

This elegant dining room is flanked by pillars and overlooks the homeowner's stunning backyard



Dazzling Dining Rooms



Some Katy hosts prefer large dining room tables for entertaining friends and extended family



This family-friendly dining room blends darkwoods with bright colored fabrics



This classic French design uses a round table that's ideal for conversations with guests

Katy Families Know How to Dine In Style

Written by Natalie Cook Clark

It may not fall high in the order of your decorating importance, but the dining room is the most family-centered room in your house. This is the place where families can come together to reconnect at the end of the day or celebrate special occasions.

Whether you're looking for an upgrade or designing your first dining room, it is important to know what you want and tailor the style to best fit your family's needs. Melissa Vereen knew what she and her husband wanted. She says, "When designing our breakfast room and dining room we wanted something different and something that could grow with us as a family."

Know What Works For Your Family

The decorating process can be overwhelming so trust the experts. By working with a designer you'll have the benefit of industry knowledge, but as Deborah Bautista of Tista's Home Furnishings cautions clients, "Buy what you want and stay away from trends." A helpful designer is also great at asking the questions that you might not think of. Martha Gray of Interiors by Decorating Den always begins the decorating process by asking the questions, "How do you entertain? And how do you eat with your family?" It's simple questions like these that will ensure that you'll design the best room for your needs.

The purposes of a formal dining room and an everyday breakfast room are uniquely different, impacting your decorating strategy. Breakfast rooms serve a much more common purpose as opposed to formal dining rooms where special occasions take place. Another decorating pointer by Bautista for either room is to not match the kitchen cabinet knobs and other designs special to the house.



A patterned marble floor is a stunning foundation to any dining room

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Decorate for the long term, because when you move, the furniture will follow while the cabinets stay.

How you plan to use the room should determine the furniture. If you entertain and use the room regularly a server or buffet may be a useful item to consider in addition to the table and chairs. Keep the importance of space in mind. "Always make sure that you allow an extra two feet on all sides of the table space," Bautista advises. Comfort is key in dining rooms and being able to get around the table once all are seated is a must. If your dining room is the center for special occasions a china cabinet may be needed to display fine china.

“When designing our breakfast room and dining room we wanted something different and something that could grow with us as a family.”

- Melissa Vereen

Color Conscious

As always, finding the right color is key when decorating. Gray sees yellows, golds and spice family colors as being popular among her clients. The "going green" trend has also found the decorating industry. Many are gravitating toward natural woods, non-chemical and non-synthetic furniture. Natural fabrics such as cotton and wool are popular upholstery and rug materials. "Green" accessories such as using preserved greenery instead of silk flowers and plants are very popular and a great look," Gray explains. Stone floors are also being used to bring some of Mother Nature inside.

Less is More

A major consideration when decorating any room is how to keep the cost down in a busy society when many are simply thinking about convenience. Many dining rooms are keeping it simple with only a table and chairs with either a large artwork selection or mirror on a wall. This option gives you less to clean and follows

5 Simple Ways to Spice Up your Dining Room



- 1 Keep your formal dining table set with fine china and crystal goblets for an elegant, welcoming look.
- 2 A bowl of fresh fruit or real flowers brings nature indoors and adds a splash of color.
- 3 Replace an outdated fixture with a new chandelier and install a dimmer switch for instant mood lighting.
- 4 Accessorize with dramatic candlesticks, elegant bowls, vases, and rich fabrics.
- 5 Change out tablecloth, napkins, and table settings to customize for each season.

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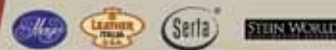


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the philosophy that less is sometimes more. Don't be afraid to mix and match. It is alright to interchange table and chairs from other groupings or only replace the chairs of your current table. "This will give you a fresh look and can also help with a budget," says Bautista. You can also change the window coverings or update a table centerpiece that would change the room's look, giving you a change without breaking the bank.

Trendy Katy Tables

The dining room is often the center of family conversations and popular table styles are showing that influence. "I'm seeing a lot of Pub height tables and bar stools and tables with benches emphasizing a casual, family feel," Gray says of breakfast room styles. Families are also moving their dining experiences outdoors into outdoor dining rooms.

There are many ways to design a stylish, family-friendly dining room that will meet your family's needs. Remember before you fall in love with a style to ask the important questions of how you entertain and how your family uses the room. If you stick to your answers, stay away from trends and buy what you want, you will have a room that can grow with you through the years.

NATALIE COOK CLARK is thrilled to be back in her hometown Katy and writing once again for Katy Magazine. The Baylor Alumni lives with her husband, Stephen and dog, Oscar.



The ideal dining room design blends beauty with functionality

This dining room's rich tones and textures add a sense of warmth





ENTER OUR COVER CONTEST!

Katy Magazine is looking for an adorable Katy area child to be our Cover Cutie for the Winter Issue. Contestants must be ages 2-8 and live in the Katy ISD boundaries.

Semi-finalists and finalists photos will be published on the inside pages of the Winter Issue. Finalists will be invited to attend our cover photo shoot. After the photo shoot, one photogenic Katy Cutie's photo will be chosen as our Cover Star.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

A sparkling personality combined with a photogenic face and big, happy smile. Children should be comfortable getting their photo taken and be able to follow basic directions at our photo shoot.

CONTEST RULES

All contestants must live within Katy ISD boundaries and be in between the ages of 2 and 8 (at time of entering). One winner and up to ten finalists will be chosen to attend the cover shoot for the winter issue of Katy Magazine. Finalists will be notified by email and asked to attend our cover photo shoot.

Finalists and semi-finalists photos will be published in our Winter Issue. Please do not send copyright protected photography. Deadline for entering is October 31, 2009.

ENTER TODAY!

Email your Katy Cutie's best headshot to editor@katymagazine.com (Just one please) include your child's name and age, your name, and address.

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5 Helpful Tips for Family Time in the Dining Room



The dining room brings families together, and it often is the only quality time that families get, especially when everyone is always running a million miles a minute. Family Therapist Nelda Wilson Brooks of Katy suggests these helpful tips that Katy families can use to make the most of their time in the dining room.

- 1 Make dinnertime your family's time to reconnect at the end of each day.
- 2 Make sure that each family member feels a part of the conversation.
- 3 Encourage everyone to participate in the conversation.
- 4 Make dinnertime positive; do not use it as a time to criticize.
- 5 Cut out distraction such as phones, T.V., etc.

Due to hectic schedules many families are unable to eat together every night so remember that it is quality vs. quantity, and bon appetite.

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