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• leather

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# SHOWTIME®

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF ITA SHOWTIME® MARKET

2017 FALL \ WINTER ISSUE



The flirt chair by Hancock & Moore is upholstered in an embossed tiger-print leather.



# Stylish

# SKINS



Distressed leathers, like the one shown here from Palliser, are at the top of consumers' wish lists.

Leather's latest looks are colorful, distinctive and anything but boring

By Jason Schneider



The smoky taupe pearl suede seat of Caracole's It's All Greek To Me Chair features a heat-transferred metallic pattern inspired by fizzing champagne bubbles.



Pebbled leather in a combination of spa blue and champagne distinguishes the Adler chair by Hancock & Moore.



The velvety seat of Caracole's Finesse chair adds shimmer to a room with its watermarked, champagne-gold metallic, laser-cut leather.

Leather has always been a classic design choice. From chesterfield sofas to motion recliners, it's one of America's favorite cover choices. And now, with fashion-forward leathers available in exciting new colors, patterns and finishes, it's an option that transcends the traditional.

"We're seeing experimentation with color, texture, and sheen in leather," says Melissa Hlushko, category manager of stationary furniture at Palliser. "This trend lends itself towards updated, on-trend, contemporary colors, including pastels, jewel tones, grays, and various tones of blue."

Palliser is launching a series of on-trend leather colors later this year, says Hlushko. "Leathers in bold-colored jewel tones as well as soft pastels ... we're also bringing 'Millennial Pink' to leather, a color we've seen have a great influence on interior design and fashion trends, and a color that is predicted to be strong for the next few years as well."

Joe Franck, vice president of Carroll Leather, says blues have been gaining momentum for the last six months. "Browns and grays are still the hot colors," he adds.

Grays are among the best-sellers at Palliser. "Consumer sales trends flow back and forth from warm to cool tones," says Hlushko. "Both warm and cool grays have become a staple in our leather lines, as they have the flexibility to appear contemporary or casual, and sell well on both stationary and motion products."

"I believe the popularity of gray tones are a result of the younger generations," says Franck. "It's a cool color and you see it widely used in upscale, nontraditional furniture stores that these buyers shop at. I think this merchandising helps drive sales in the gray tones."

In addition to grays, pastels are also growing in popularity among younger buyers. "Younger age groups tend to be more open with color choices, as they begin to create a space that represents and expresses who they are," says Hlushko. "Soft pastels are being used as neutrals, as consumers become less afraid of an overall color on their sofa."

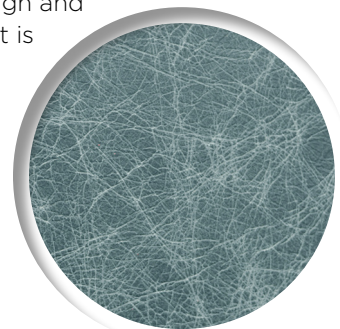


PHOTO CREDIT:  
Anthem Leather



It isn't just color that's driving renewed interest in leather. Textures are evolving, too. Franck says his company has a large selection of distressed leathers. "Wax crackle and hand-worked leathers are the most popular today," he says. "Distressed 'performance' leathers are also a rising category for us. The distressed leather category is a very important part of our business."



PHOTO CREDIT:  
JBS Couros

Palliser's Hlushko sees these leathers selling in rustic and natural colors. "Tan, copper, and camel look great on distressed leathers with an aged character made possible through hand-buffing, waxes, and oils," she says. "Leather is a timeless look, and mineral or earth tones in leather upholstery prove to be a great base for several design tastes."

Embossed, metallic, and specialty leathers are other fresh options that add interest to furniture and accessories, and help dress a room. "At Caracole, we



PHOTO CREDIT: Carroll Leather

create furnishings that are considered to be 'jewelry for the home,' so specialty leathers are a great fit for us," says Tim O'Hare, vice president of creative merchandising. "As we develop our products, we look for materials that add a bit of sparkle to a room while complementing our luxurious finishes. We incorporate innovative leathers with unique patterns, textures, and metallics to add glamour and elegance to our distinctive furnishings." 🛋️



PHOTO CREDIT: Caracole

## THE SUSTAINABLE STORY

While durability has long been one of the most important selling points for leather, sustainability is a close second. A byproduct of the beef industry, hides used for upholstery and other furniture products would otherwise be burned or destroyed. The upcycled material narrative appeals to consumers, particularly Millennials, as does the idea of buying furnishings that will outlast fabric models.

"The desire for leather furnishings transcends demographics — consumers are looking for a natural, long-lasting, quality material that is easy to clean and maintain," says Melissa Hlushko, of Palliser. "Among all demographics, it's proven that leather is still a high-interest when shopping for upholstered furniture and is even ranked in the top requests that consumers have when interested in buying new furniture." Yellow's influence will continue to grow over the coming year, and trend assortments will reflect colors like Aegean that represent the warmer side of blue.