

Tangible future designs

Ambiente trends for 2016 are about simple expressions



Maintain and evolve

Messages with news value generally attract the most attention. At the same time, the most convincing products of tomorrow are often further developments of tried-and-tested ones. A great deal of creativity, eagerness to experiment, intelligence and flair have gone into giving these wholly new relevance. The high demands placed by an ever greater number of designers, manufacturers and consumers on contemporary consumer goods supply the context. The search for meaning and value, for environmental and social sustainability, as well as materials and manufacturing processes to match, leads to surprising yet fully convincing solutions. The dividing line between indoor and outdoor is being effaced and these tendencies drive developments in the consumer goods sector.

Artisanal Gardening

Originality and authenticity are more "now" than ever: in warm, late summer tones, nature is brought indoors. The garden offers the finest templates for a powerful colour spectrum, floral motifs and natural materials. Artisanal processing techniques are lovingly cultivated, complemented by finds and vintage products to form a harmonious whole. The borders between indoors and out are becoming blurred in favour of a laid-back ambience with a hippy and folk ethos.

Futuristic Couture

The combination traditional crafts with such technical developments as 3D printing opens the way to a fully unexpected aesthetic in interior design, as well as solutions at once specific and enduring. When hypermodern materials, synthetic colour nuances, crystal effects and a passion for couture glamour are skilfully juxtaposed, futuristic products with a science fiction character are the result. A discerning flirtation with the artificial, fake and substandard engenders a world of surreal valuables.

Functional Simplicity

Functional simplicity concentrates on perfect functionality and masterful workmanship. The high-calibre minimalistic design renders the essential in its purest form. To geometric basic shapes, durable materials and forms designed solely to serve a purpose, the neutral, quasi monochrome colour palette provides a fitting response. Sober and honest, inspired by the use of material in sports and architecture, this trend exudes a beguilingly sensual perfection.

Composing Freedom

Combinations inform the least conventional trend of the coming season. Contradictions converge wilfully; surprising juxtapositions underscore the note of individuality: a wild medley of old and new, unconventional patterns, bold colours, materials and design idioms of all kinds with clear traces of the street style of the 80s. In all this colourful chaos, in which brand products rub shoulders with no-name favourites, there is one constant: the carefree abandon from which it all sprang. ■ *Source: Ambiente*

Lucideon releases new guidance for ceramics

Majority till wrapping up holiday lists

A guidance document on domestic and hospitality ceramic tableware has been released to help industry members understand the new British standard. Lucideon, the international materials and technology company, has released a new guidance document 'Introduction to BS 8654:2015, Domestic and Hospitality Use Ceramic Tableware Articles Intended for Contact with Foodstuffs - Specification'. The guidance document has been prepared to help industry members better understand the new standard released by BSi. The standard was prepared for BSi by a team of ceramic tableware experts from Lucideon, the UK tableware manufacturing sector and the UK retail sector. These include performance requirements for hospitality tableware, definitions for vitrified stoneware and terracotta, a performance specification and test method for measuring the intrinsic strength of hospitality tableware, non-stick behaviour of ovenware and hob-top ceramic utensils. References to table top glassware and vases have been removed. ■

Source: Lucideon

Outdoor theme set to grow

Outdoor kitchens among new home additions

The barbecue industry will be sizzling in 2016, according to a survey commissioned by the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Assn. (HPBA), USA. The survey reveals consumers plan to barbecue more as well as purchase new grills and smokers in the coming months. More than a third (37%) of adults surveyed plan to purchase a new grill or smoker in 2016, while 30% of current owners plan to grill with greater frequency. Owners also plan to up their barbecuing proficiency with the purchase of a variety of specialized accessories, including pizza stones and broiling baskets. In addition, 35% of consumers with outdoor kitchens plan to upgrade their space in the next three years.

Grill owners fire it up for the holidays. Among grill owners, the most popular grilling days of the year are: Fourth of July (76%), Labor Day (62%), Memorial Day (62%), Father's Day (49%) and Mother's Day (34%). The majority of grill owners (61%) enjoy using their grill or smoker year-round, and 43% cook at least once a month in the winter months. Outdoor cooking is strong and trending up.



