

# The High Point Issue



## Bernhardt's warm color story

**G**ray may be the most-important core color out there, but brown was the unmistakable neutral trend at the recent High Point furniture market. Part of a larger shift toward warmth, brown showed up in virtually every upper-end showroom.

Sometimes brown's upward trajectory was acknowledged from the outset. In other cases, new products and fabrics told their own brown story via a broad range of values and personalities:

- Chocolate appeared as a velvet pinstripe accenting bright yellow linen at CR Laine, and in a shearling/leather combination sofa with

turquoise tribal toss pillows at Century

- A nearly camel-colored suede, embossed with a floral design that was touched with metallic, covered a high-back chair at Hancock & Moore; Highland House's solid-color sofa came in velvet of a similar hue
- Lillian August's daybed for Hickory White tossed milk-chocolate zebra stripe pillows and toast-colored bolsters over an off-white bench cushion for warm contrast
- French Heritage mixed shades of beige and mid-tone brown in a skirted armchair covered in fabric with architectural and angelic references, called Venus



**Marine Blueprint,  
new from Paragon**

- Theodore Alexander pieced taupe, cream and off-white hair-on-hide zigzags onto the face of modern-rustic wooden furniture pieces
- Paragon's neutralized approach to the coastal theme included taupe grounds for framed art featuring jellyfish and other sea creatures
- Taupe provided a sophisticated ground for silhouetted white leaves on an upholstered chair at Jessica Charles

Ambella Home was among the upstairs companies declaring brown's rise. They supported it with off-white-and-beige patterned dining chairs, an ottoman covered in solid-chocolate velvet and accent pillows with an oversized, embroidered-and-appliquéd tribal pattern on a chocolate ground. Their beige chenille-and-bouclé faux-solid sofa, shown with rusty orange and warm green chairs, provided a 1970's color throwback with echoes that were felt in directional collections in other upper-end showrooms.



**Echoes of the 70s in  
Ambella Home's palette**

After brown, orange was the most-obvious 70s reference in High Point. In both light and dark mid-tone values, oranges suggested livable shades like pumpkin and rust more than any other types. These hues became volume accents.

Barely mentioned, yet equally important to the nostalgic tone, avocado was a surprise addition to the still-popular green family.

Masquerading under names like fern, leaf and even chartreuse, avocado-like hues popped up on just enough upholstered chairs and sofas to get noticed. Like other incoming warm greens, it balanced the established cooler options, including jade, emerald, forest and green patina, a verdigris-inspired shade.

Light-value celadon, part of the whisper-soft pastels collection highlighted at the April market, was also visible (just not up front for fall). However, glacier blue from the same palette held a stronger position. So did pink.

Pink became more prevalent. This was not because barely-there pinks—just a step away from neutrals—have continued to gain. Instead, it was because mid-value rose began to spread its wings. While a few cooler versions could be found, rose looked best when the temperature was warmed. This made it a logical progression from the light, blush shades that are now established. Rose's best companions included taupe (Ambella Home) and off-white (Hickory Chair).

Another factor: pink pop. Shots of bright pink enlivened vignettes at Pearson, Highland House and Century Furniture. Eastern Accents teamed pink and orange in a top-of-bed collection. Only the tribal overtones of this design kept it from screaming "seventies" (pink/orange is another hallmark of that decade).

Denim-influenced and navy blues were everywhere. Petrol saw lots of action, either alone or in combination with navy. The presence of turquoise and cyan types confirmed that warmth is still incoming for this color family. That said, Ambella Home revealed their view that blues are "slowly disappearing" at the high end. The Trend Curve agrees. The blue

**Green advanced in Norwalk's  
new Company C upholstery**



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family will always be a core bestseller, but for trend, the future belongs to greens, browns, subdued oranges and warm reds. Other color notes:

- C.R. Laine expects big things from yellow
- Purples inched forward, especially plum (purple is still in the forecast for 2017 – 2018)
- Alone, black's position strengthened, especially for wood finishes and glass
- Black-and-white vignettes got a boost (read on)

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## Black and White

**B**lack-and-white duos are basic bestsellers. That's why it was smart for key companies to devote their attention to showing how this combination can look amazingly new when married with trend-right design elements.

In High Point, materials offered a primary avenue to newness. Larry Laslo, for example, created an updated black-and-white look in one of his newest lamps from Frederick Cooper, combining quartz crystal pieces with black metal. Abstract construction gave this piece a brutalist-meets-new-age personality.

