
Ethan Allen Designers on Consumer Trends at Retail

By CINDY HODNETT

Whether working one on one with a client or as a valued member of the retail team, interior designers have valuable insight into consumer and industry trends. Designers Today recently interviewed Manuella Moreira and Maha Turkmani, interior design consultants with Ethan Allen Retail, about consumer trends they are observing in their stores.

Designers Today: Based on your recent interactions with clients, what rooms are the most in demand with regard to updating? What factors are driving the decision to move forward with the furniture purchase?

Moreira: I've noticed that they are coming in looking to update the main living spaces such as living rooms, family rooms and master bedroom. As our lives get busier and more demanding every day, I've noticed that people are looking to transform their homes into a more inviting and peaceful retreat to just unwind and enjoy.

Turkmani: The highly demanded rooms are family rooms; it is the first room a

new home owner normally tackles. Now when it comes to the deciding factor or the urge to purchase the furniture, it is a combination of different things that contribute including: a) A sale or promotion that might be going on; b) Budget plays a big role as well; and c) Product availability/limited availability, etc.



MANUELLA MOREIRA



MAHA TURKMANI

Designers Today: What trends are you seeing in the living room? Dining room? Bedroom?

Moreira: Lately, we've seen a shift towards a more casual, relaxed and simplified design in living rooms and dining rooms. People are leaning towards pieces that are more casual, tailored and effortless. It's all about making the space very livable and functional. For bedrooms, we're seeing more neutral, warm colors that create a more inviting, relaxed and soothing environment. Mixing different materials and textures help add warmth and personality to the space.

Turkmani: Trends in living rooms, dining rooms and bedrooms include consumers going neutral on the big pieces and adding an accent color on the smaller items. Bedrooms are becoming more gender free using colors, shapes



Brooklyn Retreat
by Ethan Allen

and textures that appeal to everyone.

Designers Today: What are some of the tools designers can access at Ethan Allen if bringing in a client to explore the product line?

Moreira: Technology has played a big role in the design process. When meeting a client in

the design center, I utilize the touch screens that we have throughout the showroom to show clients all of the custom options available for our pieces. Also, the tablet is a very convenient tool that I use to draw and present floor plans and renderings to clients in the design center or while on a home call.

Turkmani: The tools that designers are using to bring in clients depends a lot on technology like Preview, Photoshop 2d and 3d presentations and mood boards for conceptualizing spaces and ideas.

Designers Today: How has the retail design client changed over the past three to five years? What are some of the expectations present now that were not five years ago?

Moreira: Technology and social media has

definitely influenced the design process over the last few years. Clients are coming in to the design center with ideas that they've seen and collected on Houzz, Pinterest, Instagram, etc. They know what they want and like, but need help pulling it all together and making it work with their lifestyle.

Turkmani: Quality versus quantity is still the top selling concept, and they are more open to our design service knowing that they are working with professionals. ■

