

Fall Design

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Yellow greens remain strong, as shown in these Robert Allen fabrics from Highland House. Yellow and blue are popular accent colors, but only as sidekicks to other colors.

Looking at the Fall Market at High Point with an eye towards major trends, one thing seems clear: there is currently no single powerful, pervasive trend in color or motif. A decade ago, and for some years before that, it was possible for savvy trend-trackers to define three or four distinct color combinations and several motifs that would dominate home decor for perhaps a decade. Manufacturers of home decor products could coast for a few years selling trendy, popular styles and colors that were certain to be in demand for awhile. Now the trend cycle has shortened—often just two or three years—and it is more difficult to determine a guaranteed trend. There is a more scattershot approach—juggling a number of styles and colors at the same time, hoping to get it right for enough consumers to make a product line successful.



The trends right now are more elusive. More important than a specific shade of a color are such concepts as “real,” “handmade,” or “handcrafted.” Individuality and custom fit are important. Comfort paired with style is also important. At the same time, modern, techno, new, and unique are also valued qualities.



Classy but not too formal, this houndstooth pattern sofa from Highland House hits the “casual elegance” trend just right. Black and white with red accents continues to be a popular color combination.

Scale is becoming smaller to appeal to the young, the urban, and others who do not have the space for grand scale. This is not just a money issue. It is partly a desire for simplicity and less “stuff” in the room.

Gone is the advertising of Hollywood Glamour, which seemed for a while to be gaining strength. Some dramatic pieces still appear here and there, but they are not promoted as glamorous.

There is less emphasis on celebrity endorsement, although there is still a lot of endorsement.

Thom Filicia from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* has collaborated with Vanguard to offer his Home Collection, and *Country Living* magazine continues to expand its connection to home decor products with a self-named rug collection from Surya Rugs. Kathy Ireland has managed to con-

Trends

**WITH NO STRONG MOTIFS
DEFINING TODAY'S INTERIORS,
CONCEPTS LIKE REAL,
HANDMADE, AND NATURAL
ARE SETTING THE DESIGN TREND**



The "chair and a half" Zoli Chair from Taylor King says "come curl up and relax." Comfort paired with style continues to be a popular trend. The simple brown and blue-gray striped pillows add significant

vert her swimsuit model image to highly relatable career woman and mother and parlayed that image into a very successful home decor business. She partners with a number of furniture and accessory companies to offer Kathy Ireland Home products.

COLORS

Gray is the star neutral at the moment; its coolness contrasts well with the warmth of wood colors. Along with this is a general "graying" of colors. Cool, quiet grays, whether dark or light, are the ones that are most trendy, not warm grays. This is a sort of reaction to the warm neutral beiges that dominated the past few years but keeps things in a neutral color range, as one expects in times of war or economic slow-downs, when caution, security, and reserve are important. Gray works in several environments. It can be classic and elegant or very modern with an urban feel. It works well with metallics, with silver, nickel, and pewter serving as the gray version of metal.

Accent colors include purple of all varieties, saturated yellow-greens, some orange, splashes of yellow, and a bit of blue in deep French blue to cobalt. These have all stuck around instead of the typi-



Brown in all varieties is likely to remain in the home decor market for the next couple of years. Earthy and comforting, brown fits with the popularity of "realness" and is a common trend color in times of economic uncertainty. This trio of vases is from Arteriors.



The Tangelo Pillows (square and round) and Great Continent Pillow from Global Views are fun, colorful accessories. Very dimensional texture and bold patterns are both popular trends in accessories.



The pillows on Broyhill's Caitlyn corner chairs show how accessories featuring geometric patterns are being used to add flair to neutral beige furniture. Note that trendy gray has been added to the earthtone color mix.



Not everyone is shying away from color, and there are always options available for the color-courageous. The Sarasa Pool rug anchors a room that offers “an incredible riot of color that fills this indoor garden—it is always sunny here, even on a rainy day.” From Company C.



Classic navy blue and white is always in style, but is made contemporary by attention to trendy details, such as dark brown wood and silver rather than brass as the metallic accent. From Bassett Furniture.