The Geometric Mosaic Rectangular Table, part of the Maison-French Accents collection at French Heritage, capitalized on the growing interest in black glass, as well as the emerging position of white glass, in a tabletop featuring black-and-white glass tiles. Pieces are hand-laid into a black metal frame in a mixed-media combination that really pops.

Faux fur is on-trend again. Century Furniture used the shaggy look of white lamb fleece to add textural interest to a black-and-white bedroom vignette. At Bernhardt, a black-and-white Art Deco inspired leaf design covered a toss pillow. It kept company with faux sheared beaver, wrapped around a gray-and-white cushion.

Updated patterns also ensured that black-and-white duos will remain relevant. One abstract design, seen on an ottoman from Lillian August for Hickory White, used lines of embroidered dots forming the same kind of fracture design that emerged in framed art and cabinet doors in the past six months. CR Laine calls fracture patterns the next evolution of facets.

Plaids are incoming once again. Wesley Hall's textural version was comprised of thin, dragged lines in black and white. Cynthia Rowley for Hooker Furniture supported the trend with a regimented black-and-white plaid covering a generously scaled chair. It sat next to a white sofa trimmed with black piping.

A revival of chevrons was apparent throughout the market (see Surface Interest, below). Kate Spade's version for E.J. Victor amped up the scale with a textural zigzag pattern that made the sofa it covered almost vibrate with energy. It was unlike anything the market has seen so far.

Whimsy is gradually working its way back into assortments. At Norwalk, giant lips on fabric were enough to make everyone smile. The choice of a black-on-white combination gave them a graphic quality. Other black-and-white looks of note in High Point:



French Heritage took a new approach to black and white

Wesley Hall's new approach to plaid





An optic effect in a Kate Spade sofa at EJ Victor

- Designer Celerie Kemble created stunning black-and-white vignettes for Henredon that tied back to her book, *Black & White*
- The entrance to Vanguard’s showroom included chairs covered in a black-on-white print, plus white-on-black fabric framed as art on the wall
- Curry & Company’s Morning table lamp used a positive/negative technique for an all-over black-and-white diamond design
- The *Folded Dreams* framed art series from Natural Curiosities highlighted circular printed and hand-folded paper, including one version with tiny black dots on white for an optic effect

## Feminine Mystique

At the recent High Point furniture market, hints of a broad new directive emerged. Far from fully formed, it was still an important signal of changes to come. It was a shift toward femininity.

Femininity represents a huge turnabout from today’s leading trends. That’s why its debut was intentionally paced. Its impact could be seen in several areas, including surface design, materials and texture. Yet form was the area that got noticed first, and it conveyed a feminine message well.

Stiletto legs from Lillian August for Hickory White



Designer John Black, who debuted additions to his *Compendium* collection at Vanguard, says silhouettes are becoming more delicate overall. This was apparent in a number of new pieces at market.

For several seasons, upholstery items like sofas, sectionals and chairs have favored track arms that are flat and wide, resulting in a contemporary, boxy look. In High Point, the newest arms went for thinner profiles. Not only that, many of those arms were gently curved, rather than straight. Some showed a slight outward flare—just enough to infuse the piece with a lyrical sensibility. A few arms showed signs of rolling.

Legs began to flare, too, but not in a stick-straight line, like in mid-century style. This flare took its cues from traditional sabre-style legs, including the long curves found on the legs of Caracole’s *Work Force* desk. In some cases, flared legs terminated in a modernized version of a foot, which also suggested a traditional tone.



**Bernhardt's feminine upholstery and patterned metal**

An even more-feminine approach came from stiletto legs. Skinny and tapered, they looked amazing on Lillian August's new Stiletto Cocktail Table for Hickory White, and stunning on Global Views' bench and short chest, shown in black hair-on-hide with gold metal legs.

Chests from companies like Hooker featured soft curves again for the first time in years. Meanwhile, upholstery frames came with backs that were noticeably lower. Each of these adaptations did much to suggest a feminine character. So did the thinner, knife-edge seat cushions that hinted at a larger role in upholstery by 2018. Emerging in both contemporary (like the sectionals at Universal and American Leather) and traditional styles (Century Furniture), they looked equally feminine on each.

