

EURO TRENDTRACKING

Retail News contributor Bridget Fabi reports on the trends spotted at Ambiente, Europe's largest gift and home décor trade show.

BY BRIDGET FAB

The largest European trade fair for home décor and giftware, Ambiente, was held this past February in Frankfurt, Germany, hosting over 135,000 visitors and a fabulous range of new and innovative tabletop, housewares, gifts and home décor.

The overall attitude of both buyers and vendors was surprisingly upbeat considering the global economic climate, while the most widespread theme was socially responsible products.

The majority of vendors opted to play things safe with neutral palettes and a limited number of new items. As such, design styles weren't as prevalent or plentiful as in years past. However, the leading European style trailblazers didn't disappoint, showcasing awe-inspiring displays of pure design decadence.

Some of the most notable style directions are noted here. These are in addition to the trend toward cross-merchandising styles within a single setting, as well as the continuing love affair with purple, albeit in warmer, richer tones.

FRUGAL FAB

In this time of economic uncertainty and environmental awareness, products with good value and which employ repurposed, organic or eco materials are hot commodities.

GRACEFUL LIVING

Graceful, feminine designs and luxurious details are the hallmarks of this trend. Think exquisite glossy and opaque accessories, white porcelain and china, rich shimmery textiles and couture detailing. Colours are subtle – mauve, lilac, aqua, grey, white, oyster, silver and mushroom – and used sparingly.

Picture courtesy of Flamant Home Interiors. www.flamant.com



SLOW LIVING

This style is a marriage of simplicity and comfort with an emphasis on quality, handcrafted details and sustainability. By combining products made from ceramic, wood, glass, felt and linen a calm minimalism is achieved. Bright orange, moss, fuchsia and cobalt, contrasted against neutral hues of oyster, mushroom and white is the predominant palette.

Picture courtesy of Rauminraum. www.rauminraum.de





ROUGH LUXE

Pairing natural and organic items with high-design products made from synthetic materials is the ultimate in contrast, but a surprisingly palatable mix.

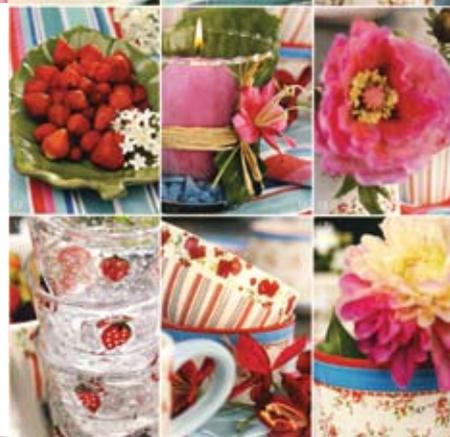
*Picture courtesy of Pols Potten.
www.polspotten.nl*



SWEET ROMANCE

Flora and fauna, whimsical insects and feminine filigree details along with sweet gingham, stripes and vintage prints abounded, especially on tabletop and linens. A summery palette of bright blue, bubblegum pink, berry red, mint and sherbet lemon were the hues of choice.

*Picture courtesy of Sia.
www.sia-homefashion.com*



ASIAN PERSUASION

This trend embodies the elegance of modern-day Japan with romantic and delicate details such as cherry blossoms adorning clean-lined tabletop and linens in contrasting glossy and matte finishes.

*Image courtesy of Sia.
www.sia-homefashion.com*



CULTURAL MOSAIC

Ethnic influences from the Far East, Africa and Asia are stronger than ever and exotic elements are becoming more mainstream.

*Picture courtesy of Villa Collection.
www.villacollection.dk*



EURO TRASH

Classics reinvented with flamboyant glitz in an eccentric palette of black, silver and gold is a tongue-in-cheek trend with a youthful vibe reminiscent of the disco era.

*Picture courtesy of Kare.
www.kare-design.de*

For more of Bridget's world-wide adventures in design journalism and trendtracking, check out her blog at www.trendsinc.ca/blog.

