

Special Focus: TRENDS & TRENDMAKERS

Vivid color, attention-grabbing texture and fearless individuality are a few of the hot new developments in home architecture and interiors. New England's design experts give us preview of these trends—and a whole lot more. **By Regina Cole**

Architects, interior designers and showroom owners can tell us what sorts of changes to expect in the world of design because they create the trends that shape the industry. Since change is life's one given, we pay special attention to these trendmakers; they not only know what we can expect to see in the future, they can also tell us why.

We chatted with some of New England's best industry professionals to get a sneak peek at what's ahead. They see a complex landscape in which increasingly sophisticated homeowners are eager to incorporate trends from the worlds of science and art, as well as design, into their daily lives, but to do so in entirely individual ways.

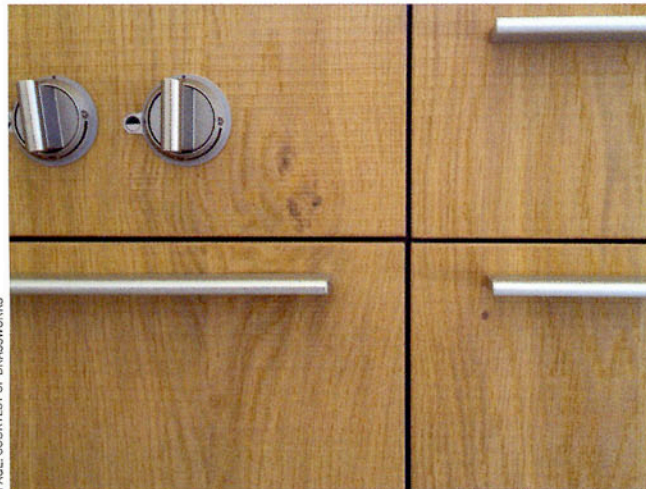
BRADFORD WALKER of Boston's Ruhl Walker Architects sees a new interest in texture that goes hand in hand with today's strong environmental consciousness. "People are looking for reclaimed wood, wire-scraped oak, chunky and coarse textiles," he says. "They are moving away from the look of surfaces embalmed in smooth polyurethane."

As another example of the move away from smooth and toward the textural, he notes, "My clients are trying hard to not do granite countertops. They choose quartz or Durastone instead."

Walker believes that New England's historic ambivalence about new architectural forms is over. "Many younger people who have money from high-tech or medical technology industries embrace contemporary styling; for the first time, we see as much interest in modernism as we do in traditional design," he says.



Architect Bradford Walker says contemporary styles are holding their own in formerly traditional New England, as in this Massachusetts riverfront home he recently designed.



TOP: BRADFORD WALKER; BOTTOM: COURTESY OF CARTER DAYTON HOME, OPPOSITE PAGE, COURTESY OF BRASSWORKS