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From: Personal Marketing Company <info@tpmco.com>
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To: Brenda Odenbaugh <brenda@kandorealty.com>
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Brought to you by

Jill C. Kline & Brenda K. Odenbaugh



Owners
 Jill: 970-388-2926
jill@kandorealty.com
 Brenda: 970-381-1169
brenda@kandorealty.com
www.kandorealty.com

K & O
REALTY, LLC

K & O REALTY, LLC
 P.O. Box 1103
 607 Main St
 Platteville, CO 80651

HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Design Trends in 2021

Even as a new year begins, interior design continues to be influenced by the events and emotions of 2020. After spending lots of extra time at home, many people are longing for a space that's both calming and inspirational. Here are four design trends to look for in 2021.

Natural elements – The pandemic caused people to crave more time outdoors, which amplified the already-trending style of bringing elements from nature inside. Look for natural wood or stone accents, live or dried plants, and artwork featuring flowers, trees and foliage.

Rich colors – As people stared at the walls of their homes this past year, many desired to add warmth to bare spaces. Color palettes in 2021 seek to soothe – look for rich, earthy hues, such as bronze, deep navy and muted green paired with darker-tinted neutrals.

Textured walls – Materials such as stone, wood beams or wall paneling, and fabric upholstery add a tactile dimension to walls. For a less expensive update, faux texture created by marbled wallpaper also adds interest to any room of your house.

Colorful kitchens – The reign of all-white kitchens may be nearing its end. Look for more kitchens with light wood accents or cabinets

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painted in two different tones. Mixed metal fixtures and hardware add further personalization to the design.



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Clean Like You Mean It

Spending more time at home during the winter months can lead to dirt and clutter accumulating quickly. Use these deep cleaning tips to help you get rid of the grime and germs.

- **Make a schedule.** You can tackle one room at a time or knock out your whole house in a day. Whatever you decide, plan a time on your calendar to get it done.
- **Start high.** When cleaning any room of your house, move from top to bottom. For example, dust ceiling fans before vacuuming furniture so you don't have to clean the same surface twice.
- **Vacuum surfaces.** In every room, use the hose and brush attachment to vacuum up dust, dirt and crumbs first. This will make it easier to wipe down and disinfect surfaces.
- **Disinfect vs. clean.** To truly kill bacteria on a surface, you must use a cleaner specifically labeled as a disinfectant. Let the solution sit for 10 minutes before wiping dry.

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Create a Video Call Space

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, home listings usually highlighted features like spacious kitchens and deluxe en suite bathrooms. However, with the rise of remote work, a new point of interest is gaining traction: a room to Zoom.

Not to be confused with ultra high-tech "Zoom Rooms," most homeowners are simply looking for a room or area of the house that has a visually appealing backdrop as well as adequate privacy for video conferences. Having an area that is constantly staged for video calls can be helpful for your own use as well as a future selling point. Here are four essentials to set up your space.

1. **Internet** – Position the wireless router close by to ensure a strong, consistent internet connection.

2. **Lighting** – Ideally, choose an area facing a window for natural light, or set up lamps on either side of your camera.
3. **Background** – Create an aesthetically pleasing backdrop for the camera. Live plants, a minimally decorated bookshelf, wall hangings, or muted artwork are good options.
4. **Privacy** – When a separate room isn't an option, use a privacy screen to create a quiet nook in the corner of a larger living space.

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Tankless Water Heaters: Pros & Cons

Pros

- **Energy efficiency** – Tankless water heaters tend to be more efficient, because the hot water can't cool like it can in a storage tank.
- **Long-term savings** – These systems don't have to be replaced as often as traditional water heaters, and they will save you money on energy costs over time.
- **No leaks** – Since there is no storage tank, you won't have to worry about damage from water leaks as the unit ages.

Cons

- **Limited flow rate** – A single unit may not be able to keep up with several appliances using hot water simultaneously.
- **High initial cost** – A tankless heater can cost up to three times more than a traditional unit, so plan to pay significantly more up front.
- **Complicated installation** – A professional may need to update your home's existing electrical wiring as well as water or gas pipes before installation.

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Italian Wedding Soup

Ingredients

For meatballs:

¼ cup breadcrumbs
 1 Tbsp. Italian seasoning
 1 tsp. salt
 ½ tsp. pepper
 1 egg
 1 lb. ground chicken

For soup:

2 Tbsp. avocado oil, divided
 1 cup chopped carrots
 1 cup chopped celery
 1 yellow onion, chopped
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 9 cups chicken broth
 ¾ cup acini di pepe pasta
 3 cups baby spinach
 ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Directions

Add meatball ingredients to a large bowl and mix until just combined. Shape into 1-inch balls. Heat 1 Tbsp. of oil in a skillet over medium. Sear meatballs in batches for 1-2 minutes until browned on all sides. Set aside on a plate.

Heat remaining oil in a pot over medium-high. Cook carrots, celery and onion for 4-5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 more minute.

Pour in chicken broth and bring to a boil. Add pasta and boil 4 minutes. Add meatballs and boil 5 more minutes. Stir in spinach and serve with Parmesan cheese.

Serves 6-8

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The Personal Marketing Company
 11511 W. 83rd Terrace
 Lenexa, KS 66214