

2017 trends in SA property and design

Tony Clarke, MD of the Rawson Property Group, shares his list of the top five property trends and features that are likely to make their mark on SA's local scene this year.



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1. Waterwise features

Saving water in the face of climate change has become a global trend, but here in South Africa, we know better than many how essential waterwise features can be. Boreholes and wellpoints have always been popular with local homeowners, but recent droughts have brought additional systems like greywater recycling and rainwater harvesting into the spotlight as well.

“Homes with non-potable water sources are becoming extremely sought-after,” says Clarke, “and I think many new and existing homeowners are going to be installing water harvesting or recycling systems this year. This will certainly make life easier for them if rains don’t return to normal, but it will also make their properties more desirable and enhance their resale value in the long term.”

Fibre to the home

Fibre internet connections may be old news in many countries, but here in SA we’re still rolling out this technological upgrade, street by street. 2017 should see many new “fibrehoods” added to the map, becoming a must-have for property owners wanting to keep up with the Jones’.

“Connectivity is already vital,” says Clarke, “and it’s only going to become more so as time goes by. Just look at the sky-rocketing popularity of streaming television and movies. The whole world is going online, and nobody wants to be left behind with a snail-paced connection.”

Clean lines

Modern architecture has long focused on clean, sophisticated and fuss-free layouts, and South African residential design looks set to continue in this simple, structured, vein in 2017.

“As space becomes more and more of a luxury in our cities, architects and designers need to make good use of what they

have,” says Clarke. “Intelligent design that connects indoor and outdoor spaces and draws the eye without overwhelming the senses is going to be important this year.”

Down-to-earth colours and materials

While neutrals will always have their place in homes, this year will see cool greys and crisp whites warming to taupes and off-white tones. Airy pastels will also give way to more intense jewel colours, offsetting the rustic earthiness of materials like terracotta, brick, cork and brushed or matt metals.

“People are moving away from overt opulence in favour of a subtler sophistication that creates a sense of luxury through innovation and thoughtful use of quality materials,” says Clark. “This aesthetic works just as well in our wild, African landscapes as it does in our inner cities, and is going to be evident in a lot of new builds and renovations in 2017.”

Eco-conscious design

Green design, as a buzzword, has lost a bit of its shine of late, but Clarke believes the eco-friendly concepts behind it will still be very evident in residential properties this year.

“Solar geysers and solar PV systems are gaining popularity in South Africa,” he says, “and solar PV technology will likely become even more prevalent in residential areas as power storage solutions advance.”

In addition to power generation, Clarke predicts increasing demand for energy-efficient design in 2017 as well, and expects features like double glazing to become far more commonplace.

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