Materials contributed to the feminine mystique. Specifically, mirror was back in a big way. This should come as no surprise to anyone who has

tracked the mirror trend over the past couple of years. With mirrors of all shapes and sizes elevated to key-item status, a new emphasis on color-infused mirror provided an entree into palette trends and printed patterns like snakeskin. This brought mirror into the texture conversation. With so much exposure, it was only a matter of time before other décor items covered in mirror would be back on the trend radar. That time arrived in High Point.



**Knife-edge cushion on Century Furniture's casual chair**

- Stanley Furniture debuted a brass bar cart with antique-mirror shelves
- Hooker Furniture's bed, desk and chest featured an églomisé technique on mirror
- Erinn V., in her collection for Elegant Furniture and Lighting, used lightly antiqued mirror for a desk and nightstand, giving it a softer character
- Alden Parks' Hancock Cabinet has antique-mirror door fronts with circular brass accents
- The base of Arteriors' Ellroy Lamp included a distressed-mirror diamond with black distressing

**From Mark D. Skies for Henredon**



**Rings overlapped mirror for a dimensional effect on Alden Parks' cabinet**



**Antiqued beveled mirror accent on Arteriors' Ellroy lamp**



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Mirrored furniture with light antiquing from Erinn V. for elegant Furniture & Lighting

Fabrics played a role in this new styling sensibility. In contrast with the bulky wovens that have dominated recent textile introductions, silk and satin looks appeared at Hickory Chair and from Lillian August for Hickory White. Ever-popular velvets transitioned to the feminine side with ease. Prints—especially those depicting full florals—began to appear. When those prints appeared on lightly polished cotton, the look was even more feminine.

Additionally, although skirts still struggled to find acceptance on upholstered seating, fabric panels began to surround beds. In the Mark D. Sikes collection for Henredon, they also draped cabinets, adding softness to vignettes.

The final feminine touch came from metallics. Metallic detailing in and on fabric is not new. The change is that it is becoming increasingly subtle. And glitter, which is on-trend and growing for wall art, feels like fairy dust.

None of these elements, when viewed alone, is enough to suggest a major countertrend to today's more-is-better heaviness. Yet taken together, they paint a picture of femininity that is forecasted to play a major role in décor by the time 2018 arrives.

## Going Traditional

When The Trend Curve first predicted a major return to tradition a few years ago, very few people seemed ready for that forecast. But since then, the word “traditional” has started slipping into descriptions of fabrics, patterns and forms on a regular basis.

At the recent High Point furniture market, directional companies talked openly about traditional coming back, with some makers even calling it the largest-potential trend out there. That status was demonstrated by the amount of showroom real estate devoted to new traditional designs.

Of course, companies were pursuing a new take on tradition that doesn't look authentic and especially not antique. Surprising colors, pared-down silhouettes and a generous scale allowed this version of traditional to blend with the transitional furnishings that also gained ground, and even with contemporary ones. That broadened traditional's appeal to consumers, who have come to accept modern's influence on everything.



Three versions of Chaddock's streamlined shield-back chair



ART Furniture reduced a classic element to an outlined leg

Classic shapes like the shield-back chair became as pared down as possible at Chaddock. Like a Tweet with no punctuation, one side-chair silhouette, appointed in three different ways, still conveyed the traditional message effectively.

Legs were similarly reduced, sometimes to nothing more than an outline, as seen on ART Furniture's cabinet.



Gold-leaf arabesque from Couture

Other classic elements found new applications:

- Couture's lamp base was made of an open arabesque, covered in gold leaf
- Columns anchored a wrap-around shelf on an ART Furniture sofa
- Quatrefoil motifs (incoming, recommended) appeared as an outline on American Lighting Brands' lamp base, the back of Lexington's Alhambra chair, as an accent-table top from JC Edited from Jonathan Charles and as silver-leaf inlays accenting Hooker's Arabella dining table



JC Edited lamp table from Jonathan Charles

Playing with proportion gave traditional shapes an avant-garde personality. Case in point: teaming thin and hefty, a device used by design talent Darryl Carter in a cocktail table featuring a thin marble top with wide bracket legs that came with exaggerated curves. This table, like all those in his debut collection for Baker/Milling Road, was designed to become an "heirloom of the future."

