

# *Color Trend Perspective*



*Two Thousand, Seventeen*

## Why CCI/FinishWorks?

---

CCI/FinishWorks and the RPM Wood Finishes Group Member Companies invest in many resources that associate and influence the markets we serve. We are closely tied with the International Furniture Market held in High Point, North Carolina twice each year; we are members of and participate in various Kitchen Cabinet and Bath Association events; an active member of the Color Marketing Group, (the Premier Association for Color Forecasting Professionals); and participate in many regional furniture shows where our coatings and finishes are on display. Why is this so important? Because we are committed to be the ultimate resource for our customers in providing personalized, trend setting finish designs and accurate market directions. With that, we provide the tools to help make it happen.

Ultimately, we are a manufacturer of professional grade coatings to the furniture, cabinet and flooring markets, in addition to a variety of specialty markets. But, we offer so much more to our customers than just paint. We are a service centered resource. We show our customers what can be accomplished with our products, using various applications, techniques, tools, supplies and direction. Finish is much more than a color or a protective coating. Finish is the personality of the furniture. As Color Marketing Group says so well, “Color Sells, but the Right Color Sells Better”.

“Any reputable coating manufacturer can make paint. It’s what you do with it that separates you from the competition”.

*M. Rodney McFalls, CMG, CfYH, Director Color Styling and Interpretive Design*

Looking back at fall 2016 International Home Furnishings Market may give us a glimpse of where we are heading, at least in terms of design, style and color, for 2017. We will cover the highlights of the fall market introductions – what’s hot and what’s not; who our customer base really is and what they are expecting in regards to decorating / redesigning their homes; CMG’s forecast for 2017 and beyond as well as a look at the evolution of colors over the past few years; and new finish designs and inspirations from the CCI/FinishWorks Interpretive Design Team.

HIGH POINT MARKET HIGHLIGHTS included casual and relaxed as overall themes that worked. Casual looks, especially those incorporating a reclaimed or industrial feel, resonated among buyers at the October market; *Furniture Today*, November edition. Vintage looks, including furniture that could be used as a focal piece; and traditional, classic silhouettes in new, casual finishes were among the market highlights. Transitional designs and finishes work within this

theme as well. The use of mixed media like acrylics, metal treatments and vellum, leather and woven materials, stone and the like drew a lot of attention. Gold metal finishes, particularly gently aged looks seemed to perform well.

Today's home style is relaxed, clean and functional. Interestingly, the wide-spread color palette for today's customer's home is "neutral". According to a consumer survey, conducted in January 2016 for Furniture Today, "neutral" best describes the color palette of a majority of today's consumers, from Millennials to Baby Boomers for the home. Additionally, "relaxed" is the word used to best describe the overall style or feel of today's home. This same study found that today's consumers shy away from the terms "traditional" and "modern" to describe their home décor. These terms also resonate across the primary regions of the United States. Clean, Relaxed and Functional make up the top 3 from the West, Midwest, South and Northeast regions. "Casual" and "Warm" or "inviting" make up the top 5 emotions to describe today's lifestyle.

Most any wood specie can work within this style. Actually, it's more about the design and functionality of the piece and the overall finish. However, brown maple continues to show strong, along with quartered oak and ash. Cherry and alder has a soft grain pattern that is very appealing, but the finish must be right. We still have a strong interest in our *MINERAL GRAY* finish on Cherry because it shows the soft grain pattern but has a soft, neutral gray background color. The *MINERAL GRAY* finish also shows well on walnut and similar species with a soft grain pattern. The feel is relaxed sophistication. For a more casual approach, wood species including oak, ash and hickory works well. The background color remains the same but the grain definition is stronger.

VISTA is a soft brown wood tone finish, (also shown on cherry) and compliments the *MINERAL GRAY* beautifully. VISTA is a good representation of the "lighter, *BRIAR SMOKE*" family.



VISTA



MINERAL GRAY

Part of our research includes various resources, like excerpts from *FurnitureToday* studies and reports, *CMG* forecasts, and our own internal market observations. Such information provides a baseline or at least an indicator point as to what the market is doing and what the end customer is looking for.

We learn that along with finishes, furniture design appears to be trending casual – as well as smaller in scale. “The footprint has shifted toward a smaller display unit that can stand alone or be bunched depending on the consumer’s preference, not to mention room size”. The china hutch, for example as well as book cases and display cabinets are designed to provide more flexibility from a design perspective. In many cases, the styling of the smaller display units becomes more transitional – and less formal, so that the furniture can be utilized in multiple spaces and for multiple purposes.

