

HOME

& Garden

[WINTER MARKET REPORT]

IT'S ALL ABOUT LUXURY

— with just a tinge of green

By Susan Fornoff
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

There was no sign or talk of recession last week at the San Francisco Design Center, where the Bay Area's latest definition of luxury and the characteristics of the region's new luxury client provided the focal points for Winter Market.

Perched on \$3,000 chairs amid \$300-a-yard fabrics, designers heard that it is just as luxurious (maybe more, even) to salvage a 150-year-old barn to construct a small home as it is to build a mansion from scratch. And they were told of the short attention span and bulging pocketbooks of the newly affluent Silicon Valley techies, who, truth be told, might be more interested in having a fully designed house this afternoon than in taking the time to remake that barn.

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ANTIQUE VS. MODERN: Newer furniture may be all the rage, but that doesn't mean you can't mix in some old styles

By Laura Thomas
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

When the fall San Francisco Antiques Show presented a special exhibition on 20th century design, it signaled a breach in the wall dividing the world of the antiquarian from that of the modernist.

That shift, noted at the outset of a panel of local dealers and designers at the San Francisco Winter Market, has been building, driven in large part by new ideas about how to collect valuable pieces and use them in the home.

Decorating a room with nothing but antiques is disappearing, said interior designer J. Van Doorn. Modern design "adds livability," he said. "Fewer homes have huge collections of things they are not using."

The group included Eric Petsinger of Epoca, Jim Gallagher of Garden Court Antiques, Kathleen Taylor of the Lotus Collection and Terry Gross of Urban Chateau, which hosted the event at the San Francisco Design Center Galleria.

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Luxury beds can be made of reclaimed hardwood like the one by Robert Lighton, above. Below, modern-era chairs set off a dining table made of antique Italian tiles and mosaics.



Wendell & Co.

KARIN MULLER / CHRONICLE PHOTOS



A daybed designed by DeSousa Hughes, with fabric and embroidery designed and provided by Holland & Sherry.

DeSousa Hughes

SUSTAINABILITY: Designers learn that natural products and splendor really can go together, plus be profitable

By Lynette Evans
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Green design is nothing new at the San Francisco Design Center, but at last week's Winter Market the emphasis was not only on how interior designers can specify earth-friendly products for their clients, but on how green design can actually be profitable.

Indeed, the themes of the various show-room presentations during the three-day annual market seemed to be: selling luxury to high-end clients, selling sustainability to those same clients, and — not to be overlooked — selling luxurious green design to high-end clients.

After Wednesday's keynote panel, at which marketing experts profiled the luxury customers for designers, Thursday's opening panel featured Penny Bonda, co-editor of Interior Design magazine and the Green Zone on InteriorDesign.net, interviewing Stefan Mühle and Sherry Caplan, general manager and designer, respectively, of the new Orchard Garden Hotel, San Francisco's, and indeed California's, first LEED-certified hotel. The topic: "How Sustainability Became Profitable." At an after-

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TEXTILES: Those who can are prioritizing elegance in their homes. High-end designers are rising to meet the need.

By Jennifer Williams
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Affluent consumers will ride out the economic downturn on a bed of luxury linens, surrounded by colors and fabrics that soothe the senses.

That's the prediction of local textile designer Barbara Beckmann, who displayed some of her recent creations last week at the San Francisco Design Center's Winter Market.

Rather than buying new homes, the trend will be to upgrade current property. "Those who can stay in the real estate market will lean toward luxury" when they redecorate, Beckmann said.

"Designers I worked with years ago are coming back to me to update the projects we worked on together," she said. "People are coming back to luxury more and more. We're going to see more hand-done work because people can appreciate what isn't made in China."

Beckmann MooreYaki Studio, where its

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Catherine Golden speculates that color combinations played a big role in her win. "I think they also liked that I did so much of the work myself."

Do-it-yourself winner

Mill Valley woman's master bedroom takes fancy of Domino magazine readers

By Anh-Minh Le
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

In early 1994, Catherine Golden found herself unemployed, newly divorced and raising her 4-year-old daughter alone.

"My goal at the time was to keep this house," she recalled. "I was so determined to keep the house and keep (my daughter) in it when she was young."

Golden succeeded. Today, she still lives in that Mill Valley house. She is a partner in a San Francisco law firm, specializing in defense litigation. And with her daughter

heading off to college in Santa Barbara, she recently decided to make her fantasy master bedroom a reality. She knocked down the wall between two small bedrooms and created a Parisian-inspired sanctuary for herself.

