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## HOME MATTERS

## SPECIAL

## A fine balance

Whether it is your home office or private residence, space planning is key to being creative yet cost-effective



A creative design tip is to use an item of furniture as a talking piece and add accent items such as rugs, lamps and photo frames to stage the living area. PHOTO: CELLINI DESIGN CENTER

Neutral tones like white and grey can create a timeless look. PHOTO: HUE D

## AUDRINA GAN

AS FLEXIBLE working hours, freelance work and start-ups continue to shape the working landscape in Singapore, working from home is increasingly becoming a viable option rather than a luxury.

For your home office, you deserve more than a metal desk and extra chair stuffed into a spare corner.

After all, it is where you will be devoting considerable time and energy. An office that reflects the design and comfort of the rest of your home

is a place where you will be happy to work.

According to Mr Paul Keng, managing director of The Furniture Mall, it is important to determine the number of working devices a home office space requires.

"These may include computers, printers and file storage area, which in turn, will define the approximate personal work area," says Mr Keng.

Mr Vincent Goi, director of interior design and architecture consultancy firm Hue D, advocates having separate work and private

resting zones.

"Try not to contain the two zones into one area. If space does not permit, get a sofa bed so that the bed can be out of sight during working time," says Mr Goi, adding that having a bright airy workspace that opens to the external environment can improve vitality at work.

Mr Philip Ong, senior designer at Cellini Design Center, cautions home owners against over-relying on references from magazines or the Internet when designing their home office.

"Unless you are experienced enough to know the materials and construction methods and solutions, it is difficult to be creative and cost-effective at the same time by drawing solely on these references," says Mr Ong, adding that space planning and finding the right furniture is key to being productive and functional.

At the same time, Mr Keng says owners should also select a preferred theme, starting with colour for the home office area.

"Any colour of furniture and furnishing pieces will fit in well against

neutral-coloured backgrounds," he adds.

Mr Keng suggests that owners adopt the minimalist Zen style to create a sleek and composed environment, which in turn fosters positivity and motivation and "can make the home office look spacious even for smaller spaces".

The industrial chic style is equally ideal.

"It captures your signature style with lots of natural hues. You can also use rustic finishings



PHOTO: NOBEL DESIGN HOLDINGS



in metallic steel and even recycled pieces to add cutting-edge sophistication," he says.

### Customise your dream home

When designing a house, it is important to rethink what residential spaces truly mean to the individual or family.

"Owners need to be more aware of intrinsic qualities of what a home means to oneself.

"Once this is clear, only the essentials need to be done up and the spaces can be used for a long time. This helps in cost-savings and originality," says Mr Goi.

Mr Ong cautions against following a particular design style too rigidly as they go out of fashion.

"Over-emphasizing (a particular style) will make the interior look tired after a period of time. Keep the walls and colours neutral as it allows the interior to be flexible in adapting new styles," adds Mr Ong.

Even on a neutral palate, you can still let your individuality shine through the use of colours.

"Neutral tones such as grey and white create a timeless look for homes.

"Maintain your individuality by having some elements of the house to be in your favourite colour.

"For instance, small pastel yellow

tiles can be added to a kitchen with a grey colour scheme to add a punch of liveliness.

"Add pale blue elements such as side tables or wardrobes to a bedroom with a white colour scheme, and a touch of mint colour to a monochrome design to create a fresh and

clean look," says Ms Jean Wee, chief operating officer of Nobel Design Holdings.

To design their homes in a creative way, owners can use an item of furniture as a talking piece and use accent items such as rugs, lamps and photo frames to stage the living

area, says Mr Ong.

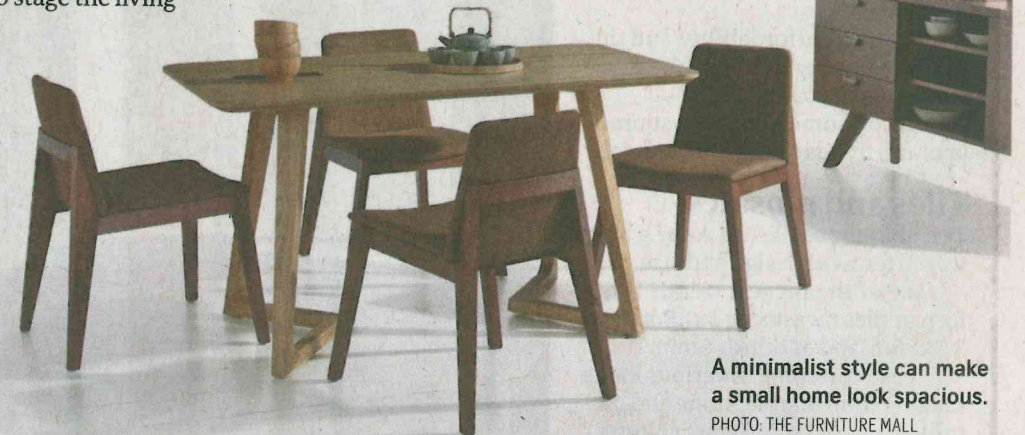
"They can also create good ambience lighting to enhance the furniture and set the mood right," he adds.

For a magical atmosphere, get a lamp that harmonises both light and music. The Yamaha Relit LSX-70

lighting audio system is a table lamp that doubles as a Bluetooth speaker, so it can play your favourite tunes while tastefully lighting up your living room, bedroom or balcony.



Light up your world with music with the Yamaha Relit LSX-70 table lamp that doubles as a Bluetooth speaker. PHOTO: YAMAHA



A minimalist style can make a small home look spacious. PHOTO: THE FURNITURE MALL



Express your individuality through the use of colours. PHOTO: TT INTERNATIONAL

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