Case goods resources allow the wood selection and the finish tell the story, a strategy that points to a renewed passion for wood and captures the imagination of the end customer. We continue to see strength in dry and “aged” finishes that add a casual flair. Finishes, like designs and styles need to be able to “work together”, so the customer can easily mix and match and create the lifestyle design that speaks to their personality. Low sheen, light browns and soft gray finishes fit this appetite.



FROTH



GRAIGE



COFFEE

FROTH, GRAIGE and COFFEE are among the new, 2017 finish introductions from the Interpretive Design Group. All three are shown on oak – for a more relaxed option. The satin finish sheen and “close to the wood” appearance reads casual / transitional & yes, opportunistic.

# Market Strategy...

---

Today's furniture buyer is looking for the next "hot" trend. As a dealer, the next hot look is the one determining factor that secures dedicated floor space. Our Interpretive Design team works with some of the most reputable "Trend Setters" in the industry, (our customers), and we are noticing an important shift beginning to take place.

Yes, grays and neutrals are still very relevant, as seen in today's new fabrics and accessories. However, we are seeing a shift in furniture and cabinetry colors from gray dominant to gray influenced. We are seeing that wood toned finishes are making a strong come back, but not the traditional red's that we've seen in the past like "mahogany" or "cherry" color tones. These wood tones will exemplify the natural beauty of the wood but not be restricted to the "expected" color tone of that particular specie. For example, many of our strongest and trendy finishes according to furniture and cabinet designers are on cherry wood – but without the traditional cherry color. People love the soft grain characteristics of cherry, alder and similar woods, but dislike the expected color tones that these species are known for. With that, the CCI/FinishWorks Design Group has taken on the challenge to redefine the expected. We do not necessarily have to allow the wood specie to dictate the color, rather it should become part of the overall finish story.

Still, we observe plenty of grays, whites and neutrals in the marketplace; as much or more than expected. In respect, textures, complimentary colors and fresh, light to medium wood tones in the "tru-brown" and gray categories continue to show strong and are being well received. Taupe grays are "hot" because they work as a neutral palette for wood tones and splash colors. Colder grays and green-grays didn't / don't go over so well. So, "Color does sell, but the right colors sells better", to quote Color Marketing Group.

For 2017, we do expect to see a continual shift toward warmer wood tones with gray and taupe influences. As we study the trend curve and where many manufacturers fit on this curve, I'd say this neutral movement is here to stay for some time.

**Key Trends in the market** include a mix of everything new and old. “Back to Nature” - the story of rustic and antique reproductions continue to be a success story, specifically in occasional furniture and dining; The “Industrial Age” utilizing casters, worn woods, metal brackets and bases, as well as other accent metal components give a timeless look to the category. “Metal and other mixed media” adds interest and creativity. The use of mixed media such as vellum, acrylic, stone, leather and metal add yet another element to the overall design story, giving traditional forms updated, industrial-inspired looks and continued proven success. Acrylics, clean and clear metal accents including stainless steel and chrome, unique fabrics, leather, stone and glass can offer a touch of elegance to a wood story.

**Casual and rustic** themes continue to be strong at market, especially those incorporating a reclaimed or industrial feel. Mixed with stone and reclaimed woods made a casual statement; casters with worn woods and metal reflect a very hot trend in the case goods and occasional line-up. Antique reproductions with authentic aging techniques and vintage



designs and finishes continue to be well received in today’s market. Plank looks, both in veneer and solid wood forms were well received on dining tables and case goods. Distressed, painted finishes add to the casual influence, particularly on European and American traditional forms in bedroom and dining room. Clear finishes on metal are a counterpoint to the more aged, rougher industrial looks and help create a basis for the ever popular eclectic lifestyle.

**Low sheen with finish readability:** Dry, lower sheen finishes; replicating virtually no finish at all, add a casual flair to transitional and even more opulent traditional forms. But, the finish must be readable – meaning that the customer wants to see the natural beauty of the wood. At the same time, finish is a critical element in protection and touch, but the finish cannot take away from the wood story. It must become part of the wood story. Natural materials continue to remain an important part of the wood story as they often complement the natural look of various wood grains. Slate, woven cane, glass or crystals. These mixed media elements offer retailers a story for their sales floor and one that captivates an enthusiastic audience – today’s customer.



**The wood story:** Solid wood was once primarily used on frames and parting rails. Now it is being seen more and more on table tops and drawer and door fronts of case pieces, adding value for a consumer seeing a good wood story. There are various finishing techniques used to help accentuate and showcase the beauty of the wood. Along with lower sheen varieties that provide an “open-grain”, natural appearance; higher sheen levels are also used to produce a sense of clarity and brightness to the mix. Like the unique features found in nature, unique characteristics in color, sheen and techniques give each piece individuality, character and beauty.

