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# The Seven Deadly Sins

What to consider when buying property in Hong Kong



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# Sustainable Style

*Interior designers provide tips on being both eco-friendly and stylish*

| Text : Leena Budhrani | Photo : [www.thinkstockphotos.com](http://www.thinkstockphotos.com) |

Interior design is all about creating a space that is practical and pleasing to the eye. In order to carry this out effectively, an interior designer is required to source the best material and fixtures for the space. In doing so, we often have an impact on the environment, albeit inadvertently.

Monique McLintock of Monique MacLintock Interiors dispels some myths, "In the past, I thought eco-friendly design meant I had to use reclaimed wood and old doors. However my mindset has shifted over the years as I have learnt that shipping these items to Hong Kong results in a greater carbon footprint. While reclaimed wood is stunning and a pure delight to touch, the majority of eco-friendly products are the less sexy items and involve reducing electricity and water usage. Some of the most popular features my clients are asking for these

days are under-floor heating, heated towel rails, double-glazed windows and ceiling fans."

Under-floor heating in the bathroom has increased in popularity. These systems require much lower temperatures to heat a room so they are extremely energy efficient as compared to using a heater. For budgeting purposes, the price is around HK\$1,000 to HK\$1,200 per square metre, which includes installation. That buys you the amazing sensation of warmth below your feet on a cold winter morning.

Heated towel rails not only add a touch of class and luxury to your bathroom. They also cut the amount of towels you go through by reducing mildew and dampness, at a cost of around HK\$4,000. With Hong Kong's hot weather, air conditioners are often turned on day and night. Double-glazed windows are becoming almost

the standard, says McLintock, as more people are becoming energy conscious. They are a great way to keep the summer heat out and prevent your house from becoming an oven. In the winter, they also help keep the heat inside.

Ceiling fans are also a great alternative to air conditioners that only use a fraction of the power. They are also relatively inexpensive at around HK\$1,500. In the hot summer months, these fans are simply not enough. However you can use them in conjunction with air conditioners to help circulate the cold air.

Although there is an assumption that you need to source reclaimed materials and recycled fabrics to be considered green, this is not true according to Nathalie Edwards of Life Styling Ltd. "The most common and effective way to change the look and feel of a space is to change



## WHO ARE THEY?

Monique McLintock of Monique MacLintock Interiors  
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Nathalie Edwards of Life Styling Ltd  
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Candace Campos of Candace Collective  
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the wall colour," she says. Today there are brands that offer eco-friendly paints. ICI Paints' revolutionary new Deluxe Lifemaster paint is one of the safest among the few on the market. The line is 100 percent free of harmful VOCs (volatile organic compounds) far exceeds the Hong Kong government's new VOC regulatory requirements, and is in line with global safety and environmental protection standards.

ICI Dulux Lifemaster paint is free from harmful toxins and annoying paint smells and offers guaranteed safety and quality. "Use ICI Lifemaster paint when you redecorate to ensure that you, your loved ones, children and pets can share a safe and comfortable living environment," she says.

"It is our first choice for clients; they appreciate our awareness for the environment and

consciousness for them. Having said this, there are other high-end paints that adhere to the same standards, which are available in Hong Kong, such as Farrow & Ball and Fired Earth."

On the other hand, Candace Campos of Candace Collective believes in adopting industrial minimalism. It makes it easy to be green: less is more. "Keep your furnishings to a bare minimum. Your home needs empty space to breathe. Don't decorate every square inch of your flat. It's design overkill and just means more things will be thrown in the landfill after two years," she advises. Alternatively, the more adventurous can showcase concrete sub-flooring, exposed pipes and electrical wiring. Eliminate additional materials and labour by leaving these industrial details on display to be admired.

Most importantly, try to preserve the existing

structure. If your flat is architecturally blessed, don't change it but preserve it. When you are house hunting, choosing a home that will require the least amount of changes is just as important in the green process as the environmentally friendly materials you use. You can also keep it fresh by adding art to your apartment; add tracks to your walls and rotate your art collection. Eliminate the need to re-frame or re-hang pieces — just keep the same frames and swap the art inside, or go frameless if you want to be avant-garde. When you must buy something new, go vintage. So much incredible design came out of the mid-century and these pieces are still being traded in Hong Kong. 🏠