

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

Three designers highlight recent home-interior shows and coming trends

COMPILED BY COURTNEY SANKS

Maison et Objet

January 23–27, 2009 | Paris–Nord Villepinte, France

Creation and innovation were the buzzwords at the first of this year's biannual Maison et Objet events in Paris. "There was a penchant for baroque and rococo forms used in a very avant-garde way," says interior designer Amely Wurmbbrand of **Amely Wurmbbrand Designs** (206-542-0447 or amelydesigns.com), who has attended the show twice.

Playing with traditional forms and tones, such as the Henryot & Cie tête-à-tête lounge in a warm mauve hue, was popular, Wurmbbrand notes. Designers were unafraid of bold colors, such as scarlet, blood orange and lively spring greens. Multicolored insets in cabinetry contrasted with vibrant exterior finishes, and colored piping added playfulness to upholstered pieces.

Among all the collections, Wurmbbrand noted statement furniture, such as Fabio Novembre's "Him" and "Her" chairs shaped like human backs, as one of the highlights. "Furniture becomes part of the art," Wurmbbrand says. "It's furniture you can have a conversation [about]."

New York International Gift Fair

January 25–29, 2009 | Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York

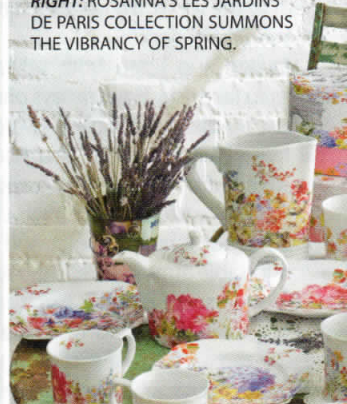
The biannual New York International Gift Fair kicked off its winter edition with an unofficial theme: the concept of healthy buying.

Alan Honick, partner of **Lichen Studio** (206-842-2625, lichen-studio.com), a design and manufacturing studio that focuses on using innovative materials, noticed a trend toward sustainable products that ease the burden on buyers' wallets as well as the environment. As an exhibitor



LEFT: LICHEN STUDIO INTRODUCES "ADAPTATION," A SLEEK VASE USING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PAPERSTONE FOR ITS BASE.

RIGHT: ROSANNA'S LES JARDINS DE PARIS COLLECTION SUMMONS THE VIBRANCY OF SPRING.



at the show, Honick gained insight into consumer trends. "Buyers were really holding back this year," says Honick, who noticed that buyers chose quality over quantity.

For Lichen Studio designer Brandon Perhacs, anticipating this consumer response meant choosing his materials wisely. Perhacs used PaperStone, a 100 percent postconsumer recycled paper material, in his "Adaptation" vase and "Migration" oil lamp for Lichen Studio. Trying to keep products true to the "green" mission is challenging, Perhacs notes. "I'm trying to get better at distinguishing what is really green and what is not," he says. "It's a very complex issue."

For Rosanna Bowles, creator of tableware company **Rosanna, Inc.** (440 S. Holgate St., 206-204-0588, rosannainc.com), affordability didn't come at the expense of quality. An exhibitor at the gift fair, Bowles chose to show items that could be used in multiple entertainment settings.

"The whole idea we did for spring was 'escape'—traveling the world without leaving your home," Bowles says of her new line. Her whimsical floral Les Jardins de Paris series set the tone for the rest of the collection, which drew inspiration from 2007's Paris Fashion Week, where Stella McCartney debuted a wall covered in a luscious array of flowers.

Acknowledging that tableware can be both elegant and effortless, Bowles summarizes in three words what is to come this spring: lush, layered and multifunctional. ■



STEPHANE PLASSIER'S MÉRIDIENNE SOFA FOR HENRYOT & CIE IS A CLASSIC FORM WITH A COOL NEW TWIST.