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and  
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## RING IN THE NEW YEAR

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# WHEN YOU GET TO 2010, KNOCK

## RING IN NEW YEAR WITH A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION AT FRONT DOOR

BY MORGAN JAREMA  
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

**D**ing-dong.  
Knock-knock.  
Bo-ring.

Ring in the new year by giving your home's uninspired doorbell ringer button or door knocker the ding-dong ditch and upgrading to something unique.

Homeowners can't knock the number of choices available to create a customized first impression for visitors to their home.

Door knockers — decorative metal devices attached to the door or side of a house — pre-date the doorbell but have made a comeback among homeowners, particularly those with older homes.

Today's door knockers come in designs for architectural aficionados, animal lovers, sports fans and nature watchers.

Jamie Eymann calls the door knocker "kind of the lost soul of the home."

She and her husband, Richard, are proprietors of US10B & Co., an appointment-only residential and commercial home hardware and bath accessories business in Ada named for the finish number of oil-rubbed bronze.

More people with older homes tend to seek out unique door knockers, Eymann said, because new construction is more likely to have electronic entries.

But she says homeowners can have both.

"If you approach a home for the first time and it had both, what would you do? Being in the business, I would probably go for the door knocker," she said. "It's a compliment to the



### Gentle ring

Michael Healy monarch butterfly doorbell ringer

**Finish:** brushed nickel silver  
**Price:** \$49

**Available at:** michaelhealy.com; Expressions in Hardware in Ann Arbor; Look In The Attic in Ypsilanti (lookintheattic.com)

homeowner because it personalizes the house. And if no one answers, hit the bell."

With doorbell buttons so common on homes, Eymann said they offer a perfect opportunity for homeowners to add decorative flair.

"The bell buttons that are sold with chimers are usually plastic," she said, while uniquely designed button covers serve as "a sweet-looking earring."

### The vintage look

Door accessories such as knockers and bell button covers don't have to be new.

For those who want to go the vintage route, scouring area salvage and antique stores — including Phil's Cool Stuff and Pitsch Wrecking (pitschco.com/salvage.html) in Grand Rapids, The Heritage Co. in Kalamazoo and Royal Oak (heritageco2.com) and Materials



### Ferocious beater

Atlas Renaissance doorknocker

**Finishes:** Oil rubbed bronze, burnished bronze, pewter

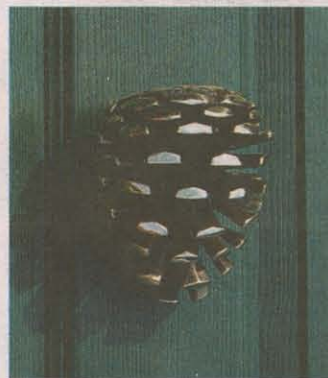
**Price:** \$108.60

**Available at:** Atlas Homewares (atlashomewares.com)

Unlimited (materialsunlimited.com) in Ypsilanti.

Knockers and ringer designs from Rhode Island-based designer Michael Healy (michaelhealy.com), available through the artist's Web site or at Expressions in Hardware in Ann Arbor or Look In The Attic in Ypsilanti (lookintheattic.com), include crosses, dog and cat themes, leaves, butterflies, flowers and fleur de lis, several of which come in the same style of door knockers.

Healy has been designing artistic decorative hardware for 20 years and started to design



### Natural feel

Michael Healy pinecone door knocker

**Finish:** polished bronze

**Price:** \$120

doorbell ringers and door knockers as an affordable way for homeowners to personalize their front entrance.

"A decorative doorbell ringer or door knocker can be a relatively inexpensive upgrade to the front of your house and shows a personal sense of style," Healy said.

"A customer recently purchased my bee door knocker because their daughter's name is Beatrice."

### Keep with the style

A bell or knocker must also complement a house's architecture.

While a scrolled, ornate door knocker would look out-of-place on a home with a modern, minimalist design, a doorbell with a cracked cover is never a welcome sight at any house, said Michael Malone, studio director with WKMC Architects, Inc. in Dallas and a member of Custom Residential Architects Network with the American Institute of Architects.

"The appearance of the front



### Quick with that finger

Atlas Renaissance doorbell ringer

**Finishes:** Burnished bronze, pewter, oil rubbed bronze  
**Price:** \$31.80

entrance sends a message about the homeowner," he said.

"Painting the front door and installing a new doorbell or door knocker can make a big impact without spending big bucks."

While brass remains a popular metal for door decor, satin nickel, silver and oiled bronze are popular finishes for door knockers and doorbell covers — as long as the metal matches the door's handle and hardware.

Doorbells and door knockers are meant to be inviting to guests, while making a statement about the homeowner's tastes and interests, Healy said.

