

A dining EVOLUTION

Kelebogile Nondzaba gets a taste from the experts of how the dining room has changed over the years



In this feature we look at how dining rooms have evolved from being about sharing a meal with close friends and family to being a multifunctional space, thanks to our new open-plan way of living. According to KARE's marketing manager Johann de Waal, dining rooms have become more than just a place to enjoy meals. They're now also an entertainment area for guests, workstations and homework and creative hubs. People want every inch of their homes to be lived in; they're no longer just show pieces.

According to Audi Snyman of Audi Snyman Interior Design: "Our lifestyles, ways of living and the desire for more interaction have seen a move from a separate, closed-off dining room to an open-plan area that flows

from the kitchen. Dining rooms are no longer fancy, seldom-used trophy rooms that we are overprotective of. Instead, our dining spaces have become more spacious, accommodating and inviting more guests to move freely and easily around the table. The social and shared aspect of food preparation has become important, and it's no longer the host's job to prepare food in solitude in the kitchen. In fact, often the meal preparation time is a highlight of the get-together and has become an interactive experience everyone can share in. Our gatherings have also grown larger, and often require the utilisation of the kitchen countertop or island as a serving area, or the breakfast nook as additional seating space for the kids."

Belinda Gordon, buying manager for Woolworths, concurs: "Dining rooms have shifted into a far more relaxed form of entertaining. Due to rushed and busy lifestyles, the home has become the main place of sanctuary. Not all people want their big chunky ancestral dining furniture, but they want the dining experience. They still love to eat together, throw dinner parties, enjoy good food, but want to experience it in a more casual style."

MUST-HAVE DINING ROOM ACCESSORIES

Sheri Howes, visual merchandise manager at Carrol Boyes, says: "Statement condiment holders, such as Oil & Vinegar Set – Hold Fast, create visual interest >



"People want every inch of their homes to be lived in; they're no longer just show pieces." - KARE

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Woolworths



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and definitely add a unique element of conversation when dining in a social setting."

De Waal suggests creating funky place settings and adding a personal touch such as mismatched crockery and table décor.

An absolute must-have, according to Snijman, is a sturdy tabletop that can take the hammering of some hearty socialising over a delicious meal, and of course comfortable dining chairs that invite folks to linger. "A large rug underneath your statement piece adds a softer and cosier appeal to the space. The distraction of cold feet or a sore back at a dinner table is an absolute no-no."

Beautiful serveware items that can be used for both everyday dining and for special occasions are what Gordon suggests. "We are living in an era where we have become a lot more health-conscious. Pieces become more and more multifunctional. >

Le Creuset



Carroll Boyes



“Dining rooms are no longer fancy, seldom-used trophy rooms that we are overprotective of.” – Audi Snýman Interior Design

Salads are not just seen as a side, but a main meal, therefore bigger bowls are used for salads and pasta dishes. There is less of a demand for side plates,” she adds.

DINING ROOM FURNITURE TRENDS

Snýman’s must-have trend accessory is a tabletop with textured timber, an oak finish or glass top for a modern look, she says. “There is definitely a move away from dark colours, and my personal preference is to not use a stone top inside the house (although they are perfect for outside), where your dining table should be warm, cosy and inviting. These days, with comfort and the invitation to linger in mind, our dining chairs comprise softer upholstery and lower backs, which also have the benefit of offering an unobstructed view across the table, when it is unoccupied.”

De Waal concurs: “Comfortable dining chairs, benches replacing traditional seating arrangements, chairs upholstered in bright colours, florals, velvet and jewellery colours. Tables and chairs that don’t ‘match’, lending a more personalised vibe to the dining space.”

DÉCOR ACCESSORIES AND PRODUCTS

Snýman says proper lighting is key. “Your dining room should be designed to allow good natural lighting in during the day. A light that can be dimmed (in the form of a pendant light, beautiful chandelier or a statement lighting fixture) will create a soft, even romantic atmosphere after the sun goes down. Windows can be dressed in a minimalist look, and softened with curtains and/or blinds. Some art that reflects your character or has a personal story can be displayed on the table or on the walls – you can even incorporate some feature wallpaper into one side of the room. A current trend is to move closer to nature by softening your spaces with environmental tones and



textures. This can be complemented by a selection of natural and warm colours. However if you’re feeling bolder your chairs can be mismatched, colourful, or quirky in their comfort. And of course you can dress your table for the occasion – either with just placemats, or go the full nine yards with a crisp table cloth and serviettes, fine crockery, cutlery and candles.”

Gordon suggests adding plants to the space to keep the room feeling fresh and inviting. The use of faux plants comes in handy to achieve this look. “Storage units and sideboards ... with many people working from home and using dining tables as their office, having storage is key when you need to switch back to an entertainer’s dining room.”

De Waal agrees that “adding plants, non-traditional and funky lighting such as pendant lights above the dining table, floor and table lamps and bold pieces of art are the way to go”. Keeping the space multi-purpose and friendly is important, says Gordon. “Stackable items (glasses, mugs and bowls) are a big trend due to more and more space limitations in your kitchen/dining environment. Shelving



Rococo-Style Gilded Bevelled Mirror

The Crown Collection



The Crown Collection

Pair of Basket Chandeliers

Gilded Eagle Circular Mirror



The Crown Collection

Pair of Rectangular Gilded Console Tables

Gilded French-Style Display Cabinet

units and sideboards are becoming multifunctional pieces – storage, display units and bars. Durable, practical pieces such as glass or concrete tabletops, metal bases, sturdy but beautiful chairs and benches.”

With thanks to Audi Snýman Interior Design, Carrol Boyes, KARE, Le Creuset, The Crown Collection and Woolworths



Woolworths



Le Creuset

LE CREUSET’S DINNERWARE COLLECTION:

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- Resistant to staining and will not absorb flavours or odours.
- High-quality exterior enamel protects against marks and scratches.
- Glazed interior easily releases foods for quick clean up.
- Backed by a 10-year guarantee.