Materials made a difference, too. Acrylic offered the best modernizing influence. A cluster of four tables, each shaped like a Greek key, functioned as a transparent cocktail table at Century Furniture. A three-drawer chest at Caracole seemed to float on air, but was perched upon an acrylic base, detailed in a way to recall classic carving.

Mirror-finished metal was another important vehicle. A dining vignette at Bernhardt surrounded a glass-top table with a polished stainless-steel base with upholstered, oval-back chairs in glimmering polished stainless steel.

Lexington's Alhambra Chair

Hooker Furniture's Arabella dining table with silver-leaf inlay





**CR Laine updated traditional style with color**



**Bernhardt expanded their polished stainless-steel offerings**

Fabric embraced unexpected opportunities. For example, it was draped over case goods like a skirt in Mark D. Sikes' new collection for Henredon. This technique not only made wooden pieces visually softer, but also differentiated them from traditional items of the past.

Luster offered another way to differentiate. Left Bank Art was one of several framed-art companies bringing back traditional landscapes, updated with a layer of glitter. For other pieces, it never took more than a hint of metallic rubbed over wood (ART Furniture) or woven into fabric (Taylor King) to make a piece stand out in a completely different way.

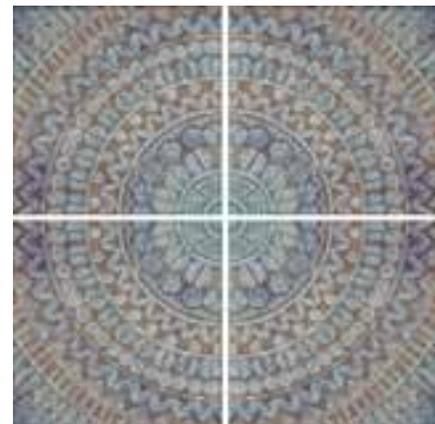
Dimension had a similar effect. Traditional style was certainly not immune to the growing penchant for surfaces with 3-D effects throughout décor. In High Point, it translated into interlocking metal rings layered over mirrored cabinet doors at Alden Parks, appliqué over fabric on cushions tossed onto a Bernhardt sofa and cut patterns made of glass framing mirrors at Global Views. All these effects brought traditional style up to 21st-century standards.

So did color.

An infusion of black and yellow at CR Laine, orange and white at Highland House, bright pink at Century and periwinkle at Pearson made traditional upholstery pop. A rich blue graphic, printed on the doors of a limited-edition Thomas Pheasant cabinet at Baker, had the same effect.

Meanwhile, scale pushed familiar florals, paisleys, medallions, acanthus leaves, lattices and florals to new extremes. The mere act of enlarging them smoothed out some of the detail, but motifs were clearly simplified, too. Unexpected pattern additions, like those with references to Japanese Shibori (Century Furniture), watercolor florals (Ambella Home) and blurred stripes (Wesley Hall) ensured that the evolution of traditional style was unmistakable.

Could Traditional ever be as popular as looks like Mid-Century, Farmhouse or some of the other volume-selling styles? Yes, absolutely, especially when you consider that it will be mixed with so many looks, including contemporary. Traditional style is forecasted to become one of the top choices for home décor by the time 2019 begins.



**Glitter-infused wall art with a touch of bling from Left Bank Art**

**Caracole's chest seemed to float on air**



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Burton James featured an exposed-wood sofa

## A Closer Look at Wood

There is never a shortage of wood products at the High Point furniture market. That's why this twice-yearly trade show provides the nation's best opportunity to uncover the next wood trends for furniture, lighting and decorative accessories.

One of the biggest shifts had to do with the amount of wood that was visible. Specifically, wood took a larger

position on upholstery. Outlines, arm details, posts, inserts and a healthy number of incoming plinth bases made of wood didn't make this hard material more important than softer fabric on sofas, chairs and benches. However, it did position wood as the "jewelry" on each piece—the element that caused everyone to take notice. It also reinforced the mixed-media trend, which remained key.

Mixed-media combinations provided not only visual variety, but also textural interest. The preference for texture is one factor in the rise of wire-brushed and ceruse techniques, both of which continued in High Point.



From Century Furniture's Corso collection

White oak, tainted for years by the dated reputation of its red-oak cousin, has now solidified its trend credentials as the preferred vehicle for wire brushing and cerusing. A year ago, gray finishes were the Next Big Thing for cerused oak. This time, grays were dropping. Top honors went to black.

