to the cold climate and plentiful supply of timber in Europe, they are not suitable for the Israeli climate.

One example is sofas and armchairs. In the recent past, leather sofas and armchairs were very popular here. Today, cloth is king. Fabric is much more practical and more suitable to our climate than leather.

Interior décor is also influenced by the size of the homes in this country. Many local apartments are not large. Thus clean lines are very fashionable because they provide a sense of space. These lines are combined with splashes of color and decorative items that neutralize the sterile effects of the lines, thus creating a more spacious atmosphere.

Clean lines and light colors are especially popular in kitchens and bathrooms. In kitchens, the monotony of the clean lines and light colors is broken by trimmings of natural wood. In bathrooms, the white ceramic walls are accented by vividly colored marble or small ceramic tiles.

Tel Aviv's prestigious standard has arrived in Beit Shemesh

Accepted standards of building in Tel Aviv's prestigious projects are now available in Beit Shemesh. Zemach Hammerman has begun construction of Nofia. The project includes five 15 floor towers comprising 350 living units. The project's residents will enjoy a private park, playgrounds, and accessibility to the Jerusalem -Tel Aviv highway, as well as to the train station right next to the project.

In close proximity to the project, Zemach Hammerman will construct a shopping and entertainment center to serve

residents of the complex as well as residents of the city.

According to Ran Ben Avraham, VP of Marketing at Zemach Hammerman "This is a modern and diverse project that will attract younger and older couples from the greater Beit Shemesh area. One of Nofia's main advantages is that it is situated at the entrance to Beit Shemesh, isolated from other neighborhoods and residents will enjoy public services aimed first and foremost for residents of the complex.

