

Darker colors prevail as Homerama noted

By Helen Diane Vincent
special writer

HERE IN Michigan, fundamental changes are taking place in the use of color and design for

Credits

INTERIORS, the special home furnishings section appearing today in all editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, was coordinated by Marie McGee, special sections editor.

Special writers were Joan Boram and Cathie Breidenbach. Photographers were Jerry Zolynsky and John Stormzand.

Advertising coordinators were Gigi Gondek and Vel Ellis.

The cover shows a dining arrangement from the Centennial Collection by Bernhardt Furniture adopted in the Georgian manner with carved splat back arm and side chairs and double pedestal table. At Norman Lacoff & Associates in the Michigan Design Gallery, 1700 Stutz Drive, Troy.

Questions concerning the section should be directed to McGee at 591-2300, Ext. 313.

the home. There's more happening than just a shift in color preference. The home is increasingly viewed as a means of self-expression — a place where we are able to define our environment, and by extension — ourselves.

Talking with some of our leading retailers confirms this.

Commenting upon the highly developed sophistication and self-confidence of Jacobson's clientele, Larry Eppers, assistant store manager in Birmingham, said, "They are thoroughly exposed to the broadening experience of travel, education, and the media coverage of international interior design."

"CONSEQUENTLY, they come in with a pretty good idea of what they want and expect us to help them achieve it."

Irene Chappin, a Jacobson's interior designer, added, "Because we often work with two generations from one family, we see the differences in their approaches."

"Typically the wife from an older couple carries out the responsibility of making choices. Now their children — the younger couples — are into design projects

Green shades leading parade

together. "They consult with our staff and with each other before a final decision is made. There is less of a rebellious reaction to the older generation as much as an interest in achieving their own sense of elegant style."

Eppers concurred. "What both generations are looking for is a quiet boldness and not trendiness. Furnishings are thought of as wise investments."

Both agreed that it would be easier to do a trendy look rather than exercise a higher level of professional skill in reflecting an individual's taste and circumstances.

Jeffrey B. Roberts, of Gorman's in Troy, a showcase for the Drexel Heritage furniture lines, also recognizes the client's need for self-expression as the main force behind the multiple trend seen today in the home furnishings field.

HE POINTS to Gorman's broad assortment of styles as satisfying a greater part of that

need. With the line about to expand this fall with major introductions in the neo-classic, art deco, and other styles, still more options will be made available.

From the vantage point of J.L. Hudson's director of interior design, Susan Salley Zinger, "We get our direction from our clients — and some are quite vocal when looking for something different."

She continued by affirming a trend toward "a definite mixture of styles that make a room look as if it evolved, rather than being deliberately planned."

UNQUESTIONABLY, each of the numerous furniture styles is having a particular influence on how colors are being used.

Hudson's country French upholstered pieces sold well in more "romantic" colors, Zinger said, while Chappin said Jacobson's Pierre Deux line did extremely well in cinnamon, soft blue and beige.

Roberts said the best-selling fabric for Heritage's Ming Treasures Collection sofa is in a dark

iridescent paisley that blends with the deep wood tones and the style.

FOR ALL OF THE retailers, the Southwest style has been invariably linked to the neutrals and grays pastels.

When the strong association of white and neutrals with contemporary styles, Bob Siegel, director of design for the Gorman's Southfield store was bought up exclusively with contemporary, agreed.

"Whites and neutrals are strongly identified with our lines and remain strong in sales, because many of our clients feel secure with these types of colors."

But he went on to say, "They're not the only colors sold. For years, we've also been selling pinks, peaches, and turquoise, and now we're even beginning to see the return of golds, olive greens, and browns."

SINCE THE Los Angeles post-modern and Italian Boldism (a streamlined futuristic style), highly touted in national publications, are not having much effect in Michigan, none of the designers or retailers contacted anticipated the return of very bright colors in unusual combinations linked to these styles — at least for some time.

In contrast, anticipating that neo-classic and other 19th Century-inspired furniture will become accepted, some people believe there would be an accelerated use of more saturated shades called the "jewel" tones, capable of standing up to the strong design statements these furniture styles project.

CONNECTED WITH furniture style is the direct influence that wood color and finish have on color trends.