Although remodeling is nothing new for empty nesters, something extraordinary happened in Golden's case: She won \$10,000 for her makeover.

Shortly after her bedroom demolition, construction and redecorating project was complete, Golden heard about a Domino

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Catherine Golden, a former art major, often spends her weekends on home-improvement projects, such as stenciling a floral pattern on the closet doors of her master bedroom. The editors of Domino magazine picked the room as the winner in their design contest.

Catherine Golden

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ANTIQUE VS. MODERN: What do you know? Young people want styles different from parents'

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The source of this shift seemed a bit difficult for the panelists to pinpoint, although Gross said it was partly fueled by the growing interest of young people in buying furniture and a reciprocal interest by dealers in courting them.

"The dot-commers want to establish their own style and be different from their parents," she said.

Asked by moderator Heidi Gerpheide to define antique versus modern, the panelists offered the following:

Any item more than 100 years old is called an antique. The birth of the modern age is acknowledged to be the 1925 Decorative Arts Expo in Paris, where designers introduced new materials such as plastic, fiberglass, aluminum and acrylic, and machine-made furniture was exalted.

The dealers on the panel said they have always advised mixing antiques with modern.

"What's fun today is the contrast between really interesting objects," Taylor said.

As an example, she described placing an 18th-century chair next to a table with a 20th-century upholstered piece across the room. Both pieces "become sculptural and that's a very exciting space," she said.

Trying for a pure look with too many pieces from a period "dilutes" their impact, Petsinger agreed.

Instead, he suggested the juxtaposition of an Italian rococo commode crowned by a peach-colored plastic framed mirror from the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas.

Van Doorn said he encourages clients to "collect whatever appeals to them and, more often than not, it will all go together. There is some underlying theme

that ties it all together."

But he was quick to add, "and a good interior decorator, of course."

Gross said the mixing of modern and antique is a given in Europe where people are established and tend to naturally mix their family heirlooms with contemporary things.

"Americans are much more concerned about being in the latest style," she said. "They identify trends and move toward them."

Nonetheless, the panelists were asked by Gerpheide to identify what was coming next.

Gallagher noted the French trend toward using industrial furniture, while Taylor said using objects from other cultures was important. Questioned about whether those trends hadn't originated with artists and the so-called "cultural creatives" living in the Bay Area, panelists insisted they came more from an exchange of ideas among designers.

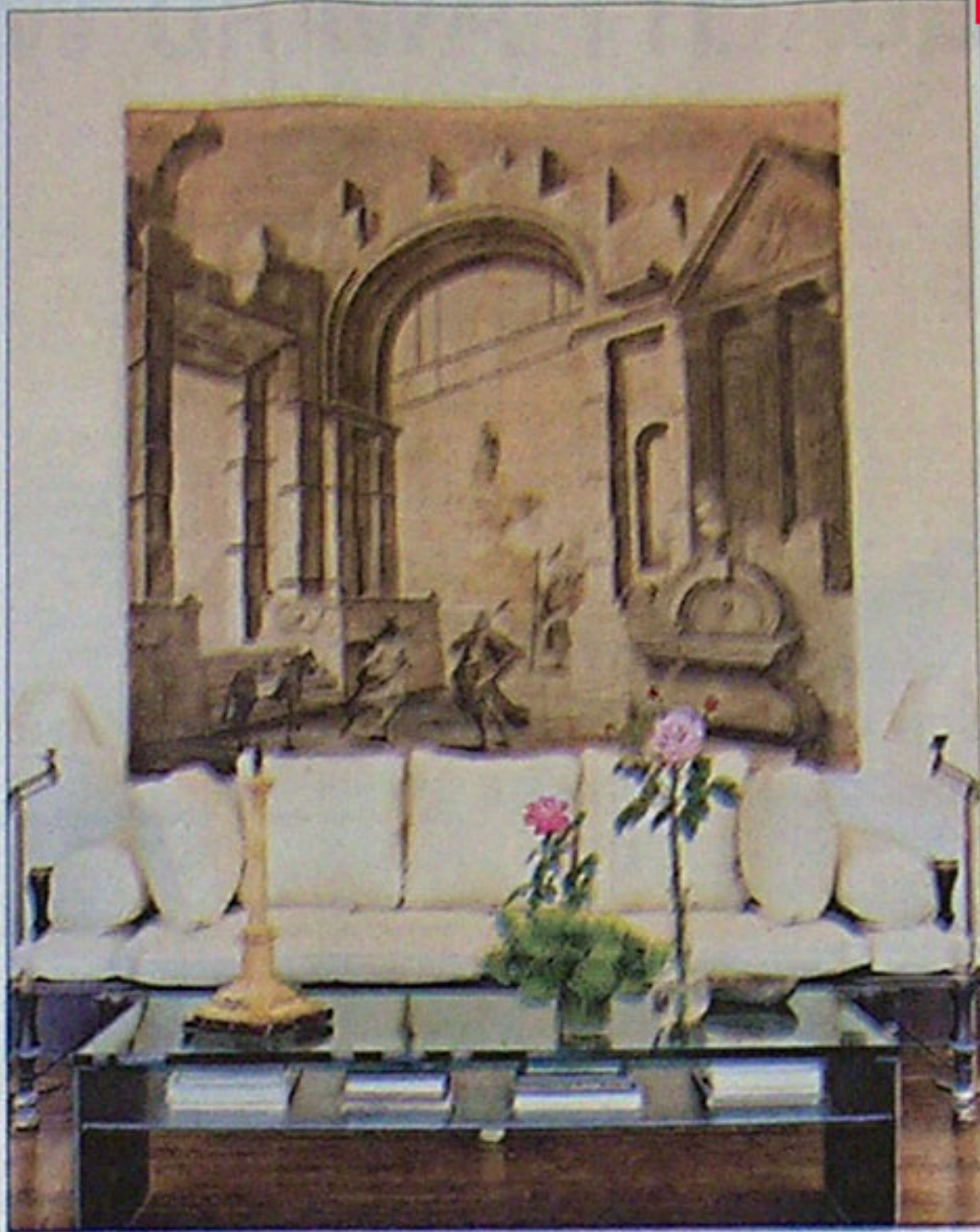
"It's important to recognize that nothing's out at any time if it's important to your client," Gross advised the audience of mostly interior designers.

