

# Designer look comes to retail level

By BARBARA MAYER  
For AP Special Features

Move over, rustic American country and cookie-cutter kitsch. There's a whole new world of accessories to explore.

It's in the field of personal decorating, a relatively new arena that offers a designer look at the retail level. One that, if you have a creative eye, can be pulled together without a decorator or to-the-trade showrooms.

It made quite a splash among home furnishings professionals who attended the October show at High Point, N.C.

Keeping pace with European-inspired furniture collections, U.S. accessories firms such as Sarreid Ltd. and Guildmaster Inc. showed a variety of international accents based on favorite antiques and crafts.

There were influences from Europe, the Near East and Asia. Some of the copies were so realistic that walking through a number of showrooms was more akin to visiting bazaars in exotic places.

Sarreid, a Wilson, N.C., company that imports accessories from Europe and the Far East, is a good example. There were tables in a Mediterranean style, with tile tops and forged iron bases. Nearby were Italian ceramics — fruit and lamps shaped like fruit — and urns made to look like old glass that might have been excavated from the island of Murano. There also were metal boxes from India, ceramic candlesticks and vases from Mexico, and much, much more.

In a highly unusual move, Guildmaster, of Springfield, Mo., devoted its entire line to one designer — Isabelle de Borchgrave, a Belgian artist whose work is widely known in Europe.

"They look like items that a person would collect one at a time," Ellie Parsons, co-owner of Guildmaster, said. "Americans want that individualized look, but they want it the fast-food way, all at once. That is what this collection is designed to give them."

De Borchgrave products include prints of botanicals painted on antique, hand-written journal pages; hand-painted and hand-stenciled furniture; and mirrors, candlesticks, lamps, boxes, mini-chests, wall brackets, and more.

Upholstered furniture also joined the ranks of personal decorating. Pieces by Sandra Nunnerley for the Lane Co. of

**'Americans want that individualized look, but they want it the fast-food way, all at once.'**

**Ellie Parsons**  
Guildmaster

Altavista, Va., carry such stylish design to a new level.

"I have taken details from custom work and applied them to mass-market production," the New York interior designer turned furniture designer said.

The Nunnerley collection encompasses about three dozen pieces. One is an English club chair which combines striped and solid fabrics with bullion fringe — something a professional decorator might do.

A round tufted ottoman alternates fabrics in a pinwheel design. An upholstered chair recalls the designs of Syrie Maugham, a famous English decorator in the 1920s and '30s, and a chair and ottoman are reminiscent of Billy Baldwin, an American designer of the '40s and '50s.

Fabric-covered "couture" tables offer another decorator look that Nunnerley is translating for retail sales. These tables have far more tailoring and detail than the usual circular, to-the-floor cloth. But they have the same protective glass on top. And they aren't just round. There are also squares and rectangles in console tables, lamp tables, game tables and dining tables. Fabrics are solid colors, and contrasting borders, pleating and mitering and the use of metal grommets and ties add to the looks based on pieces now popular in high fashion.

Suggested retail prices for the Nunnerley pieces, available in late March, will range from about \$700 for an ottoman to \$3,000 for a sofa.

"This is the upper end of our line, but not the very top," Art Thompson, president of Lane Upholstery, said. "They are not more expensive than many other Lane pieces."

Thompson says interior design galleries probably would carry more pieces than mainstream retailers. The consumer should be able to pick the style "but probably will be able to use some design help when selecting fabrics."

"We see the collection as a group of refreshing pieces, not necessarily tied together," Thompson added. "High style design is becoming more mass market as consumers grow more discerning and comfortable with their own taste."

"It started with fashion and now some people are carrying the same discernment into their homes."

In the showroom, Nunnerley stuck to a neutral palette with a splash of bright blue which she calls "the new navy."

Catherine B. Stein, president of The Color Council, a color and trend forecasting service in New York, confirmed that brights are the new story.

"Citrus colors such as orange, lime and lemon and turquoise and hot pink are replacing the neutrals and naturals," she says, adding that at Baker, a style leader, "the predominant color was coral, a mid-tone of orange which is the

fashion color at the moment."

While most of us can't afford to trash our neutral upholstery, an accent piece in one or more of the fashion colors should live things up at home.

"The public is probably just as bored with neutrals as the manufacturers are," Stein says.



**We Have Spectacular**

**THANKSGIVING**



**Centerpieces for Your Holiday Entertaining**

**Hours Mon-Sat. 10-5**

- Silk Plants & Flowers
- Dried Flowers
- Brass Trees
- Ceramic
- Wicker
- Pottery
- Unusual Containers

**WINDOW FILM...**

**Reduces Heat, Fade and Glare!**

- Rejects up to 77% of the sun's heat, lowering your electric bill
- Rejects up to 98% of UV rays, the primary cause of fading of draperies and furniture
- Provides a degree of shatter resistance to increase safety
- Reduces heat & "hot spots" near windows
- In winter, helps insulate glass to retain heat
- Variety of colors & shades to complement your decor

**RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL**

**FREE ESTIMATES!**

**eclipse**

**WINDOW TINTING SPECIALISTS**

**9206 Telegraph • Redford • (313) 532-8820**

**LENNOX**

**ONE LESS THING TO WORRY ABOUT.**

**YOUR #1 TEAM FOR TOTAL HOME COMFORT**

**LENNOX and SM HEATING SALES COMPANY**

Service maintenance agreements very affordable. We Service All Makes and Models • Complete 24 Hour Service Company.

**23262 Telegraph • Southfield, MI**

**(810) 352-4656**

- Gas Furnaces 80 to 90% efficiency
- Central Air Conditioners from 10 SEER
- Electronic Air Cleaners
- Humidifiers
- Digital Thermostats
- Chimney Liners
- Professional Installation
- Financing Available

**FREE ESTIMATES**