We are also seeing a variety of wood species that are growing in popularity – not necessarily as a cost factor either. Brown, (or soft) maple seems to have taken a surge as a very common specie in all price point categories - and the

finishes can be outstanding. We are also seeing a resurgence of open grain wood species like oak and ash because distinctly defined grain character is part of the finish and wood story. Ceruse or limed finishes remain a popular designer choice but are quite dependent on an open grain structure.

In conjunction with the wood story, we are seeing evidence that certain wood species appear to be losing steam in the “popularity category”, like cherry, mahogany and other woods that have a “reddish” color reputation. We’ve long been saying that red-browns are moving to browner, “Tru-Brown” tones, and that is very evident in today’s market. We have long been somewhat “hand-tied” to this “color by specie” rule, where we expect the natural color tones of the wood specie to dictate what the final color design would be. We’ve even patterned ourselves to name finishes after particular color tones – “Red Cherry”, Golden Oak”, etc. Our industry as a whole, especially finish designers, have surrendered to this rule. But, we don’t have to be. We can achieve beautiful, trendy, tru-brown colors on naturally red toned woods and the results can be dramatic, especially where the soft grain pattern of woods like cherry, alder or mahogany are desired. The grain pattern and the finish should work together, through creative finish design to achieve the unexpected, unanticipated results.

**Relaxed Elegance:** Customers, particularly the younger generation often avoid the traditional, heirloom furniture of their parents and grandparents, basically because it doesn't fit their need, style or personality. But, that doesn't mean they can't be sold on these traditional forms and designs. More often than not, today's traditional is much more relaxed – transitional – casual – livable – and yes, usable. Sometimes it's the design or functionality of the furniture that makes it less desirable to our younger customer. But, I propose it's as much the outdated finish as anything else. Ever notice on these do-it-yourself shows on TV how one of the first things they do is paint over the old finish. I cringe every time I see one of these home interior designers drag a piece of beautiful traditional heirloom furniture into the front yard and commence to painting it – with a paint roller no less; but, it works for the new owner.

Casual finishes are here to stay and yes they can work, even with traditional designs, by incorporating new and creative finishes that fit today's fashion trends. The customer simply wants it to reflect their own personality. *"People are willing to pay for products they can customize and make their own"*. Nathan Copeland, Highland House. Along the same lines, we are seeing attempts to update traditional furniture designs with exciting, new, today finishes.

*Personal note:* With all that said however, I must admit that I have advised my family – do not surprise me with a home makeover if it involves touching my collectables; and no, my children will not be handed down my 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Henredon furniture. I honestly can't bear the thoughts.

**Looking to Nature:** In conjunction with the green movement; (sustainable materials, environmentally friendly coatings, etc.), furniture designs include elements that mimic nature and its popularity is growing. Driftwood finishes with gray undertones, dry and open grain finishes remain strong; although we believe the *Restoration Hardware* look is becoming more refined as it evolves, (refer to our newest concept finishes Silver Fox and Lynx and River Rock from our Lifestyle Expressions Collection).

In the same discussion, the live edge look continues to have a broad appeal, especially with the high-end, designer oriented customer. The live-edge literally has a natural appeal to the customer while "paying homage to the trees – it lets the tree tell the story". The live-edge design incorporates a machined and finished surface, maintaining all of the natural "characteristics" like worm holes, splits and voids – with the natural shape of the tree along the edges, often containing the bark.





“The live-edge is a good fit for eclectic settings, especially as more consumers are demanding pieces that feel truly organic”, Pat Watson, Hooker Furniture.

Our Interpretive Design Group has created several techniques that replicate weathered barn board, crusty paint finishes and even faux bark, (as seen in the pictures below). Through a series of steps,



we can replicate the depth of colors and texture of faux bark – even down to the faux moss. Today, we have customers who are successfully replicating this effect using specialized products and techniques supplied by CCI/FinishWorks. For more information on how to replicate this look, contact your local sales representative or contact any CCI/FinishWorks location.

## FAUX BARK



## 23212 BARN BOARD

# *Fashion forward...*

An interesting accent application finish is FAUX PARCHMENT 02515, designed to simulate stitched leather. The finish has a fine crackle and random smudges of colors. A unique “soft feel” topcoat was designed that provides a cushiony touch, similar to that of real leather. The colorations can be modified to blend with fabrics or a variety of wood or paint tones. This finish works well with a multitude of popular wood tones as well as solid paint colors.

