

High Point

Spring 2006 Market Trends

Color and design trends in the U.S. tend to go in cycles that roughly coincide with the decades. The most successful incoming trends take center stage in the first few years of the decade, then become established during the middle years. The years we are entering now—the last few years of this decade—are perhaps the most interesting for trend trackers, as clues about the next great ideas in color and design begin to reveal themselves in fashion, culture, and the newest home decor products.

By Vivian Kistler, CPF, GCF

One of the best places to look for those clues is the High Point Home Furnishings Market, held each spring and fall in High Point, NC. As the largest home furnishings market in the world, High Point attracts key buyers from furniture stores, department stores, gift shops, interior design firms, and catalog sales businesses, who buy inventory for their companies while also getting a feel for the latest trends. This year's Spring Market, held April 27 to May 3, included more than 3,000 exhibitors.

Here are some of the trends from the market.

Animal prints have been popular for years, but there is a shift away from leopard, with giraffe and especially zebra hide taking the lead. More often the animal prints are "interpreted," meaning it is not a direct likeness more of a "influenced" design, such as Nicole Miller's tan and white pillows—is it giraffe or odd little squares? The same holds true for the black-and-white Safari bedspread in the Ernest Hemingway collection.

One common marketing tradition in home decor is translating the romance of a particular place or culture into products. Provence and Tuscany continue to attract consumers, along with Asia, India, Paris, and New York, but there are always some new entries in this category. There appears to be more of a global blend of indigenous cultures with a new emphasis on Portuguese design. A more U.S. focused theme was the sense of Nantucket: the coastal retreat or lakeside cottage.



The very popular filigree motif is paired with soft pink roses in Iron Trellis by Wampler from Paragon.

A look at the latest color and design trends on display at the latest High Point Home Furnishings Market

Furniture

Furniture finishes are vital to the sales of picture frame mouldings as well as furniture, so a color-watch on wood tones is very important. Dark brown wood with names like espresso and coffee bean, a color so dark that it's almost black, showed up a few years ago. This color must have a visible wood grain to be the trend. Expect to see this color for many years. There are several wood tones on display at High Point: warm browns like maple, a few pieces in blond, a couple of light birches, and even a grayed smooth finish, but dark coffee brown was definitely the winner. Other significant finishes are blacks with a rub of color and solid white or antiqued white finishes such as those in the Habersham line.

Color Combinations

- Black and white is clearly a leading color combination. There will be home interior designs using all black or all white. You'll also see black and white with a dramatic accent color like red, lime, yellow, blue, or brown. The



Dedon has created a set of four standard-size chairs that stack to make an interesting sculpture. The chairs are hand-woven from weather-resistant Hularo® synthetic fiber.

filigree swirls of black wrought iron will continue to emerge as a design element in furniture and art.

- Brown and a color. The popularity of browns, tans, and beiges continues and are often paired with one color, such as brown with pale blue, brown with pale green, brown with pink, brown with red, brown with yellow, and so on. There is typically more brown in the combination with the additional color acting as an accent.
- White and a color. Using seashells as inspiration, monotone white fabrics and complete room designs with the accents of color such as coral, blue, green, and—of course—black.
- Greens. Yellowed greens, such as olive or lime, were used in room design as well as in the advertising of the market exhibitors. Yellow greens are paired with an additional color, such as brown, white, gold, or blue.



Accessories

Area rugs are available in every conceivable color combination or design image. They are fun and easy to use to add a design accent in many rooms that need to be updated. Company C considers their area rugs as a means to decorate homes with open floor plans. The rugs can be used to define an area and add character to a rather beige environment. Character is



Blue and brown are used to convey "the graceful aesthetic of the southeastern France countryside" in Provence, part of the National Geographic collection from Lane Furniture.



Black paired with one other color is a key color trend. In the Ava collection from Eastern Accents, plush pink crushed velvet is the chosen color. Pink with green and pink with gray are other strong trend combinations.



In current art images, seashells tend to be depicted as oversized single specimens. Chambered Nautilus by Kelly is from Paragon. Note the use of brown instead of black as a background color, as brown continues to thrive in home decor.

something for picture framers to consider when helping a client to choose artwork. Framing should feel comfortable when seen from several angles and many room environments. The art hanging in the kitchen area may be visible, for example, from the foyer.

The garden theme continues, although it has a considerably smaller place in the market than five years ago.



This collection of pillows and throws from Goodwin Weavers is a blending of traditional, retro, and modern patterns in pale blue-green and rich brown. Note the pillow with the repetition of thick, imperfect circles—a very popular motif.

Baby boomers have realized that the garden actually takes a lot of work and upkeep. To offset that real garden, images of flowers and gardens are more popular than ever, as are decorative accessories that incorporate nature images like ferns, leaves, and flowers. Images of large single flowers on a background of solid color or filigree iron gates were featured in showrooms. Filigree, from typical iron railings, can be seen as a design element in many pieces of art as well as furniture designs and fabric designs.

Accents and art include a profusion of real seashells and plenty of framed art featuring individual oversized seashells. Expect to see more framed pictures of antique or modern botanicals. Botanicals were featured on lamps, bowls, throws, and other accessories.

Lifestyles

Designers are focusing on not creating just a look but also capturing a lifestyle. Liz Claiborne's Arbor Hill Collection from Lexington features casual, feminine home furnishings rooted in the traditional design with an appreciation for warmth and comfort. The collection is intended to let a woman express her sense of style while creating a warm and welcoming gathering place for family.

Lexington Home Brands offered a Nautica and a Seaside Retreat collection, both featuring a comfortable place to live away from the maddening crowd. The



Stylized zebra patterns come in hot combinations such as black and beige or black and white. One example is Safari bedding from the Ernest Hemingway collection, which continues to exceed sales expectations with its appeal to male consumers. Note the overall neutral color scheme of the room.



Paisley is adopting traditional colors, and moving beyond rugs and bedding to pillows, upholstery, and even lampshades. From Harris Marcus Home.

Shelter Island collection from Stanley combines "urban aesthetic with relaxed, leisurely attitude." Beach life includes "strolling through posh art galleries, buying organic produce at a local farm stand, or enjoying an oyster roast on the beach." The result is a combination of seashells and coral with formal furniture. Finishes include Piano Key, a smooth solid white, and Marimba a dark brown.

The Habersham company, well known for its large furniture pieces in aged white-painted finish, introduced the Bella Rustica collection featuring the Italian Lombardy art style of hand-painted designs in gold on dark wood. Habersham's large pieces are styled for high ceilings and large open space homes. A new introduction includes a white armoire containing a basic kitchenette complete with a wine cooler, to be used in the bedroom. ■



The Shelter Island collection from Stanley combines "an urban aesthetic with a relaxed, leisurely attitude." Note the extensive use of seashells and coral as accents on the white bookshelf.



Tulips remain popular in artwork and accessories. This vibrant spray is one of the latest "permanent florals" from NDI. Tulips remain popular in artwork and accessories.

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