Dark, dramatic and stunningly beautiful, black-ceruse finishes were impossible to ignore. They looked especially great in Global Views' Reflective Column series of round, mirror-top tables and pedestal, and in cabinets from Century Furniture's Corso collection, which draws inspiration from Italian and Scandinavian references. Of course, not all black-stained oak was also cerused. Either way, the pronounced grain of the wood was the textural star.

As a countertrend, finishes called blonde or even white bifurcated oak's path into the future. These very light looks, enhanced with ceruse, fumed and or, more frequently, wire-brushed techniques, provide a glimpse into the future of all wood types. Light will be the dominant preference by the time 2019 begins.

Many of those light finishes will, in fact, be found on oak. Oak has already begun gnawing at walnut's current popularity. Oak's share is projected to outstrip that of walnut in 2018.

## Décor's Greatest Hits

It was impossible to miss the throwback looks popping up all over High Point. Lots of decorating devices from the late-20th-century were back again, with many of them focused on items or materials which had their heyday in the 1970s and 1980s.

For example, Étegères were signature pieces of the 1970s, especially those constructed of brass



Maitland Smith's light countertrend to dark finishes



Hooker Furniture's armoire from the Hill Country collection

and glass. The first hints that they could return appeared about a year ago. At the recent High Point market, an original couple of *étagères* had turned into a stream of products that shows no sign of stopping. Note that Caracole showed their new *étagères* in place of side tables.

Armoires hit their popularity peak as the last century was closing. They have been post-peak since the early 2000's. But HC28 says consumers lost important vertical options when armoires exited (their solution was a new wall system—see the paragraph below).

Hooker Furniture says consumers have been hard-pressed to find a better storage solution than the armoire. That's why armoires are starting to pop up here and there again.



A cutout handle updated this tub chair from the Bungalow Classics line at Highland House

So are bunching cabinets. Also storage solutions from the past, bunching cabinets and wall systems went the way of the dinosaur when it became a decorating faux pas for pieces to match. Are consumers putting the eclectic trend behind them in the name of practicality? Not really. But a couple of matching pieces in a room will start to become more common in 2018 and beyond. When that happens, bunching tables will also play a part.

There have been so many Danish-modern silhouettes and modified wingchairs on showroom floors over the past decade that they elbowed out other styles. But suddenly, there seems to be enough room for tub chairs. Consumers loved them in the seventies. Now that mid-century modern looks from the sixties have shifted from trend to basic, shapes from the seventies have more potential. Highland House added a cutout handle to their version, part of their just-released Bungalow Classics collection.

Grasscloth came on strong in the 1980s. It was the fashion-forward wall covering of choice, but it didn't mean as much for furniture. In 2017 – 2019, furniture with a grass-cloth skin will make a fashion statement of its own. Ann Gish's new furniture collection for Global Views was signatuaed by it. Arteriors chose it for the shade on one of its newest floor lamps.

Raffia and grasscloth have a similar look, so it's not surprising that raffia should rise as grasscloth returns. Stanley made use of natural raffia, teaming it with wood in a new bed from their Havana Crossing collection. EJ Victor used it to wrap a game table. At Bungalow 5, it added texture to tables in pure white.

Wicker and rattan are similarly on the rise. Taylor King was one of several companies adding frames in these materials as they come in from the cold and take a more prominent place in indoor décor. Incoming trend: very open weaves for everything from cane to water hyacinth.

Tapestry was everywhere in the 1980s. Today, it is in the first stage of a revival. Why? Three primary reasons stand out. First, it looks completely fresh again to a generation of younger adults. Next, it has traditional overtones, and traditional style is rising. And finally, tapestry offers so many opportunities for texture and detail that fit with today's more-is-better approach to décor. Ambella Home showed it best in a dense forest design, colored in trend-right greens, on a wingback chair.



Taylor King's new Farrell Chair

Grasscloth was back in a collection by Ann Gish for Global Views





Studio A's steak chevron

## Surface Interest

Surface design had quite an impact, and not just on upholstered pieces. Yes, there were lots of quilted, tufted, pieced and patterned fabrics. But there was also a noteworthy uptick in the use of decoration for hard materials, too.

Case in point: chevrons. While printed and woven fabric designs with chevrons have already moved from trend to basic status, chevrons on cabinets, tables and other hard surfaces made everyone in High Point take notice of them again.