Our customers expect us to continually “stretch the boundaries of imagination” with new ideas, applications and colors. In doing so, we often present new color collections to help create eclectic themes or unique lifestyles. Many of our finishes are designed to be the primary, or statement color, easily blended with various accent finishes or applications. Other finishes are specifically designed to be accent colors, intended to add flair and value to the statement finish. And, some finishes easily fit into either category, depending on the imagination of the end user.

We have designed a collection of “flair” finishes called JEWEL TONES, using the concept of color splash to create wood tone finishes. This concept provides a means to produce a accent color splash, while showing off the natural character of the wood, especially highly figured solid woods and veneers. JEWEL TONES are not paints. Rather they are designed with dye stains to maintain richness, depth and outstanding clarity.



FAUX PARCHMENT



# *Color makes us feel good*

## New Collection

# Spotlight

CCI / FinishWorks recently introduced a new finish collection called “Lifestyle Expressions” which will bridge a gap between our Premier Collection and Designer Series. This collection was designed to demonstrate “value added” techniques using a fundamental color base. Many of our customers are asking for finishes that will enable them to accommodate demands of the designer focused market, yet not stray too far from their existing manufacturing capabilities and capacity, or add significant costs to in material or labor. Lifestyle Expressions meets this need. As with the current Premier Collection, Lifestyle Expressions is now available to our customers and retailers and will be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis to insure that we are providing the most up to date, trend setting collection available. Please contact your sales representative for pricing and availability or contact Rodney McFalls @ [rmcfalls@rpmwfg.com](mailto:rmcfalls@rpmwfg.com), or [info@finishworksindiana.com](mailto:info@finishworksindiana.com) for more information.

## Lifestyle Expressions



Registry

Hanover

Bay View

Toffee

Cambridge

7 Oats



Surrey

Bogart

Eastbay

Fruitwood

Graphite

River Rock

Be watching for new introductions to our Premier Collection and Lifestyle Expression Portfolio's in the coming months. In keeping up with current and projected trends in the furniture and cabinetry industries, we have researched and designed finishes to fill these gaps and help us provide a well-balanced color portfolio for our customers.

---

We are excited to present *REFLECTIONS in Colour* – a fan deck portfolio the latest trends in opaque paints, available in various, leading technologies. We realize that the finish is perhaps



the most important element that defines character in a piece of furniture or cabinetry. Colour is an expression of one's personality – it is a reflection of our moods – and it evokes passion. Colour is an integral and vital part of our daily life, involving everything we do and everything that surrounds us. Colour is an emotion. It is our world.

CCI/FinishWorks is committed to designing and providing our customers with exceptional, trend setting finishes for all types of furniture. Through extensive research, we have selected 210, designed inspired paint colours tailored to today's most popular home fashion trends, fabrics and accessories.

*REFLECTIONS in Colour* is so much more than just a collection of paint colours; it is a world of possibilities and distinct personalities. This collection is currently available in three technologies and designed for Industrial use only; Conventional Nitrocellulose Lacquer, Precatalyzed Lacquer and Conversion Varnish.

*Extend the reaches of your creativity....*

The 2017 Color Trend Perspective is prepared as a summary of color trends and direction, pertaining specifically to the residential furniture and kitchen cabinet industries, based on our observations and overall interpretation. We provide this resource to our customers as a general guide for information and inspiration. We credit our sources of information to furniture related publications, quotes and previous commentaries. For additional information, color trend presentations or customer palette reviews and recommendations, contact your sales representative or M. Rodney McFalls, CMG, CfYH @ [rncfalls@rpmwfg.com](mailto:rncfalls@rpmwfg.com).

---

## RPM Wood Finishes Group

*R&D and Manufacturing facility*  
3194 Hickory Blvd. Hudson, NC 28638

*Corporate Office and Color Design Showroom*  
2220 US 70 SE – Suite 100, Hickory Furniture Mart  
Hickory, NC 28603

**M. Rodney McFalls, CMG, CfYH**

Director Color Styling & Interpretive Design  
CCI/FinishWorks . An RPM Company  
[rncfalls@rpmwfg.com](mailto:rncfalls@rpmwfg.com)

Color Trend Perspective, 2017

## CCI/FinishWorks Locations

Shipshewana, IN	Westfield, MA
Apple Creek, OH	Salt Lake City, UT
New Holland, PA	Toronto, ON
Authur, IL	Mocksville, NC
Phoenix, AZ	

### Credits / References:

*Furniture Today High Point Market Highlights 2016*

*Post Market Commentary, fall 2016 highlights*

