



Top Drawer
Back-to-school tip: A laundry hamper for every bedroom. **2D**

White, wood form an unlikely partnership

CONTRAST COMMANDS ATTENTION
IN RETRO-TINGED FURNITURE

By ELAINE MARKOUTSAS
Universal Uclick

White with wood furniture is easy on the eyes, and for many, that's a relief. For the uninitiated, the mashup suggests a sort of split personality. There's definitely a bit of retro going on, whether it's Art Deco, midcentury modern or Scandinavian style that's informing the latest designs. Wood in all shades from blond to the darkest brunette is cohabiting with white surfaces, drawing new admirers.

White can add a fresh feel to décor – one reason that snowy slipcovers are perennial favorites, as classic as crisp white bed linens and shirts.

But when it comes to case goods (tables, consoles, everything not upholstered), white isn't the usual go-to choice – unless it's in a beachy or country cottage setting or for more drama and edge, ultra glossy white, which is especially in sync with mirrored pieces in Hollywood glam interiors.

For some, white is too stark, too casual or too over the top. Wood is preferred for the visual strength or elegance that it lends. Some are diehard enthusiasts for a particular species, such as cherry, particularly in period styles, while Arts and Crafts aficionados can't get enough oak. Wood hue preferences, both natural and stained, also go through cycles of popularity.

Most recently, there was a spate of espresso, partly launched by the French designer Christian Liaigre, whose fondness for nearly black wenge wood has trickled down to big-box stores. Then there were the limed or whitewashed woods, a look hugely embraced by Restoration Hardware, where it even translates to outdoor furniture.

Now comes this hybrid: a dramatic teaming of wood offset with white or ivory frames, generally expressed in contrasting doors, drawers or table-tops. The white may be painted, lacquered, stained. Or it may be applied to the surface with leather, fabric or some other material.

SEE FURNITURE, PAGE 4D

Hooker Furniture's Vassaro chest has scrolling painted on a creamy finish across the drawers in a case made of poplar solids and cherry veneers.



COURTESY OF HOOKER FURNITURE



The Pushkin sideboard from Philipp Selva Home is crafted of beech and linden veneered in cherry; the drawers are covered with white leather in a crocodile finish.

COURTESY OF PHILIPP SELVA HOME



COURTESY OF BDI

The Format desk designed by Matthew Weatherly for BDI is made of natural walnut and nickel-plated steel with a white top.

Sourcebook

- BDI** 703-803-6900, bdiusa.com
- CB2** 800-606-6252, cb2.com
- Gus Design Group** 416-534-0773, gusmodern.com
- Henredon** 800-444-3682, henredon.com
- Hickory Chair** 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com
- HGTV HOME Furniture Collection** Bassett Furniture Industries 855-788-HGTV (4488), hgtvhome.com
- Hooker** 276-656-3335, hookerfurniture.com
- IKEA** 800-434-4532, ikea.com/us
- Julian Chichester** 336-886-2454, julianchichester.com
- Regina Andrew** 734-250-8042, reginaandrew.com
- Selva** 336-885-2239, selva.com
- Yube** 800-474-6615, yubecube.com
- West Elm** 888-922-4119, westelm.com



COURTESY OF REGINA ANDREW

Disparate textures look striking in this table by Regina Andrews. The rustic legs are made of recycled wood.

For great green results, go native



Garden Spot
Debra Boyette



COURTESY OF DEBRA BOYETTE

The wooded area on the north side of Tom Harville's home in Cary is full of native plantings.

fy his wife's desire for specific cutting plants. Others were put in when he settled here and thought he'd plant a formal English garden. His plans changed.

After meeting members of the N.C. Native Plant Society and others who extol the benefits of native plants, Harville became curious.

SEE NATIVE, PAGE 3D



Harville

I don't know what Tom Harville's woodland garden looks like in spring and fall, but on a Sunday afternoon in what he calls "the green malaise of summer," plenty of plants got my attention. Harville led a tour by the south side of his Cary home, around the back, to the north and along pathways that climb a wooded bank.

Ferns, hemlocks, azaleas and oakleaf hydrangea are among several hundred species of native plants in his garden. Just a bit of color – red berries on Solomon's seal and fading purple peeping through a wave of yellow Heliopsis helianthoides and Rudbeckia heliopsis – was visible on this day in early August. Mostly there's green in various shades, shapes and textures.

Although most of his plants are native to North Carolina, Harville said he's not a "purist." He also has non-natives, or exotics. Some satis-

10 Questions DECORATING SECRETS FROM THE N&O DESIGN TEAM

Try for a timeless look

M.A. Allen

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Design philosophy in 25 words: Design should be timeless. Whether it's modern, traditional or somewhere between, the interior should look just as tasteful 10 years later.

Next big home decor trend: A return to brass. It's popping up on furnishings, accessories and plumbing.

Most outdated décor trend: Heavy and elaborate drapery. Swags and cascades have been traded in for neat pinch pleats.

Favorite color combination: I love a gray backdrop with punchy color brought in through art, fabrics and accessories. Paint with enough contrast really accentuates nice interior moldings.

Favorite design blog: I am not a blog follower, but I use Houzz.com occasionally. My clients flag images they like on Houzz so I can get a feel for their style. It's been a great tool.

Best way to dress a mantel:



COURTESY OF KNOLL.COM

M.A. Allen says the best design bargain she ever found was a midcentury Saarinen tulip table for \$550.

Beautiful and meaningful artwork. The fireplace is typically a room's focal point, so what goes above it should be something you want to draw attention to.

Best design bargain you ever scored: I bought a midcentury Saarinen tulip table for \$550, and I just saw the same table in New York City for sale for \$7,000.

Every foyer must have: Drama! It sets the tone for the rest of your house. Even the smallest of foyers can have a statement light fixture and killer rug. With more

space, add a chest and mirror for function.

Biggest design no-no: Round rugs, matching furniture suites, large overstuffed upholstery. ... I could go on and on!

My best tip for do-it-yourself designers: Invest in quality pieces instead of rushing into temporary fixes. My parents taught me to collect, so I place high value on meaningful art and accessories. Objects purchased on a trip tell a much better story than a tchotchke from a chain store.