A seaside house can welcome guests with Healy's bay scallop doorbell cover and a starfish door knocker for under \$130.

A family of tennis players can buy a Healy-designed door knocker shaped like a racquet hitting a ball for \$80.

A country home can be filled with good luck for visitors using Healy's brass horseshoe door knocker (\$70).

Healy's 30-acre farm in rural Rhode Island, features his butterfly design doorbell cover (\$49).

"Our doorbell sends a message to visitors, before they even ring it," he says. "The butterfly connotes that I love nature and also appreciate artistic items."

As important as the looks of a doorbell or door knocker are, it also has to feel and sound good, Malone says.

"Test out a door knocker before buying it," he says. "A door knocker that goes, 'tick-tick-tick,' isn't as impressive as one that really knocks the door. It should rap on the door, as opposed to tapping it."

But, in an age of minimalist design, having a knocker on an all-glass front door isn't practical.

Some modern homeowners are choosing doorbells to match a more contemporary design. A spore doorbell (sporeinc.com) has a blue hue that emanates from a light-emitting diode (LED) and casts a cool light, especially at night. Costing less than \$100, the spore doorbell's bicycle-bell chime can be irresistible to visitors.

"My favorite door knocker was on the home of friends who were avid bird-watchers," Malone says. "It was a woodpecker motif with the bird's beak acting as the hammer of the door knocker. I still envy the cleverness of it."

### Reach for the bars

The door knocker on Flory Silverstein's East Grand Rapids house is so unique at least one neighbor has jokingly threatened to "liberate" it.

The heavy 9-inch-by-6-inch iron knocker was a gift from an antique-lover friend who gave it to her when she moved into the house 41 years ago,



### Rap or ring?

**Atlas Homewares avalon door knocker**

**Finishes:** Oil rubbed bronze, brushed nickel  
**Price:** \$108.60



**Familiar knock:** Flory Silverstein of East Grand Rapids received a unique door knocker in 1941 as a housewarming gift from friends who collect antiques. "It has graced the door all these years," Silverstein said.

Silverstein said.

She also has doorbell ringer but, as Eymann predicted, Silverstein said visitors use the knocker more often.

"They're intrigued by it, and it makes a nice big sound so you can't miss when people are here," she said.

**Atlas Homewares avalon doorbell ringer**

**Finishes:** Brushed nickel, oil rubbed bronze  
**Price:** \$32.80



PRESS PHOTOS/EMILY ZOLADZ

The knocker became such a signature piece for Silverstein that, when she considered moving a few years ago, one "con" was leaving it behind.

"I thought, 'I can't leave that knocker,'" she said.

— Universal Press Syndicate contributed to this story



### Grab a hold, push

**Baldwin Hardware Archetypes craftsman door knocker**

**Finishes:** natural silicon bronze, light bronze, medium bronze, dark bronze, natural white bronze, pewter bronze and aged bronze.  
**Price:** \$445

**Baldwin Hardware Archetypes craftsman doorbell ringer**

**Finishes:** Natural silicon bronze, light bronze, medium bronze, dark bronze, natural white bronze, pewter bronze and aged bronze.

**Price:** Small bell button cover \$67, medium cover \$105  
**Available at:** baldwinhardware.com

# Resolutions for a stylish new year

BY MARY CAROL GARRITY  
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

When you're writing your New Year's resolutions, don't forget to add a few that will help your home be most stylish in 2010. Here are a few decorating resolutions to inspire you.

### Freshen up paint

For the price of three gallons of paint, you can transform the look of a room. Instead of choosing warm colors, try something new: shades of gray, from steel to oyster.

### Spruce up your bedroom

Fabulous bedding can take a bedroom from dull to dramatic. To make a bed more spectacular, affix curtain rods to the ceiling above the bed then hang luxurious curtain panels from the rods, achieving the look of a canopy bed on a shoestring budget. Pick a color palette of white, cream and gray-beige fabrics for the bedding and mix up the textures.

### Break out the china

Use your most beautiful pieces in your decorating and entertaining. When you have guests over, spoil everyone by setting a spectacular table featuring your china. Use your china in your interior decorating. Fill a china bowl with fruit for a fast and easy centerpiece. Use your plates as artwork on your walls, mixing them in with existing montages, creating a grid or using them to flank a large piece of art. Prop plates in easels and use them as backdrops for displays in your bookcases or on your mantel.

### Organize holiday decor

Holiday decor packed away in a hodgepodge of boxes stacked willy-nilly in your basement? Are you never able to find what you're looking for? Put up metal shelves in the basement and buy plastic storage boxes and a label maker. Pack away like items together and label the boxes. Once the boxes are stacked on the shelving, hang curtain rods from the ceiling and cover them with curtain panels to conceal the shelves.