She worried, however, that many people go for "the look" of things over value. Taylor answered that those who pick things they really love "never care about the value." She cautioned people with large homes, however, who want to fill them quickly, to be careful about assessing the value of what they buy.

The panelists also debated the forecast for acquiring good antiques, and the question of sustainability.

"We're the ultimate recyclers," Gallagher said, noting that antiques only increase with value over time.

Van Doorn said he was uncertain whether Boomers would be more focused on downsizing in



A thoroughly contemporary sitting area is graced by a period scene in a pre-1914 Italian Grisaille painting in the home of Montecito designer Mark Weaver.

KARIN MULLEN / California Homes

the next few years and unloading their antiques or be ready to spend their retirement accumulating them.

Taylor warned designers that acquiring new things from Eu-

rope was getting tougher with the value of the dollar and general scarcity of new finds. "Things are dwindling fast," she said.

On the other hand, Gross said she had noted the downsizing

trend had yielded a healthy market in antiques domestically. "The prices are low," she said.

E-mail Laura Thomas at lthomas@sfgate.com.

INTERNET GAINS: Professionals shop online

Even designers are doing their shopping on the Internet these days — but carefully.

That caveat emerged at "Interior Design Online," a lively panel discussion presented by Decorati.com, a year-old Web site linking designers and to-the-trade showrooms. Martha Angus, a nationally known designer who says she started her business before the fax machine came along, bought 20 chairs once from an online dealer in New Orleans.

"They arrived, and it was mold-er plaster that had been painted brown, so when you leaned back it just crumbled," she said. "And it was very difficult to get our money back."

"I've had great success shopping online," said local designer Lawanna Cathleen Endonino. "I have also had things arrive damaged and got them fixed locally because it was easier than shipping them back."

For the record, the designers are shopping at eBay and 1stdibs.com as well as retail catalog sites. They are also watching blogs, including the Peak of Chic, DesignSponge and ecoFabulous, for ideas.

"I still look at magazines for inspiration," admitted Angus, though she isn't sure anymore how she once lived without the Internet.

— Susan Fornoff

Market watch

Showrooms at the San Francisco Design District are usually open for the public to browse, but most sell only through interior designers. Information: www.sfdesigncenter.com.