"The high quality of wood finishes is a key element to the success of our Drexel Heritage lines," Roberts said.

Two dining room settings at the entrance to the store are examples.

One is very formal in a high gloss, dark finish; the other is an elegant transitional in a very pale, soft lustre finish.

The contrast made it obvious that each spoke to a different generation, if not attitude. Each required, by its very nature, its own range of colors indicating that the trend toward contrasting wood finishes will generate an expansion also in the range of contrasting colors.

This is something the middle-tone wood finishes had not required in previous years.

A STYLE STATEMENT that bears watching for its wood finish as well as its new sense of proportions is Baker's Northern Italian Collection.

A gap is being filled in the furniture industry that has so heavily emphasized high polish, or depth

of finish. The colors that showed off the dark, low-lustre finish in the display were a warm red, nearly a cinnamon-rose, deep greens, and gold.

It was Shirley White, showroom manager of Baker Knapp and Tubbs (where the line is shown in depth), who pointed out the softer lustre, the black wrought-iron detailing, and the hand-painted finishes of the armoires and other pieces.

Hand-painted finishes, in faux trompe de oie, or more basic glazing, have been primarily in the domain of high-style lines for many years.

THEY ARE now coming into their own, influencing the use of colors in the direction of soft celadon greens, blues, creams, and beiges.

Undoubtedly, the strong underlying trend toward more complex painted finishes applies not only to furniture, but extends to walls, ceilings, moldings, and even floors.

In this process, we'll all begin to think of color in a far more subtle, complex way. This trend runs parallel with carpet and fabric development that has become far more complex in its achievement of iridescence, subtle dimension, patterning and other special effects, dormant for many years.

WHEN ALL of these elements are taken into consideration, we can summarize present color and design trends that will be around for the next eight to 10 years.

This is an overall expansion of available colors in all home furnishing's lines.

Up until recently, as new colors moved into a line, they usually replaced the older colors. But this is happening less often.

Older colors continue in demand, while new colors proliferate in shade and tint variations.

"An ever-wider range of colors, from neutrals to jewel tones is selling at Gorman's," Roberts said.

Much the same can be said for patterns and styles in all product categories.

FOR EXAMPLE, solid color, plush broadloom carpeting continues to sell in basic neutrals, but so do burlaps, and pin-dot patterns in a variety of colors.

There is a greater sense of freedom in combining patterns, textures, and weaves throughout the home than we've had in years.

Zinger credits Ralph Lauren for bringing mixed patterns and sophisticated color into the bedroom and bath.

And further, as Zinger and others observed, "There is an overall trend toward opulence, more embellished windows, larger-scale accessories, and a broader acceptance of different styles from

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N0537	Tabriz w/Silk	46 x 66	\$ 1,525	\$ 762
N0286	Tabriz	107 x 169	\$ 10,850	\$ 5,425
N0308	Yazdeh	88 x 110	\$ 12,950	\$ 6,475
N0320	Bakhtiari	100 x 132	\$ 11,250	\$ 5,625
N0333	Kashan	91 x 127	\$ 12,925	\$ 6,462
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N0462	Fine Isphahan w/Silk	32 x 56	\$ 10,200	\$ 5,100
N0470	Tabriz w/Silk	33 x 47	\$ 2,500	\$ 1,250
N0246	Kashan	68 x 95	\$ 8,400	\$ 4,200
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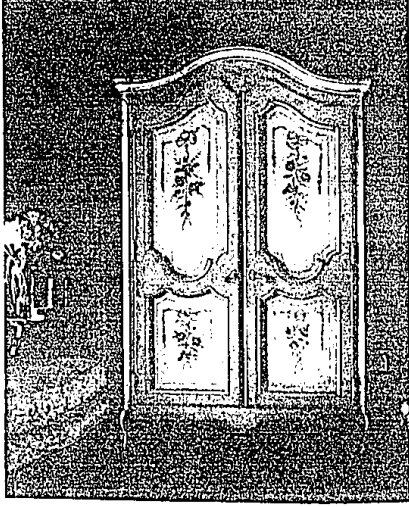
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Romantic look

Louis XV painted armoire by Baker. Decorated with fanciful flowers and ribbons for a light-hearted, romantic look. Hand-painted furniture at Baker, Knapp and Tubbs in the Michigan Design Center.