

Trends in Framing for 2003

by Anne Vazquez



Antique finishes, such as the one seen on this moulding profile and fillet, complement the simple yet elegant decor that will be seen in many interiors during 2003. (courtesy of Larson-Juhl)

A trend is defined as, “a direction or movement; an inclination or tendency toward.” While the start of a new year may not mean that style and design trends change like the flip of a switch, it is a logical time to become reacquainted with what consumers are looking for and how this translates to their custom

framing needs. As you tackle the framing jobs that arrive at your design counter, being aware of the general design trends on the market increases your value as a source of guidance for your customer. While not every item you are to frame, or every customer you have, will call for framing in the “latest fashion,” when asked if you can frame a mirror like the one

seen in the most recent Pottery Barn catalog, it’s best if you know the style to which they’re referring. Or, maybe they’ll ask to see a moulding like one they’ve seen on the television show *Frasier*. Of course, a primary aim of custom framing is to enhance an item in the best way possible—as opposed to following market trends regardless of the artwork or item.

Consumers are also looking for “more” these days and as always many look to the custom framer to make the most of the item they want to display. This desire is

reflected in several trends that continue to be popular in 2003. Consumer home décor magazines are more popular than ever, which means many of your customers are

more savvy to the possibilities of framing. This presents an opportunity to framers. A more savvy customer may mean more time at the design counter and more ques-

Forecasts in Color for 2003 from Color Marketing Group

As in 2002, consumer preferences continue to reflect the desire to create serene surroundings that incorporate colors, textures, and materials from nature. According to Color Marketing Group (CMG), an association of color and design professionals based in Alexandria, VA, a variety of blues will dominate the palette this year. This will include new tones such as “cinder blue” (a silvery blue); “blue aire” (a retro ‘60s turquoise blue); “deep arctic” (dusty navy); and “ocean cruise” (a tropical pastel blue).

Jay deSibour, president of CMG, explains, “Blue is associated with the sky and sea, so it evokes thoughts of the environment. Psychologically, it has a calming effect. Because of these attributes, it will continue to be the most universally popular color, though you will start seeing many mixtures of blue and green becoming popular.”

Gold and silver, and variations of each, are also forecast to remain popular. This is evident in the demand for brushed

metallic finishes on frames. Pearlescent whites are expected to be used in creating soothing, yet contemporary settings.

“Because there are so many home magazines and decorating guidebooks on the market today, people are more comfortable with using color,” says deSibour. “Hence we are seeing a broader and more confident use of color.”

The CMG predicts that natural colors such as yellows, greens, and browns will dominate home décor in upcoming months. “We see a trend toward nature with less bright, more sophisticated colors coming into play as well as an overall softening of the palette,” noted deSibour. “Also, people are looking for ways to make color more interesting by incorporating pearlescence, metallic, and translucence that add a sense of space and dimension.”

CMG also forecasts the return of violet and mauve (with a dusty rose appearance). Other colors expected to be on the rise in coming months include berry tones like raspberry. Accent colors include peach, orange, and lemon-golds.

For more information, visit the CMG website at www.colormarketing.org. ■



Consumers will want colors that provide a respite from technology and a return to nature. An increased emergence of neutral hues will be seen in 2003.



New blues will be sophisticated, yet natural with bright undertones.



CMG members have forecast a growing influence of reds and oranges for consumer products in 2003.



There is a continuation of elegance and sophistication utilizing luxurious materials from nature for contract markets in 2003.



Contract colors have been forecast to be inspired by fashion and moved by technology. This means high energy colors.



CMG has forecast that color, pattern, and texture will be interconnected. 2003 Contract Markets will draw from earth-based tones and textures.

tions to answer. But it also often translates into a more elaborate design, which can also translate into a higher retail price.

Wide, substantial mouldings continue to be popular, and special finishes such as brushed metallics and burlwoods appear to remain favorites for many items being framed. Dave Rosner, senior vice president of marketing at Framera, notes, "Over the past year, automobile designers have implemented lighter burls into interiors.

Consumers have responded by requesting new lighter burl colors [in other interior decor]."

Woods, in general, continue to stay strong in design trends. Natural finishes complement the "Lodge Look" that many consumers still favor. The desire for natural, quality mouldings are expected to be among the top choices for custom framing.

Mike Mooney, vice president of marketing for Larson-Juhl, asserts that "the demand for the look of hand-finished mouldings and the desire for great design will continue to be strong." Rich, antique finishes are also expected to be popular picks.

The "Cottage" look that many people are creating in their homes is forecast to remain at the forefront in 2003 as well. In the framing industry, the increase of white (and near white) moulding

styles provides framers with options for customers who like this look.

Another popular style will continue to be the tropical theme. This style includes a leaning



The rich colors and texture of burlwoods can be used to complement many interiors in 2003. (courtesy of Framera)

toward dark wood mouldings and neutral colored matting.

Black mouldings continue to diversify with finishes and ornamentation stepping up the design possibilities. The current popularity of black and white photography will keep black a useful color in frame design.

Metals also continue to gain popularity as suppliers of these items are introducing profiles, finishes, and ornamentation that can be used to enhance and enrich a wide variety of items. These styles can be used to create the streamlined, serene surroundings that many people desire.

Matting trends continue to lean toward wide borders, as well as designs with uneven mat borders (a wider border on the bottom than on the top, for example). Perhaps it's because

many of the mouldings we see today convey a bold feeling, matting styles are “rising to the occasion.” In addition to wide borders, textured matboard and fabric-wrapped mats are increasingly being used to elevate the quality of frame designs.

And as more framers introduce computerized mat cutters into their production line, consumers are becoming accustomed to seeing the intricate patterns created with this equipment. And don't be surprised if more and more of your customers ask about enhanced glazing for their framing package. Consumer awareness of UV-filtering, non-glare, and anti-reflective glass is increasing, and there are signs that resistance to price, and the notion that you're “just trying to sell them something,” will begin to decrease as the year

goes on.

More to See

The use of more dimension in frame design is another rising trend. Spacers are being used not only for the purpose of giving individual items some “breathing room,” but also to add drama. They are being used between multiple mats to create shadows, or to create levels in collage type designs.

Frederic Sischka, owner of Fast-Frame in Lost Altos, CA, has observed a rise in several techniques used to create depth and dimension. “We're seeing an increase in stacked frames, multiple fabric-wrapped mats, multiple openings with asymmetrical layouts... Another design technique that is on the rise is hinged display shadowboxes,” he explains.

Hinged or not, creating shadowboxes is certainly a framing

option that continues to gain prominence. In keeping with the tendency for people to preserve special items (without having to store them away), shadowboxes are a logical solution to the challenge of framing one or several three-dimensional items in an attractive fashion. There seems to be no end to the things that can be housed in a shadowbox, from christening gowns to an autographed hockey stick to a simple rock brought home from a special trip.

As consumer awareness of the possibilities of custom framing continues to grow throughout 2003, framers will need to hone the skills and equipment necessary to keep them satisfied. By keeping abreast of what's on the market, you're one step closer to become an invaluable part of your customers' lifestyles. ■