



Well Seated by Gideon Schutte

Taking into consideration that we sit for the most part of our day (and some nights), it may be a given to pay some attention to the quality of being well-seated and to the trends behind the science of lounging around on a sofa or comfy chair.

Some of the forces active behind furniture design trends of the 21st century include younger buyers and technology, with women having more buying power than ever before and being more involved in choosing and buying furniture. Whether it's new seats for a spacious loft or trendy industrial office space, there are a few trends well worth being aware of.

Less becomes more

Our living spaces are shrinking, and large and ponderous furniture pieces seem out of place in many of today's smaller homes. The shift toward

smaller pieces goes hand-in-hand with a preference for furniture that's less ornate and more contemporary.

More streamlined furniture seems to be the logical choice for consumers trying to make efficient use of their available space. Recliners and chairs with smaller profiles are increasingly available as women tend to want to buy furniture that's more suited to their preferences.

Leather is still lekker.

Leather is an old favorite and remains a popular choice because it has now become available in so many different shapes and colours. Leather is easy to clean, to maintain, and retains its appeal much longer than fabric. One downside is that some stores offer bi-cast leather, also known as by-cast leather. This is not leather. This wouldn't be so bad if they didn't classify it as such as it can be misleading for consumers.

Velvet touch

There is no denying that velvet has made a huge comeback and for good reason thanks to its silky and sumptuous feel. It's a plush fabric and it's certainly dramatic. Velvet upholstery makes an elevated impact in any room while making it feel all the more grown up.

Popular vintage

Nostalgia is involved – yes, but vintage furniture also contributes as it is green on many counts. Although the finishes weren't originally non-toxic, they've finished off-gassing so they're safe for indoor air. When you buy vintage furniture or use furniture you've inherited, you're rescuing it from going to landfills. It's already survived many years so it's probably well-made and durable.

Global inspiration

The globe seems to be shrinking and other cultures no longer seem quite so distant and foreign. Bringing the world to our homes is catching on. All this has resulted in some foreign furniture riding a wave of popularity in the millennium.

This isn't just confined to bringing in furniture from other parts of the world but from their bygone eras as well. In the case of Asian-inspired furniture, it could be the search for a more Zen-like interior space or drama. Whatever the reason, the lure of travel has made globally-inspired furniture very popular.

Out and up

Due to our famous South African weather, outdoor areas have always been very desirable, thus the quality and design of outdoor furniture has developed tremendously. Sales of casual and outdoor



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furniture have indicated upward movements as many furniture pieces are designed in such a way that they can be used either indoors or outdoors.

Handcrafted authenticity

More and more customers are looking for something different. Customization of furniture seems to be a trend that continues to develop and evolve. While some manufacturers have been offering it

for years, the growing demand has made more manufacturers take notice.

It can vary from style, size, fabric colour or pattern to changing the style of an arm or leg on a sofa. Many manufacturers let

the customers provide their own fabric. Contrast piping, contrast stitching, and flanged seams used individually create uniqueness and a distinct level of perceived value. Manufacturers with their own upholstery, sewing, woodworking, metal studio, paint and locksmith workshops have a real hands-on control of every step of the way – delivering unique pieces to the customer which screams craftsmanship and custom design.

Some manufacturers employ “sitters” performing countless “sit tests” to ensure that each piece is just as comfortable as it is stylish. The final product is a rare combination of beauty and function.

Multi-functional furniture.

It is not a new concept, but multi-functional furniture has come into its own — perhaps as a result of those smaller living spaces. When space is at a premium, you need furniture that can perform multiple tasks. The interest in speciality sleep surfaces began with waterbeds and has developed over the years to a sizable share of the sleep market.

Check out the instant “chameleon transformation” of a couch changing into a bunk bed by simply lifting the seat base and the whole system raises up in less than a minute to transform the whole couch into a bunk bed sleeper.

Lounging around has become much more complicated with all the options of being well seated but the choice is yours to make.



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