

FALL FRAMING TRENDS

Keep these ideas in mind when designing for customers this season

by Anne Vazquez

A variety of framing styles continues to hold top spots in the design arena. From contemporary to cottage, from natural motifs to art deco, the trends are as varied as they are interesting. This fall, moulding profiles and finishes and matboard textures and colors, for instance, are available in a plethora of choices. Design motifs from nature are present in many favored styles, including bamboo weaves, scrolling flora and fauna, natural stone, and rich wood grains. Contemporary looks often associated with metal moulding and colors are prevalent, with many of these designs sporting a fancy finish or interesting shapes. As always, having a feel for what enhances the artwork best and



This landscape print is emphasized with a moulding that imparts a warm glow to the image. (courtesy of FramERICA)

communicating this with your customer is key to successful sales and design.

Many consumers are keeping focused on their homes, and are spending expendable income on items and projects to beautify their surroundings. It's key that you offer framing materials and design that will make you stand out from your competition—and the pre-framed pieces that are increasingly getting attention.

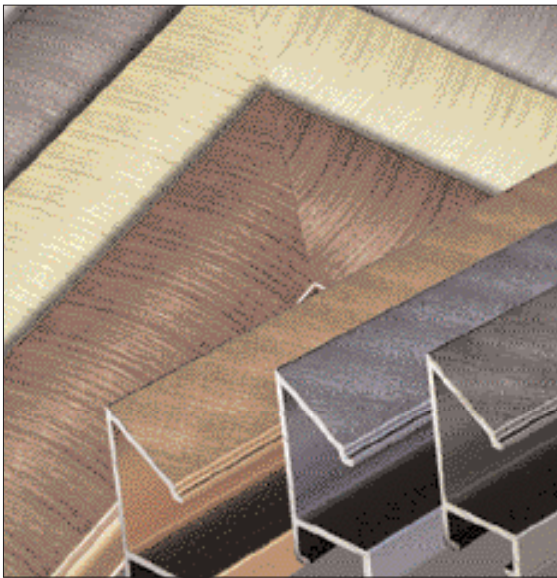
Wide mouldings that give authority to artwork,

without drawing away from it, are still popular with framing customers. However, profiles need not be so commanding to create impressive framing this season. Consumers are increasingly looking for signs of craftsmanship in their custom framing, and the use of fillets and textured mats can be used to fulfill this demand. Custom framing that is truly custom and utilizes the vast styles available is what attracts and keeps today's consumers. Specialty finishes such as brushed metallics and burlwoods appear to remain favorites.

Metals are surging in popularity this season with interior



The subtle patterned matboard used to frame this print adds depth to the art. (courtesy of Crescent Cardboard)



The brushed finish of this metal profile can add texture to the artwork it surrounds. (courtesy of Decor Products Int'l.)

today convey a bold feeling, matting styles are rising to the occasion, so to speak. That is, textured matboard and fabric-wrapped mats are gaining popularity with consumers.

Making It “Pop”

People have become less afraid to use color. Bright color and unexpected color combinations are seen more and more in all types of design arenas.

design utilizing the look of brushed aluminum and other metals. The increased selection of profiles and finishes available from industry suppliers means framers can provide this popular look to the fullest.

The cottage look that many people are creating in their homes is forecast to remain popular in 2004, and in our industry, the increase of white (and near white) moulding styles provides framers with options. In addition, simple wood finishes can fit this look perfectly.

Another popular style will continue to be the tropical theme. This style includes a leaning toward dark wood mouldings and neutral colored matting.

Matting trends continue to lean toward wide borders, as well as designs with narrower sides than top and bottom, or a wider border on the bottom than the top.

Perhaps it's because many of the mouldings we see

Don't be afraid to use it at your design counter. Industry suppliers have met this need, as you may have noticed with the introduction of moulding and matting in colors that make framing designs “pop.

Raising Awareness

An educated customer is often your best customer. They will understand why you are suggesting conservation materials. Of course, you may be their only source of



This framing, which utilizes both mahogany and natural bark finishes, illustrates the rich wood grains that complement interior designs. (courtesy of Presto Frame and Moulding)

this information so be sure to explain the need for such materials in as clear and simple fashion as possible. Over time, more and more consumers are learning of enhanced glazing. General awareness of UV-filtering, non-glare, and anti-reflective glass have



The leaf patterns on these profiles are an example of the organic motifs that are popular. (courtesy of Omega Moulding)

increased, and there are signs that resistance to price and the notion that you're “just trying to sell them something” is decreasing. (See article in PFM, February 2003 about Tru Vue's consumer survey results.)

Don't Be Shallow

The use of dimension in frame design is a trend that remains strong. The desire to frame memorabilia lends itself to shadowboxes. And this shows no sign of slowing down. Hinged or not, shadowboxes are certainly a framing



The use of color to decorate interiors is more popular than ever. Crisp colors, such as those seen here, work with many consumers' tastes. (courtesy of Universal 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 single rock.

Depth can also be achieved with the use of spacers. They can be used not only for their functional purpose of giving breathing room, but also to add drama. They



The textured finish on these metal moldings illustrates the options available. (courtesy of Nielsen Bainbridge)

are being used between multiple mats to create shadows, or to create levels in collage type designs.

So as the fall season is in full swing, and the holiday season nears, remember to stock all the styles that you will need to meet your customers' needs. Remember, more and more, they are seeing the countless selections of pre-framed artwork on the market. Get their attention and keep them coming back with all you have to offer to meet their framing desires. ■