Theodore Alexander's Marco table showed off mahogany-chevron parquetry with a cerused mesquite finish. The lower tier of this round accent table, which debuted as part of the Highlands Collection from Thor Taber, was covered in a coordinated hair-on-hide chevron in soft, neutral tones. The same chevron hide design also covered the fronts of several cabinets and chests in the same collection.

Intricately laid chevron marquetry came in a smaller scale at Studio A Home. It appeared in the Sonnet Collection, a lyrically shaped two-door sideboard and deep mirror, done in teak.

Havana Crossing, based on Stanley Furniture's extensive research about Cuba's history and culture, translated the link pattern from the door at the Hotel Havana Riviera restaurant into furniture design. It was most notable as a dimensional pattern on the front of a three-drawer nightstand. At Resource Décor, Maison 55 also teamed dimension and surface design in a raised-diamond motif, which repeated across walnut drawer fronts on a new credenza.



Cut-metal roses in an intricate design: Caracole

Bernhardt took pattern to silver-leaf finishes in the Celeste Drawer Chest, with organic geometrics in a play of pleated and smooth textures (see *Feminine Mystique*, above). Caracole took a different approach to pattern in metal. The circular base of their Rose cocktail table showcased intertwined roses in a cut-metal repeat under a black-glass top.

At Hooker, door fronts on Cynthia Rowley's Bowery accent chest were made of marble with a distinctly striped design.

These examples confirm that the more-is-better attitude informing today's décor designs is still being amplified in new-product development. It will continue for the next two years.

3-D patterning with historical roots from Stanley's Havana Crossing collection

Striped marble in Cynthia Rowley's Bowery Chest for Hooker Furniture

Pieced chevrons in hard and soft surfaces: Theodore Alexander

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# On The Watch List

Keep track of these additional design elements. Offering a hint of newness now, they will develop into stronger trends over the following three years:

- Canopy beds
- Cocktail ottomans
- Hair-on-hide
- Smaller-scale furniture and lighting
- Outlines, done with piping, inlays or framing
- Satin-look fabrics
- Bronze metal and metallic
- Organic patterns and “accidental” design



Mark D. Sikes' canopy bed for Henredon



Bronze returned in stunning pieces from Universal



Global View's hair-on-hide accent with stiletto legs



Emporium's new Ink Blot table

## The Last Word

While in High Point for the furniture market, I ran into a long-time Member of The Trend Curve's subscriber family. We were both rushing through the Hamilton Wing, but when we saw each other, we had to stop to say hello.

Having emerged from a decorative-accessories showroom, he told me that he had just recommended The Trend Curve to that company as the best source of trend information and forecasts that he knows. I am always grateful for endorsements from our Members!

Then, this Member went on to tell me that—while he likes to read about garden trends and kids colors—he was craving more “meat” about home-interiors products, like those at the furniture market, at this moment. That's when I started planning The High Point Issue that you are reading now.

Those of you who attend the High Point furniture market know how huge it is. With 180 buildings and more than 2,000 exhibitors, it is the place where over 75,000 attendees come twice each year to see tens of thousands of new-product introductions.

This furniture market is also a powerful force in the future of home-décor color and design trends. That's because many of the products debuting in High Point are meant to last for years, and often, for decades. Once a style emerges

for upholstery and case goods, it can influence other categories, like decorative accessories and lighting.

If any market deserves its own issue, it's definitely High Point.

We have never before devoted an issue of The Trend Curve entirely to one show or product category. However, if our Members like this format, others may be in the future. Will you let me know if you like the concept, and if so, which events you think deserve this kind of attention? And if you feel that an all-anything issue of The Trend Curve is overkill, let me know that, too. Just drop me a note at [michellelamb@trendcurve.com](mailto:michellelamb@trendcurve.com) or tweet me [@trendcurve](https://twitter.com/trendcurve).

With January comes a new group of trade shows. I will personally attend the gift and home market at Americasmart (I'll be speaking there about retail reconnaissance from a trend point of view on 1/12), Maison & Objet, Showcase Ireland and Christmasworld. In February I'll be in Frankfurt for Ambiente.

If you plan to attend any of these events, feel free to reach out so we can arrange a time to say hello in person. Or just look for me in the aisles. I always love to stop and talk with Members of The Trend Curve's subscriber family.

*Michelle* tc



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