Unique, sometimes offbeat pieces appeal to the need for statements of individuality, a trend that continues to be a strong undercurrent in today’s market. The LeVoyage chair from Bauer International was inspired by the company’s roots: Bauer was founded by Ken Bauer’s great-great grandfather as a 19th-century manufacturer of steamship trunks and carpetbags.



Storage beneath the bed and in the compact, lighted end tables makes this furniture from Broyhill a practical choice for those living in smaller spaces, such as apartments, condos, and older homes built before the advent of the enormous “master suite.”



Silver is the current trend favorite in metallic finishes. The Lavo photo frame from Roma comes in six gleaming finishes, including the Electric Silver shown here. Instead of traditional matching corners, the ornate pattern flows asymmetrically around the frame, providing a unique, updated character.

cal hot then cold cycle that can affect strong colors in healthier economic times. Red was shown less than at the past couple of High Point shows.

In wood, visible wood grain says “green,” quality, and authenticity. No single wood tone dominates, but light finishes and liming seem to be growing more popular. Many people have medium brown stain on their floors, and they struggle with the decision to match or contrast with the color of their wood furniture. One solution is mixing stains, such as dark brown with pale oak or medium brown with cherry, and several companies are experimenting with this option, such as a pine and cherry combination from Vaughn-Bassett.

ACCESSORIES

Consumers no longer feel like they have to commit to one style like Colonial or French. After years of eclectic design in magazines and on television, matched sets of



Strong, deep orange infuses this sofa and chairs from Lane Home Furnishings with a pretty, fresh, cheerful character that will appeal to trend-seekers willing to make a color commitment. Notice the use of yellow green accessories, with just a hint of blue.



Traditional yet current, the Jodi Chair from Broyhill features a large, swirling leaf pattern in rust, olive, and pale teal. Large patterns and swirls continue to be popular trends.



While some hide their large televisions in massive entertainment centers, others acknowledge that the television has traditionally been visible in the American home. Is the juxtaposition of sleek, modern electronics and traditional style furniture a design faux-pas? The answer tends to be "no", as most consumers find it acceptable. Antiqued cabinet from Samuelson.

furniture and accessories are giving way to a mix and blend of individual pieces. It can be a bit tricky to create a mix that actually works, but consumer confidence in this area has really blossomed in the past couple of years.

As mentioned, specifics like color and motif are less important than such concepts as natural or handcrafted. Favored materials are wood, glass, metal, stone, and wicker. "Interesting" items are highly valued and are created with shapes, colors, finishes, and patterns.

To accommodate the trend toward item-by-item shopping (as opposed to purchasing several items from one collection), Stanley has created a "Stanley Signatures" line, "a unique and distinctive selection of fine accent pieces that has been hand-picked from all over the globe." This allows the company to continue offering one or two popular items from a discontinued collection and offer accessories that do not specifically match any collection of their furniture.

INNOVATIVE MARKETING

Helping retailers increase sales is a logical priority for home furnishings company. Lane has created the Lane Home Entertainment Tour, a mobile showroom with room setups showing a contemporary casual media room and a home version of a movie theater. It will travel to around 60 retailers this year. This allows retailers to show this unique furniture without investing in stock, and it creates an event that includes tents outside of the truck offering games and prizes and in-store features that coordinate with the mobile showroom.

In general marketing, there is a bit less emphasis on "green-ness" and more emphasis on giving back, and in what is a company doing to make the world a better place? C.R. Laine raises awareness of the plight of the honeybee with fabric and an info campaign. The Guildmaster Pink Collection benefits the Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks. Companies like Ibollili are based on a relationship between native peoples and western consumers, with the company serving as the interface between the two worlds.

Each High Point Market offers a unique barometer of the trends in home decor design and color as well as the buying trends of the consumer. The Fall Market says that people are now looking at a mix-and-match, real-and-simple, classic-but-interesting, neutral-with-a-splash-of-color, and cautious-but-optimistic state of mind. ■

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