

GETTING PERSONAL

A new take on the trends of 2024.

BY DANIELLE POPE

On the precipice of the new year, there's the usual fervour around what textures and styles will be in vogue for home design in 2024, and what Pantone will announce as its colour of the year. Victoria's designers, however, are seeing something a little different.

This year's most prominent trends — especially on the Island — might seem more like ways of becoming. *Spruce* spoke to two design experts for a little clarity on the matter, and what people can anticipate for the year ahead.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU'D EXPECT

"Trends are interesting because they are the lifeblood of this industry — and they are also incredibly optimistic. People trying to forecast trends want to build things anew, which is beautiful," says Ann Squires Ferguson, CEO of Western Design+Build. "But it's also terrifying. When we look through history, we know we had trends like stirrup pants and leg warmers, or the post-modern era, and we might say, 'What were we thinking?'"

Squires Ferguson has her list of usual suspects. She's armed with research she and her team have done around what's coming from Europe and New York. (Hint: it's maximalism, big textures and lots of wood.) Instead of starting there, though, she says she's seen something more emergent right here on the Island, and she's not the only one: deep personalization.

"People tell me about things they'd love for their home, but they stop and say, 'Ann, what do you think, though — is it in style?' I tell them: If you love it, it works."

It might sound cheesy, but Squires Ferguson makes her case.

"A lot of trend articles feel like shopping lists to me. You get the large-scale wallpaper, the parquet floors. There's so much specificity to it," she says. "But with conceptual design, we try to do something else. It's not about what's in style — it's about how we want to feel in a space. Then, we talk about what it will take to get there."

For this cookie-cutter breakaway, the weirder, the better.

To get clients in the zone, Squires Ferguson asks them to imagine their space as a character. One client got so into the activity, she said her home's name was Goodrun, who braids garlic and onions and leaves them to dry in the foyer.

"You just know that home, don't you?" says Squires Ferguson. "How it feels — that's the trend we're after — and it's entirely unique to a space."

Geneva Johnson, who named her home after the "good run" it's had and its general spirit, is working with Western. She says when she stopped trying to force the space into what she thought it should be, everything changed.

"I let it fully become itself. It's a craftsman home, not mid-century or modern, and when we figured out what the home needed it really came to life," says Johnson. "Now, I can't help

but hear Goodrun, and the bold choices she would make."

WORKING FOR COMFORT

One European theme is slowly catching up here in Victoria: an increase in comfort.

"There is such a movement for comfort right now, and we're really seeing that in design," says Iván Meade, principal and founder of Meade Design Group. "We're living in a world that is desperate for peace, so we're seeing anything that creates a cocoon. We want to be in a world that is not so structured and sharp, so we're seeing a softness; softer shapes, and a new interpretation of what West Coast design even means."

Meade has seen furniture that emphasizes gentler, rounded shapes, and textures that build softness into a space, like contemporary macramé. He's even seeing a renewed use of marble and limestone, which was traditionally seen as a dangerously soft material.

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