

New Furniture Trends

Our interior design editors scoured the recent High Point furniture trade show for the latest looks to share with you.

Mouthwatering Color

Twice a year in High Point, North Carolina, in the heart of furniture country USA, home furnishings manufacturers reveal their new collections to the world. Store buyers come to stock their inventories with the latest and greatest. And decorating editors like us investigate what's new and what's coming -- so we can report the trends to you throughout the year.

We searched high and low at the furniture market in High Point, N.C., in April 2001 and turned up these new trends to spend our pennies (or, in some cases, blow the bank account) on. The upshot: Color is hot, Australia is cool. Furniture goes glam, and Asian style reinvents itself. Classic patterns -- toile and checks -- look fresh and new again.

You Say Tomato, I Say Persimmon

The return of color is the big story this spring. At Baker Furniture, the Lexus of home furnishings, the showroom looked like it had been colored from the small crayon box: primary blue, green, red, yellow -- plus ivory for contrast. Iridescent lavender silk at Hickory Chair was reminiscent of the frocks seen at last year's Academy Awards ceremonies.



Photo 1.
www.mitchellgold.com

But the season's hottest palette is straight from your parents' 1970s earth-toned den: persimmon (think burnt orange) paired with brown or alternately, shades of green mixed together for an eco-friendly look. Milling Road (Baker's more affordable line) used the orange/brown palette to give a modern twist to



Photo 2.
www.natuzzi.com

traditional French furniture. Mitchell Gold, which supplies upholstery to retailers such as Pottery Barn and Crate and Barrel, offered persimmon on a velveteen club chair (see Photo 1); Italian leather manufacturer Natuzzi presented the color mix on a trim leather sofa (see Photo 2).

Furniture Forward

Shine On

Break out the Lemon Pledge; shiny furniture is back in style. Truthfully, rich lacquered finishes never went out of style with high-end furnishings -- and the wet look has always been popular among the Florida condo crowd. But Barbara Barry, Hollywood designer to the stars, was one of the first to make shiny look cool, not cold, with her elegantly understated designs for Baker. At this most recent furniture market, Baker Furniture continues the modern look with a collection by interior designer Bill Sofield, a founding partner of New York's hip design firm, Aero Studios. The look is masculine -- like the stateroom of a really elegant yacht -- with lots of figured walnut, stone accents, bronze hardware, ivory, obsidian, and Chinese red lacquer. The high-gloss sheen is flattering to woods and veneers (see Photo 3).



Photo 3.
www.bakerfurniture.com

Continuing to be popular, case goods, the industry term for chests, tables, and other wood furniture, are made from several different wood species, and showcase obvious grains, swirly burls (see the John Widdicomb table, shown in Photo 4), and incredible, intricate inlays.



Photo 4.
www.johnwiddicomb.com

G'Day Mate

The Sydney Summer Olympics are over. But "Crocodile Dundee" is back for a second sequel and "Survivor" just braved the Outback, so why not look Down Under for the next home furnishings trend? If your mind draws a blank when you think of Aussie



Photo 5.
www.centuryfurniture.com

style, don't feel bad.

Nobody else seems to know what it means either. As interpreted in Century's "Matilda Bay" collection (see Photo 5), it is a mix of European influences, mostly French and Dutch. "Australia is the quintessentially casual elegant country," says a Century spokesman. "It's like wearing a Rolex watch with your gardening clothes." Another example of Aussie style is the current rage for faux-crocodile-embossed leather on sofas and chairs.

Evolution of the Pieces

Crouching tiger, hidden coffee table

Ottomans continue to grow in popularity -- and size. The largest now top the charts at nearly six feet long. Some styles open to reveal hidden storage compartments; others contain fold-out beds or pop-up coffee tables. Dubbed "Mr. Big," Mitchell Gold's jumbo model doubles as a "lounge bed/party

ottoman." On the opposite end of the scale are modestly sized cubes, often upholstered in leather, such as the white Coach one (see Photo 6), which can be moved around the room for flexible seating. Also in the category of multiple-personality furniture: Console or sofa tables with leaves that pop up to become dining tables or desks.



Photo 6.
www.coach.com

Eco chic

The Asian trend has gone mainstream and has evolved into something more Rainforest Crunch than Peking Duck. Imperial reds and yellows have softened into spice tones and cool celadon greens -- such as these two urn lamps from Currey & Co. (See Photo 7).



Photo 7.
Currey & Co. accessories are available at stores nationwide.

Chow tables (traditional Chinese tables with carved bow legs) and chinoiserie have given way to banana bark coffee tables (see Photo 8), and silk ikat. In Thomasville's new Visaya collection, these earthier elements were mixed with a clean-lined modern sofa upholstered in cocoa brown leather.



Photo 8.
www.thomasville.com

At Broyhill Furniture, the Eastwinds Tapestry collection (see Photo 9) features pieces with Asian-inspired motifs -- note the

wrapped-bamboo look at the corners of this hutch -- with a casual lighter finish. Add a miniature water garden and an Enya soundtrack, and you have an instant antidote for a stressed-out day.



Photo 9.
www.broyhill.com

Patterns Aplenty

All about toile

From Marie Antoinette to Martha Stewart, it seems that everybody's mad about toile. Typically white or off-white cotton fabric printed with classical scenes of milkmaids or other pastoral life, toile de Jouy was originally popular in 18th-century France. Suddenly, it's all the fashion rage once again -- on the runways and at home.

(Martha Stewart recently revealed that she owns a pair of toile capri pants.)

Toile (pronounced twal) is perhaps most at home in traditional French or English country schemes. At Highland House, a new fabric collection based on Asian and European porcelain patterns was paired with the manufacturer's Cotswold Cottage and Rue de Provence upholstery (see Photo 10). But with its clean, graphic designs, toile also manages to look surprisingly modern.



Photo 10.
www.highlandhousefurniture.com

Check republic

Once reserved for the "My Little Pony" age group, gingham checks are breaking out of preteen bedrooms and into adult casual living spaces. While small-scale pattern still looks sweet on a tufted chair in Kincaid's new Laura Ashley collection, oversized seersucker checks have a more grown-up appeal at Lee Industries and on Lane's Nantucket sofa.