One-tenth of grill owners have an outdoor kitchen, featuring primarily premium grills, furniture and lighting. Of these outdoor kitchen owners, 35% are likely to upgrade in the next three years. Of these individuals who plan to upgrade, 67% plan to purchase new outdoor furniture, and 38% plan to purchase a new premium grill or smoker. ■

Source: *Casual Living*

Take it Outside

Growing interest in the outdoor room

Answering the growing interest of interior designers in the outdoor room, the Suites at Market Square Seminar Series included a session on hot outdoor trends on opening day of the fall High Point Market with Nancy Fire, HGTV design director and creative director and founder of Design Works Style. Fire addressed a group of a hundred or so designers and buyers, acknowledging that casual furnishings are one of the fastest-growing categories in home furnishings, with more and more consumers



spending time in their outdoor spaces at home. In her talk, "Let's Take It Outside," Fire identified five product

style trends and shared both characteristics of those categories as well as vendor resources for products in them.

Artisan Blues - Products in this category are identified by their offbeat tones, watercolour accents and a look that leans toward the imperfect and the shibori, tie-dyed style.

Global Guru - Here many styles come together, with medallion motifs, rich saturated tones along with fringe, pompoms and 3D effects.

Nature's Bounty - Perhaps the category with the broadest appeal, here greens and blues play off each other and against neutral accents. In this category, botanical motifs proliferate, cork detailing surfaces, and the feeling is of being at one with nature.

Luxury - In keeping with its name, this luxurious palette comes in purples, bolds, magentas and rich blues. Products in this category suggest the world traveler and may feature ornate prints and metallic accents.

Colour Me Happy - This category is identified with the burgeoning millennials and is associated with fun, bright colours and modern influences. Small space items are important here, and this trend also includes transparency through fretwork, mesh and lattice constructions.

There is a mix of materials across the various style trends and consumers are looking for convenience, easy mobility and ways to use their outdoor spaces in multiple ways. ■ Source: *Casual Living*

Changing demands of Millennials and Baby Boomers

Fundamental shift in relationship between furniture industry and consumers

Millennials and Baby Boomers are living in smaller spaces and spending less. Many economists report that the two largest consumer groups in the US - Millennials and Baby Boomers, have more discretionary income today than in recent years. And retail sales data indicates they could be spending even more on furniture and home decor.

Unemployment is down and this is part of a shift in household formations in the United States. That means young graduates can find jobs and move out on their own, and they need furniture for their new apartments. That's what the industry should be focusing on. These graduates, of course, are part of the Millennial generation—who, according to the Pew Research Center, were projected to surpass Baby Boomers as the largest US demographic group in 2015. They are also projected to account for about 30 percent of total retail sales. And Millennials are driving the strong shift in household formations. So are Boomers, who are transitioning to retirement, downsizing from large suburban homes to condominiums and apartments.



Boomers and Millennials are going to want smaller pieces of furniture because they have less space. People in the 30-to-50 age group are probably the smallest part of the market. They have the most disposable income and can buy higher-end products, but given

these transitional moments, most of the sales will be in the younger and older segments of the population. Several marketing-savvy players such as Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel have seized on the downsizing trend. They are offering more compact furniture pieces and aggressively marketing product across catalogs, the Web and traditional advertising channels.

Internet retailers have captured a large piece of market share with free shipping, easy returns and two-day delivery. Customer service and delivery were traditionally the advantages of brick-and-mortar stores. These retailers have proven that the most effective way to reach Boomers and Millennials isn't by focusing on payment terms, as furniture dealers have traditionally done. It's by promoting the design, style and functionality of the product itself. The furniture industry should build upon successes gained from marketing products across a wide spectrum of outlets, both digital and traditional. The economy has picked up and shows signs of remaining stable into 2016. Opportunities to continue growing business with the customer-first marketing approach look promising. ■

Source : *Furniture Today*

Toxic Substance Act passes in US Senate

Toy industry applauds step towards correcting outdated chemical law

The US Senate overwhelmingly passed S. 697, a bill updating and reforming the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), by a voice vote, according to a Toy Industry Association report. This is an important step forward in overhauling the federal chemical law, which has not been updated in nearly 40 years. Passage of S. 697, called the Frank R.



Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, is a top priority for the toy industry because it requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to use a "risk-based" approach to regulating new and existing chemicals, and a "weight of evidence" approach that uses credible and authoritative scientific data to demonstrate harm before creating new mandates, according to the TIA. The bill establishes a workable program that ensures chemicals are safe for their intended uses, while still allowing industry to remain innovative and globally competitive. S. 697 also contains strong preemptive language that will curtail unnecessary state-specific regulatory programs that result in complex and costly compliance procedures without increasing the safety of children's products.

The TIA and the toy industry encourage conference members to fight to maintain strong preemptive language and to reach a consensus so that the President can sign a final federal bill into law. "The Toy Industry Association (TIA) applauds the U.S. Senate for acting on this critical legislation," said Steve Pasierb, president and CEO, TIA. "We are now one step closer to a federal, uniform policy for regulating chemicals across all 50 states that fosters innovation and keeps American children and families safe. We applaud Senators David Vitter and Tom Udall for leading the bipartisan TSCA reform effort, the bill's 56 cosponsors, and Senate leadership for bringing this bill forward." ■

Source : *Playthings*

Holiday Return Fraud to cost retailers \$2.2 billion

Retailers estimate that 3.5 percent of their holiday returns this year will be fraudulent, up from the estimated 3 percent reported last year, according to the National Retail Federation's Return Fraud Survey. Holiday return fraud is expected to cost retailers \$2.2 billion, up from approximately \$1.9 billion last year. Total annual returns will reach \$260.5 billion, or 8 percent of total retail sales, with \$9.1 billion of retailers' annual returns expected to be fraudulent, or 3.5 percent of the industry's total returns, according to retailers surveyed.

"Return fraud remains a critical issue for retailers with the impact spanning far and wide, in-store and online," said NRF Vice President of Loss Prevention Bob Moraca. "While technology has played a significant role in deterring many in-person fraudulent transactions that would have otherwise gone unseen, there is little that can be done to prevent a determined criminal who will find a loophole one way or another. When it comes to retail fraud, retailers can build taller walls, but criminals continue to find taller ladders."

Nine in 10 retailers surveyed (91.9 percent) said they have experienced the return of stolen merchandise, similar to last year's 92.7 percent. Wardrobing, or the return of used, non-defective merchandise, also presents a unique challenge every year for retailers: three-quarters (72.6 percent) of those polled said they have experienced wardrobing in the past year, on par with last year's 72.7 percent. The report does offer a glimmer of optimism though—fewer retailers in 2015 have experienced specific instances of return fraud, including:

- 75.8 percent have experienced the return of merchandise purchased on fraudulent tender, down from 81.8 percent in 2014.
- 71 percent have experienced return fraud made by known organized retail crime groups, down from 78.2 percent last year.
- 77.4 percent of retailers surveyed have experienced employee return fraud or collusion with external forces, down from 81.8 percent in 2014.

Given the growing use of e-receipts by retailers, the survey found a likely connection to fraud in this area. The survey found one-third (33.9 percent) of those polled said they have experienced return fraud with use of e-receipts, up from 18.2 percent last year. ■ *Source: HFN*

Top Drawer S/S 2016 trends for Home, Gift, Fashion and Craft ruled by metallic tones to clean, textural finishes

Key trends for Spring/Summer 2016 have been identified across Top Drawer's four distinctive worlds - Home, Gift, Fashion and Craft. A number of key trends have been identified for Spring/Summer 2016 by UK leading design-led buying event, Top Drawer, the next edition of which will take place January 17-19. From metallic tones to clean, textural finishes, here are some of the key trends:

Lustrous Allure - A metallic trend hot on the heels of the Dulux Colour of the Year for 2016, Cherished Gold, sees an array of metallic tones that have the edge to perform beautifully by themselves, or as a base or accent to other colours while Blush Hues follows the fashion-led trend for all things pink, with shades from Barbie through to Ladurée macaroons.



Summer Living - This is the trend to follow to discover products with a summer vibe that will appeal throughout the year while those with an adventurous spirit will love the Intrepid Explorer trend for travel-inspired products for home and away. Those who appreciate balanced colour, shape and form will be able to submerge themselves in our Modern Geometric trend, where sharp surface patterns present themselves across a vast range of products throughout the show.

Rustic Utilitarian - Getting back to basics never looked so good: simple, clean lines and textural finishes distinguishes the trend we call Rustic Utilitarian, whilst Add Character is the trend for your inner fun-child to discover a world of character-led products that the retail customers will love. ■ *Source: Casual Living*