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## Stylish Solutions

By Ann McDonald



Ambiente Trade Show tabletops are drool worthy for this lover of all things dining. Exhibitors come from across the globe to showcase what's new and next. Here, for 2016 we see pastels and primary colors in bakeware and tabletop. Official press photo, 2016 [www.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.messefrankfurt.com)

companies, hardware brands to lighting manufacturers. What was the hot ticket this year? Custom cabinetry and pretty much custom everything.

Ambiente. Just finished, this is the leading international consumer goods show held in Germany. Here we find the newest from enamel cookware to Versace home's latest porcelain introductions to the next best-unknown lighting designer. Ambiente is an extraordinary show, and often showcases trends that will hit the U.S. market, six to 12 months out. The trends this year? Nature on and in man-made materials, including porcelain. We see sand and other raw materials transferred and printed onto and into anything from porcelain to textiles. From table linens to tiles, nature influences, from raw to overtly floral and colorful, were everywhere.

Maison Objet. The show. Well, not the only show, but considered "the" show, here you find the most fabulous introductions of textiles, product and furniture design as well as historical and educational seminars with inside access to designers and fabricators. Exhibitors come from across the globe. One of the hallmarks of this show, as well as Ambiente is the use of unusual and custom materials.

The use of hand formed objects, from hand blocked fabrics, to non-assembly line pillows, and lighting fixtures where even the 'same form' was not an exact replica of the one adjacent stands out. There is a return to perfectly imperfect in the design world, a stronger sense of couture level production, where you are acutely aware that a hand has made this, not a machine alone.

Maison has a U.S. show scheduled for the second time this year in Miami.

High Point North Carolina. Every year, twice a year, designers pilgrimage to High Point for new product releases, fabrics and furniture, accessories and educational seminars. This actually is "the show" for furniture and fabrics. Due to the overwhelming volume of product at this show, my team and I plan for weeks in advance depending on the goals for our time in North Carolina each season. Many brands and designers debut new furniture lines and use High Point to educate on product

Welcome to "the season," as we say in the design business. We are in the middle of a time of year when trade shows abound, and comfortable shoes start traveling with us discreetly in purses, whipped out for the walk between booths and parties. From the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas to the shows across the pond, I thought it would be fun to give you, Stylish Suburbanite, an inside peek at a few standards, as they say, "behind the drapery."

These are industry-only trade shows where designers, architects, builders, suppliers and manufacturers showcase their wares. We glean training, access to unreleased products and test models, and learn about what will hit the market six to eight, or in some cases, 12 to 16 months out.

KBIS: The Kitchen Bath and Industry Show. Held in different locations across the country, the 'mac-daddy' for the western United States is held in Las Vegas, often in conjunction with several smaller home-gear shows having to do with drapery, building and property development.

At KBIS, designers learn about new introductions from appliance manufacturers to tile

construction or uses. We will often spend half our time behind the scenes on private tours or in closed-door sessions with those leading the market.

What's hot? The transitional traditional is still holding court. While I love a contemporary space, at the end of the day, people - no matter how austere in their design aesthetic - still need someplace to sit and sleep. We are seeing fresh takes on traditional, fewer completely dark rooms, and mixed metals and florals are back - in a big way. There are reprints of classic floral patterns a la the chintz of 1980, albeit with an updated flair, used in moderation, or not, to remind us of softer, gentler living. It's rather nice. I think every room can use a flower or two!

Las Vegas Market. Similar to North Carolina, but on a much smaller scale, the Las Vegas market is packed with furniture, fabric and accessories and is also run in conjunction with the accessories and gift shows. While many in Lamorinda are getting ready for swim meets, my team and I are often headed off to source holiday décor in the dead of summer. It is funny to wholesale Christmas trees, and then fly back for the OMPA, but therein lies the truth behind the drapery for designers.

There are so many more ideas I could share from boutique shows run alongside the majors, where artisanal wares are showcased by the artist themselves, to other national trade shows, but I have learned to edit. For the Lamorinda design-savvy suburbanite, these are our majors. After each show, my team and I gather trend reports for those who desire a more in-depth experience. For a recap from our travels last year, be sure to read the June 3 article, "What's New in the World of Design" in the Lamorinda Weekly online archives. For this year, we continue to scour the globe to bring you the best available.



This photo showcases a traditional look, still popular with clients. Cabinetry by Teddwood Fine Cabinetry, Design and Installation by David Calvani & Sons, David Calvani



Photo courtesy Ambiente, [www.messefrankfurt.com](http://www.messefrankfurt.com)



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