

Furniture Trends: 50 Shades Beyond Gray

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.



Fall furniture trends will not cause you to stare into showroom display windows, but you'll see a twist this season.

Gray continues as the new neutral in interior design, just as beige did for years before; however, it packs a punch.

According to Tom Lias, president and COO of Gorman's Home Furnishings, "Gray continues but with spots of color, such as pastels in purple, aqua,

light blue, plum, ochre yellow and tangerine, to brighten up the gray."

Gorman's beautiful furniture showrooms in Troy, Novi, Southfield, Shelby Township and Grand Rapids present many styles and carry about 100 different brands, from moderately priced to luxury lines. Lias named the two most popular trends favored by customers as the "New Traditional style" and "Uptown Modern style." Continued on page 92



Above: Resort Living conversation area.
Right: Natural materials: petrified wood



Tufted bed.



Upholstered high-back bed.



New Traditional Style.

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New Traditional furniture styles have simpler lines than what was previously considered traditional. He notes a bit of pizzazz, with silver and gold nail heads and perhaps a starburst mirror as a strong statement piece.

“It’s not your mother’s mahogany,” Lias says. “It can be slightly contemporary and sometimes borders on Uptown Modern. New Traditional lies a bit right of the Traditional you may have grown up with.”

Uptown Modern reveals a clean and casual look. Lias paints a picture: “Imagine smoked woods, grayish brown tones coupled with textured bronze metal. If gold is used for detail, it must be with a calmed-down patina; this style tends toward bronze for a subtle accent.”

Other new trends in furniture introduce the use of natural materials including petrified wood and untreated woods. Important detailing includes channeling around chairs and sofas using lengths of leather or contrasting colors to usher in unique new looks.

Lias comments on the trend he calls “Resort Living” for the backyard and three-season room. “The focus now is

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New Trends in Furniture

- Gray – with spots of color
- New Traditional – simpler lines and a bit of pizzazz
- Uptown Modern – smoked woods and textured bronze
- Natural Materials – untreated woods, petrified wood
- Channeling around chairs and sofas – in leather or contrasting color
- Resort Living – focus on conversational seating outdoors
- Beds are Beautiful – upholstered frames, mirrored or nail-head trim
- Recliners Return –the look of an accent chair

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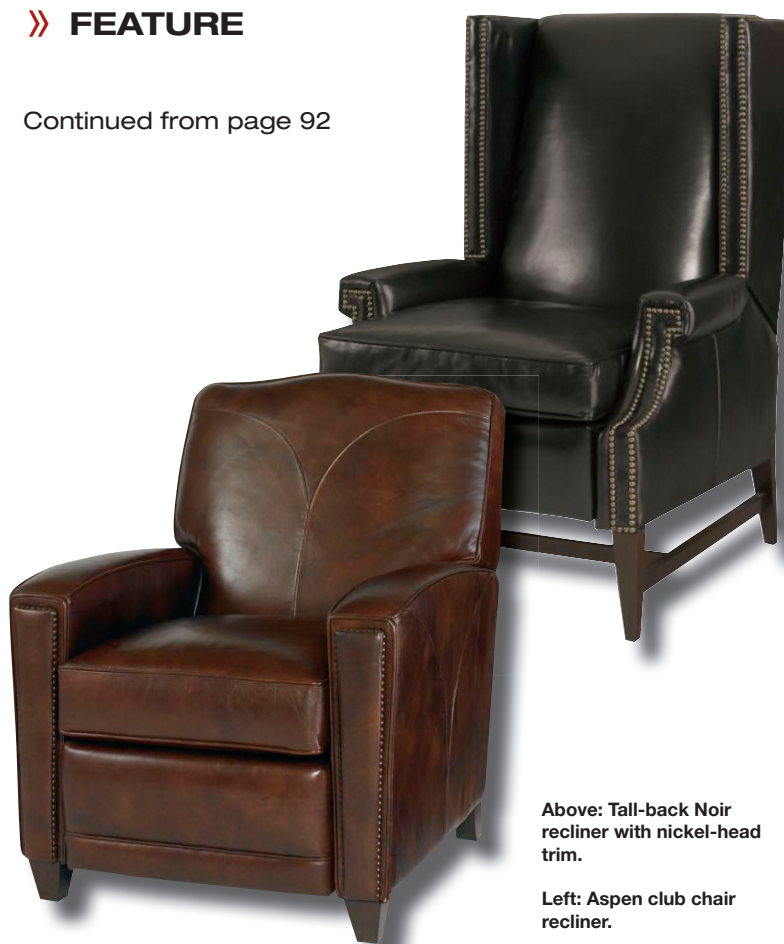
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Above: Tall-back Noir recliner with nickel-head trim.

Left: Aspen club chair recliner.

on seating, not just dining," Lias says. "We arrange outdoor living around chat groups using comfortable and trendy upholstered chairs that withstand the seasons. Such groups are also arranged around fire pits, now available in many outdoor furniture lines.

"Our customers are savvy and are looking for customization. We do mostly special orders and sell very little out of stock. The movement is toward personalization and that's what we offer."

Shannon Growney, an interior designer with Scott Shuptrine Interiors, sees two big trends in the furniture industry that have taken over.

The largest trend, with no end in sight, is the bedroom. It was, at one time, a rather flat, under-represented area of the home. Many people didn't put money into the bedroom, and it was the last room to be redone. All of that has changed.

The upholstered bed came on the scene a few years back and has taken off. When vendors recognized how big the trend was they took their designs farther. Variations include upholstery, mirror trim and wood frames with upholstered insets, nail-head trim options and multitudes of shapes, heights and sizes.

"Beds are not only beautiful now, but they are also economical," Growney says. "The look can be used with any case goods, and I find people mixing a variety of products

in the bedroom to create that eclectic look that everyone wants."

Some furniture is just too comfortable to go away. Thus, the ubiquitous recliner, the giant, overstuffed monstrosity in the corner, has a new face. While the ultimate comfort and relaxation that a recliner offers may be priceless, some look for more streamlined features and something that resembles an accent chair.

"Michael Weiss uses a modern approach to the recliner with its mirror, polished or stainless base, and channel stitched back. Century offers a variety of pressed-back recliners from the traditional wing chair to the nutmeg Aspen club chair. The tall-back Noir recliner reveals polished nickel nail-head trim," Growney says.

Shuptrine offers an array of vendors that showcase their exclusive versions of the recliner with a variety of leather and fabric options. **NS**

Gorman's Home Furnishings & Interior Design

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