GREEN GUIDES

Interior designers and do-it-yourselfers alike can get help from these resources:

► Green Fusion Design Center — 7,000-square-foot retail showroom and education center. 14 Greenfield Ave., San Anselmo; (415) 454-0174; www.greenfusiondesigncenter.com

► BuildItGreen.org — non-profit offers two-day green certification for professionals as well as resources for homeowners. www.builditgreen.org

► Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the benchmark for design, construction and operation of green buildings. Certification given to buildings and building professionals by the U.S. Green Building Council. www.usgbc.org

► iReuse — a site for businesses and individuals to find buyers and nonprofits who want old furniture and construction materials or to buy recycled materials. www.ireuse.com

► Interface, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, will take back used carpet. www.interfaceinc.com

► Lily Pad Consulting shows you how to green your home. Verde Clean, a green cleaning service in the Bay Area, is booked but has a waiting list. To reach both: (415) 561-9920; www.verdeclean.com

► SafeCoat nontoxic paints, sealants. www.afmsafecoat.com

— Lynette Evans



Earth-friendly fabrics from the O Ecotextile collection debuted at Sloan Miyasato in the San Francisco Design Center during last week's Winter Market.



Shanghai Cherry in dupioni silk by Charlotte Forish of Chez Charlotte Textiles. Available from the Beckmann MooreYaki showroom in the Design Center.



Reiko Sudo's designs for the Japanese firm Nuno, in cotton, polyester, silk or Japanese paper, are available at Beckmann MooreYaki.

FABRICS: Gold and silver are popular color choices in creating the look of luxury

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founder spoke, carries "the top 1 percent of what's available in the industry," said interior designer Kristina Moore Yaki, the studio's principal. "And in hand-painted fabrics, Barbara sets the standard."

The studio's clients include the Bellagio in Las Vegas, the Claremont Resort in Oakland and the royal palace in Dubai. "Gold and silver are becoming very important again," Beckmann said. "They create the look of luxury. We're going to see this market coming back."

Carolyn Ray, another Beckmann MooreYaki manufacturer, also features metallics in her fabrics. Many of her wall coverings and textiles have floral patterns, while others feature strong geometric shapes.

Asian motifs abound in Beckmann's fabrics and in those of Charlotte Forish, also at Beckmann MooreYaki. Forish's company, Chez Charlotte of San Rafael, offers textiles that are hand-screened on silk dupioni, linen and moleskin.

Soft jewel tones, especially blue, are popular in a number of textile lines. Beckmann's jewelry was the inspiration for her collection featuring shades of quartz, amber, topaz, citrine, jade and two blues: aquamarine and sapphire.

For clients in the hospitality industry, Beckmann's designs can be printed on solution-dyed acrylic. The durable fabric can be washed in cold water and is suitable for outdoor as well as indoor use, she said.

Another trend in high-end design is the customization of fabric. "A good fabric is like a great accessory," Beckmann said. "Fabric makes the room."

Well-ensconced in that marketing niche is Shoshana Enosh, whose company, Micana, hand-dyes its yarn before weaving it — on human-operated, wooden looms — into luxury textiles.

"The art of dyeing is an art with a bit of science," she said, recalling how she learned the craft. "We practiced in an old-fashioned claw-foot bathtub for a year before we got it right."

Now her company can custom-match colors to clients' specifications. Enosh's focus at last week's market was on custom chenille patterns. "It's as soft as a baby's bottom," she said of a chenille throw she passed around to a studio full of admirers. "There's absolutely nothing softer than this."

At Holland & Sherry's custom embroidery presentation, "Haute Couture for the Home," Nicholas Chambeyron, formerly of Dior, described his transition from apparel to home fashions.

"We started with border designs, then moved to all-over designs, and finally to the finished product," he said. "We use a lot of computer processes, machine processes, but all the details are worked by hand" at a factory in Germany.

In creating its textiles, the company can copy architectural details from a room and put them into embroidery or appliques. "I'm trying to make things very refined and elegant," Chambeyron said. "There is no puckering of the fabric where it's embroidered."

Holland & Sherry makes its own chenille, and its line includes chenille-on-linen designs. The company also embroiders on leather, and uses leather as an applique on other fabrics.

"Most of the designs are not very traditional or old-fashioned," Chambeyron said as he displayed a number of geometric patterns, some with a Far Eastern influence.

One design featured rectangular cutouts on a mostly solid background. When sunlight shone through the openings in the cloth, the design evoked the many windows of a city skyline. Another design looked to the past. Embroidered on a light-colored background, it featured farm motifs: a flower, a rooster and a child feeding a dog.

E-mail Jennifer Williams at jwilliams@sfgate.com.