

PRESS RELEASE

Fabric fabulosity

A piece of furniture that has been upholstered in fabric can be the celebrity piece that adds that pop of colour, texture or interest – bringing the entire design composition of a space together. We speak to Claire Gibson from leading motion furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy, about the most popular fabric upholstery trends currently making waves.

31 October 2016, Johannesburg: There is something inherently regal about fabric upholstery – it oozes comfort, design and a certain richness that can't be compared. Says Claire Gibson from leading motion furniture manufacturer, La-Z-Boy: "When it comes to upholstery, there is a wide variety of both natural and synthetic options available, in an almost infinite diversity of colours, textures and patterns.

"However, there are definitely notable trends when it comes to the popularity of the different kinds of fabric that people choose most often. Since La-Z-Boy is an international brand, we get exposed to a wide variety of what is popular throughout the world. With regards to upholstery, South Africa is in line with some of the global trends, however, it also has its unique idiosyncrasies that are exclusively limited to local shores. Since each piece of La-Z-Boy furniture that is sold in South Africa is also manufactured here, it is easy for us to see which upholstery is the most desired by South African consumers."

Claire points out the top four fabric upholstery trends that she believes will be most influential going forward in the South African market:

Leather-look fabrics

Although genuine leather remains La-Z-Boy's top selling upholstery option, it is also a very expensive option. Today's faux leather fabric products are much more affordable, and Claire notes that they look just like the real thing: "The faux leather fabrics that La-Z-Boy uses look and feel like the real thing, however, on close inspection, you can tell that they are not genuine leather."

She says that their popularity is on the up-and-up, and it is easy to understand why: "Leather-look fabrics look just like the real thing, but they have a number of added bonuses as well – they are breathable, and so they are a better fit for our often hot and humid climate, they are more environmentally- and animal-friendly, they can be produced in virtually any colour, style or pattern, they are durable and easy to clean, they require very little maintenance, they are UV-resistant and they don't crack." She says that the only drawbacks of leather-look fabric when compared to genuine leather is that they don't have the same hypo-allergenic qualities as genuine leather, they are easily torn and punctured, they don't last as long, and they don't develop a natural patina as they age.

Natural versus neutral

Natural earth tones are a huge trend right now, says Claire, however, she explains that the reference to natural tones does not mean neutral: “In fact, these trendy natural hues are a far cry from the flat almost two-dimensional neutrals that were so popular in the past. Today’s on-trend tones offer a wide array of various colours that occur naturally around us. They can be used to great effect to create a down-to-earth, almost bohemian look. Darker versions of these nature-inspired tones are especially popular, such as greys, blacks and dark browns, as are rich reds, blues, oranges and greens as found in nature. And of course, off-whites, such as maize, stone and sandy hues, remain ever popular as well.”

Plain versus patterned

Claire notes that eclectic and statement-making patterns remain an ever upward trend, however, these kinds of fabrics are being used more for soft furnishings instead of using them to upholster an entire chair or sofa: “Of course, when it comes to fabrics, individuality is key – it is important to be able to express who you are by the colours, patterns and textures that you choose.”

“However, furniture, especially good quality branded furniture is on the upper end of the price spectrum, and as such, consumers prefer to get them upholstered in plain fabrics to boost their longevity of style. It is a prudent move, as you can always decorate them using soft furnishings, such as scatters for example, in more detailed, patterned materials – and these can be easily and affordably switched when you tire of them.”

Tantalising textures

Claire notes that textured fabrics remain very popular: “Textured fabrics are much more practical when compared to monotone, flat fabrics as they don’t show marks or dirt that easily. They also help to add a textural richness to any design composition. At La-Z-Boy, we have noticed that textured fabrics in a wide variety of colours remain a popular choice with our clients, including shades of Cherry Red, Royal Blue, and Emerald Green for example.”

She notes that velvet is currently making a huge comeback: “Velvet is definitely having a trending moment. One of the main things to remember with velvet however is that it has to be used in moderation – for example, it can be used to great effect to upholster just one piece of furniture to add more drama without overwhelming the space. Velvet upholstery fabric has a perfect textural component that draws the designers to lounge on it for countless hours flipping through issues of interior design magazines!”

ENDS

Released on behalf of La-Z-Boy (www.la-z-boy.co.za) by The Line (www.theline.co.za).