

Diversity

Shoppers influencing interior design trends



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A quiet revolution has been taking place in the American home. People are moving away from following trends set by experts to demanding

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pieces from the American or European Themes collections.

Both collections employ natural wood and painted finishes, allowing for cross-coordination.

Bernie Moray, of Gorman's Gallery of Fine Furniture in Southfield, who has spearheaded the retailing of contemporary furniture for 28 years, has added Della Robbia of California to his distinguished roster of resources.

Three of this new company's upholstered lines — Barga, Cassino and Trivoli — make it possible for Moray to bring close interpretations of well-known contemporary classics to a larger public at lower prices one usually expects to pay for these styles. The Della Robbia lines also include an array of European upholstery patterns typically associated with very high-end furniture.

Andrew H. Fisher, president and CEO of Arkitektura/In-Situ in Birmingham, is dedicated to high-style modernism, an international design movement that defines what "cutting edge" should be.

Fisher takes a strong position on protecting the intellectual or creative property of the designers whose furniture he retails. Perhaps this has made his showroom a mecca for architects and consumers who relish the challenges laid down by these innovative designers.

Donna Stevens, director of the Interior Design Studios at Hudson's, underscores the necessity of having interior designers accessible to the public. With the proliferation of styles making interior design decisions all the more difficult, the responsibility has fallen on the skilled designer to bring cohesiveness to customer selections.

Hudson's has even re-initiated interior design seminars taught by some of

products and services reflecting their preferred style of living. It turns out these preferences themselves are diverse and changing.

Many suburban retailers have kept pace with changes by expanding assortments and adding consumer-friendly seminars, in-store videos and interior design services. This also is prompted by an environment of relentless competition.

Gary Van, president of Scott Shuptrine's furniture stores in Bloomfield Hills, Novi, Troy and Grosse Pointe Farms, has focused on lifestyle merchandising as "idea starters" intended to show customers some of the available possibilities.

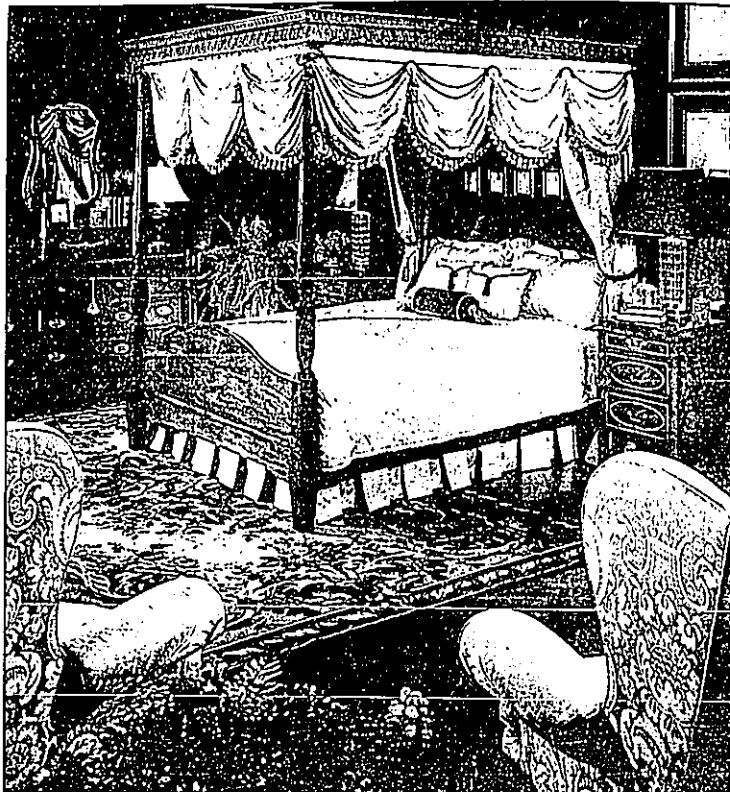
Scott Shuptrine's wide style and price assortment has been expanded to cater to increased consumer demands for more casual comfort at affordable prices.

Two lines in particular meet this criteria: the new Mitch Gold upholstered pieces that make the most out of slipcovers as a style feature and versatile additions to Lineage's line, American Tapestry. Its design inspiration comes from eclectic treasures one finds by scouring antique shops and flea markets.

Jeffrey B. Roberts of Gorman's Drexel-Heritage Galleries in Troy has added two completely contrasting lines to appeal to different consumer lifestyles.

For those seeking the upscale, sumptuous look, they can select from the extensive Biltmore Estate Collection made up of replicas of fine 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century European furniture gathered for the North Carolina Vanderbilt mansion, built in the 1890s.

Others who prefer low-keyed, plain-spoken styles derived from either rural America or England, France or Scandinavia, may choose

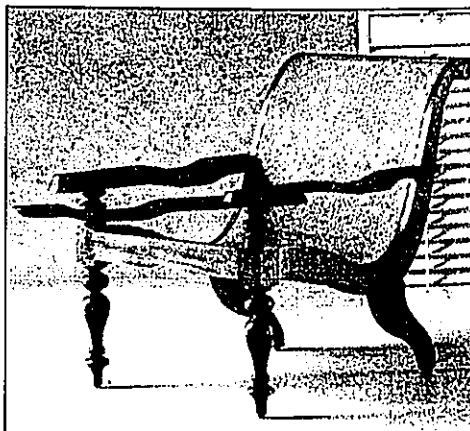


Gilded-age treasures: Reproduction of bedroom furniture from George Washington Vanderbilt's Biltmore grand mansion in North Carolina. Manufactured by Heritage and shown at Gorman's Drexel-Heritage Galleries in Troy and Ray's Interiors in Farmington. Tyrolean Room Canopy bed, queen size, \$5,139. Watson Room dresser, \$3,369. Watson Room lyre mirror, \$1,429. Oval parlor table, \$1,429. Chippendale Room nightstand, \$1,979. Stuyvesant wing chair in foreground, from \$2,100 to \$2,540, depending upon grade of cover.

their 37 designers. These types of seminars are being offered more frequently by our top retailers to an ever more interested public.

Bob Gamble, sales representative for Milling Road, a division of Baker, Knapp & Tubbs, is confident Milling Road's 22-piece West Indies Collection will find a receptive consumer — if for no other reason than its distinctive style. Milling Road's adaptations, just now being introduced locally, follow the example set by 18th and 19th century Caribbean furniture makers in balancing the best of American Federal, European Neo-Classical and Colonial Anglo-Indian styles. So far, this style has been available mostly through the antique markets.

Eric and David Buzenberg of Walker & Buzenberg Furniture Sales, bring a fine rendition of Mission-style dining room and occasional tables by Richardson Brothers



Cool, comfortable: From Milling Road's West Indies Collection, the Planter's Chair (\$1,458), with mahogany frame, extended arms and woven cane seat and back. At Englander's, Birmingham; Baker, Knapp & Tubbs, Michigan Design Center, Troy.