

fabric fashion

By Tony Smyth

HA+D takes a look at what's available in the upholstery world from popular trends to sustainable practice.

DESIGNERS TODAY are adopting innovative interpretations of many diverse styles and adapting them to suit the nature of the specific project. Manufacturers are also expanding their lines to offer a vast array of textures, colour and patterns using a selection of materials that have been manufactured or reworked to comply with today's fire safety and sustainability requirements. Choices range from the modern versus the traditional, oriental designs juxtaposed with western influences and contemporary architectural elements fused with antique motifs.

Amanda Lack Clark, Managing Director of Altfield Interiors, points out that manufacturers are considering what the end use for their fabrics will be and are designing accordingly. "We have had tremendous success with our collections from Pollack recently; in part this is due to their focussed and very useable colour palette. We are very fortunate too, that they design their fabrics with their final usage in mind, so international fire codes are met, along with high rub-tests and so on, so they are fantastically useful for hospitality yet have the luxe look of the finest top end residential fabrics."

The market for 'all environment' fabrics, designed for high performance and can be used outdoors, as well as in Spas and heavy use areas such as restaurants, is one that has been developed enormously by lines such as Chella. Developments in weaving technology and solution dyed acrylic yarns are such that outdoor velvets are now appearing in collections such as those by Donghia. Hospitality designers are increasingly specifying these types of fabrics for their high-performance characteristics.

The use of beautifully embroidered fabrics, in increasingly complex patterns and natural ornamentation, is also becoming a major trend especially in Asia Pacific & Middle East. These delicately worked fabrics are now often being specified in rooms to enhance their luxury. When used for accent and drama or even as framed panels in suites, they can truly elevate the feeling of quality in a room. Examples of which can be found in the Emperor's Garden collection from the UK's GP & J Baker.

Deborah Schwartz, Art Director at Valley Forge Fabrics, has created a line that was inspired by the need to create competitive yet 'green' fabrics. Valley Forge Fabrics' FRESH line, a trade-marked acronym for Fabrics Redefining Environmental Standards (for) Hospitality, emphasises the fact that hoteliers do not have to pay more for making choices that are better for the environment. Schwartz says, "My inspiration was to create a collection of designs with clean, graphic qualities in a colour palette that offers a range of choices that emulate the comfort found in residential lifestyle environments." The collection also includes a volume of textures that offer choices for simplicity when bold designs are more predominant in other areas of the guest rooms.

Exploring the geometry and styles of architecture through the ages, the DesignTex Destinations Collection is a diverse grouping of upholsteries and vinyl wallcoverings inspired by unique finds from travel destinations around the world. Inspiration for their designs stemmed from flea markets, farmer's markets, historic palaces and up-and-coming fashion districts in an experience that presents itself with endless beauty and inspiration. The collection features a number of extreme performance fabrics and value priced patterns that transport you to another place and time. Resurrecting antique patterns from empirical palaces or building on geometric and architectural facets, the collection has a comprehensive sense of place arousing a modern sense of nostalgia. ✿



Top to bottom: Pollack; GP & J Baker; Chella; Valley Forge Fabrics.