

Jane Lockhart is a designer with a flair for colour

Jane Lockhart, TV host and interior designer, knows colour trends and how to decorate large homes.



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Designer and TV host [Jane Lockhart](#) talks style, colour, trends and how to decorate big model homes. She recently designed the 6,500-square-foot model at [Kylemore](#)'s Glen Angus community in Markham.

Toronto Star: How does one design a model so that regular people can relate?

Jane Lockhart: Every home should have an inspirational quality to it, but it also has to be realistic. You want some polish, especially in the kitchen and bath, but your home must allow you to interact with others in a way that enhances relationships.

The materials you use are important. Mirrored pieces and all silk drapes, for example, can be high maintenance and a little stiff. You can still get that bit of glitter and shine with an easy-care poly-blend drape, or crystal vases and wall-hung mirrors. French country was the style guide in this model home because it combines the elegance of French style with the casualness of country.

TS: This model is large at 6,500 square feet. What are the unique challenges designing a big home?

JL: Large homes have their own unique challenges, the main one being scale. One thing I've found with the Kylemore homes is the well-thought-out architecture and interior layouts with hallways that lead you through in logical ways, and second doorways at the rear (go to [kylemorecommunities.com](#) for more info).

Next to consider is the furniture's scale and proportion — a large home like this with high ceilings needs furniture with substance. If you're moving to a larger home, by all means bring what you have to try in different rooms. At the very least, it's a good "placeholder" for getting a feel for the space while you decide on what to purchase. On that score, don't buy everything at once; go quality rather than quantity and building over time garners a collected, real look.

Sit in it to make sure it's comfortable. Go for details — your large home can handle them. It's OK to do some “infill” shopping. [HomeSense](#) or secondhand stores like [Around the Block](#) or the [Elegant Garage Sale](#) are places you can find inexpensive, but quirky personality items, such as the collection of plates we arranged on the dining room wall. And raid your personal photography; travel photos or family photos, if they're artistic, are wonderful enlarged and framed.

TS: As the host of *Colour Confidential*, among other TV shows, you're known for your colour savvy. But this house isn't screaming out colour. Why is that?

JL: It's all colour; subtle neutrals as well as vivid hues. In this house, we took a serious approach to colour with a darker, richer palette and a few spots of bright colour. The family room has some brighter colours in denim chairs, yellow cushions and a pale yellow oriental carpet, but the overall feel is neutral. And the dining room is a deep charcoal grey, a colour you won't get tired of as you can with a more flamboyant shade. If you crave a riot of colour, satisfy the urge in a smaller space, like a powder room.

Bottom line is, a house should have a supporting role to you and your lifestyle, not take centre stage.

TS: What trends are you seeing now?

JL: Definitely more colour on furniture — dare I say lacquer? Citrus and coral held sway the last few years but are giving way to deeper jewel tones, like emerald. Walls, by contrast, are going paler, lighter.

Details such as crown moulding, bigger baseboards and larger casings are the finishing touches that really help a large house with scale and proportion. If you're buying a new home, those are good upgrades to invest in.

Flat cabinet doors in high-gloss or wood veneer for kitchens in all price points are easy to clean. And more livable textures: in flooring there's a swing back to lighter woods, especially mid-brown for more traditional interiors and pale, even blond in contemporary interiors. Wide planks are great for creating a casual, livable interior, and the weathered-look camouflages dirt and are durable.

Tiles have gone to extremes; huge 18-inch by 36-inch tiles with no pattern or texture; and tiny, baby tiles like glass mosaic installed in sheets. Look, too, for incredibly real looking wood or coloured wood tiles. Really durable for basements. And porcelain is holding sway over stone.

Volume, by increased ceiling heights, creates the feeling of more spacious rooms, eliminating the need for greater footprints. Ten-foot ceilings are becoming standard.

TS: Define style.

JL: Details. Like when everything has been thought through and your pictures and accessories work together with the main furnishings. More importantly, style is the concrete expression of who you are and how you function. If it's a natural extension of you, it won't have that “designed” feel.

TS: What makes a great home?

JL: Something that totally suits you and your family. I find a blend of casual and formal works best for most people; a place to dress up and have a grown-up dinner party, but also a place to play Scrabble with your kids. It requires great bones, dressed up with details and a little polish. You need a place to retreat,

especially if your job is demanding, like a den, a bedroom, or a spa bath. And you need a place to gather together — family room, kitchen, even the front porch.

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