

# Spring Design



Designers are using soft but contemporary pieces like the Cameo Chair from Sitcom to bring a modern sensibility to traditional settings. This particular blue has become established; it is paired most often with brown, but more often lately with charcoal gray, as seen here.

Styles are always on the move. At the same time some styles seem to maintain their popularity when everything around them seems to be changing. This was again the case this year at High Point Market in High Point, NC, which continues to be a significant home furnishings trade show. At the Spring Market, which returned to April, there were a broad range of new product introductions including many new looks but also with some variations on continuing favorites.

## STYLE TRENDS

### Trad-mo

As contemporary style grows, there is a blending of traditional and modern in home decor: “Trad-mo” is the awkward name some have attributed to this popular trend. It may involve upholstering a Queen Anne chaise lounge with a bright contemporary print, or hanging ornate gold picture frames in a stark, modern room.

### Durable Fabrics

Who wants to deal with real silk when the polyester version is sturdy and stain-resistant? Even those who can afford the silk enjoy having easy-care furniture. The creation of durable, fade-resistant fabrics has led to an expansion of seat-cushions and pillows for outdoor furniture.

The Chesterfield sage green sofa from Clayton Marcus displays a popular current trend:

plain, solid color upholstery that shows off the styling of the furniture with patterned pillows providing contrast.



### Customization

Individuality is key—I want it my way. The twenty-somethings (soon to be homeowners and furniture/picture frame buyers) have turned this into body art. “We all have tattoos, so we are all alike. But we all have uniquely different tattoos,

# Trends

By Vivian Kistler, CPF, GCF, CMG

so we are all different!” Conflicted consumers want desperately to fit in and stand out at the same time—quite a balancing act. Designing products that fill the bill requires a similar balance between trendy and unique.

## Green, of Course

Taking measures to be “green” is now expected, not news. The question is not, “Are you doing something?” but “What are you doing?” Not everyone is on board, but it is clear this trend is not going away, so it is a topic every home decor manufacturer will be discussing.

## DESIGN TRENDS

### Bamboo Textiles

The use of the bamboo plant to make textiles continues to expand as sturdier, upholstery-weight fabrics are developed. Bamboo has huge “green” benefits. It is very fast growing without fertilizers, pesticides, or irrigation, and the finished fabric is soft, lightweight, durable, and naturally resists bacteria and fungus. There is one down side—processing bamboo takes a lot of chemicals—but new processes are being investigated. For right



Part retro, part global culture, patterned fabric is making a bold return, as seen in the red Ikat fabric Joplin Sofa styled by Tina Chai for Robin Bruce. The thread for Ikat fabric is colored in a technique similar to tie-dying prior to weaving.



Consumers want to be trendy and individual at the same time. The contemporary blue Blake Sofa from Rowe Furniture makes this easy, since it is available in 500 fabrics and six wood finishes for 3,000 unique combinations.



Although orange remains confined to accessories, it is popular for adding a bright accent to room decor. These vibrant, curvy Dubai vases are from Sitcom Furniture. The tallest is about 16".



Curvy etched blossoms add texture to these white vases (sold in sets of three) from Sitcom's Fiji Collection. The color accents have a hand-painted appearance.

now, it has the “cool factor” going for it, as well as lots of positive aspects that manufacturers are stressing to mitigate the downside. Plus, other fibers take a lot of chemicals to process, too, without all the benefits of bamboo.

### Pattern vs. Plain

In upholstered furniture, plain solid-color fabrics have been a trendy favorite in modern decor. Then solid took on the added interest of stitching, piping, slubs, or other visual textures. This texture is a dominant trend, while patterned textiles are just beginning to impact the decor market. Discreet little dots and stripes and plaids in bold color combinations are a few of the latest versions. Often, one busy patterned piece is used in an otherwise plain room to add pizzazz.

### Texture

Texture continues to be a strong trend on textiles, wood, stone, and metal as well as fabric. Lots of “earth elements” are used together to accessorize a room. The texture may be dimensional or just a visual impression caused by complex finishes.

### TV Cabinets

For the past few years, furniture companies have struggled with the need for furniture to contain the new, thin televi-

Natural, sustainable fiber sources are an important part of today's green mentality. The Sanibel Chair from Rowe Furniture has an abaca-covered frame. Abaca comes from the stalk of a banana-like plant grown in the Philippines.



Using furniture in new ways is part of today's individual style. The traditional "secretary" can be useful in a bedroom, as shown in this piece from Aspenhome's Weekender Collection. European country style adds charm—plus valuable storage space and a makeup table.

sions, mostly trying to fit them rather awkwardly into old-fashioned entertainment centers. At this Market, low cabinets in all styles have replaced the old style, with discreet spaces for associated machines like DVD players and cable converter boxes and storage for the video collection. The television—no longer a massive box—sits on top of the cabinet, obvious but unobtrusive.

### Style and Size

Contemporary furniture is clearly the leading style; even traditional furniture is shown with cleaner lines and simplified decoration. Of course, some consumers still go for over-the-top ornate styles, and there are always some products to please them at High Point. There is still a lot of large-scale furniture to accommodate big rooms with high ceilings, but there is also a trend towards scaled-down furniture for the large segment of the population living in apartments and condos.



*Earthy neutrals with a splash of color and pattern are a strong current trend, as shown by the Ophelia Collection from Sitcom Furniture. Lines—curved and straight—play an important role in the decor design.*



*Black-and-white with an accent of flashy red continues to be a popular color combination. The sleek Oslo Collection from Sitcom Furniture makes good use of this high-contrast color theme.*

### Color Trends

Earth colors—soft to dark variations of green, brown, and gray—continue to dominate, along with black, white, and pale neutrals.

Blue and yellow remain outsiders, although they were shown on a few products at this Spring Market, because exhibitors use them to stand out from the crowd and be different. Light blue—either rich or pale—is seen frequently but usually in tandem with some sort of brown. A darker blue, somewhere between royal blue and navy blue, is seen occasionally, usually in a coastal or nautical character. Although some accessories are bright yellow, rich gold and pale wheat are the only truly established yellows.

Purple is being used as a “fun” accent color, especially vibrant, reddish purples. Red continues to be shown with black and white as a color combination, such as red pillows on a black-and-white bed covering.

There is no particular “it” color in wood finishes this



*Pillows continue to be essential accessories, bringing pattern and visual “pop” to many decor styles. This Sitcom Furniture collection reflects the trend: red, orange, blue, and brown dominate, and the only truly popular blue is some version of French Blue.*

spring, with dark, light, warm, white, and black all sharing the spotlight. The dark espresso brown of a few years ago is now just part of the crowd. Moderately distressed or weathered wood finishes, including driftwood and limed wood, were shown on numerous furniture pieces at High Point. ■

Vivian Kistler, CMG is a 20-year member and senior chairholder of the Color Marketing Group. Kistler is the editor of the Color Names Reference book, which contains more than 37,000 names for commercial products.



*American-made, with a commitment to craftsmanship and sustainable forestry, Harden Furniture's Cherry Console Table offers features that are valued by today's consumer.*