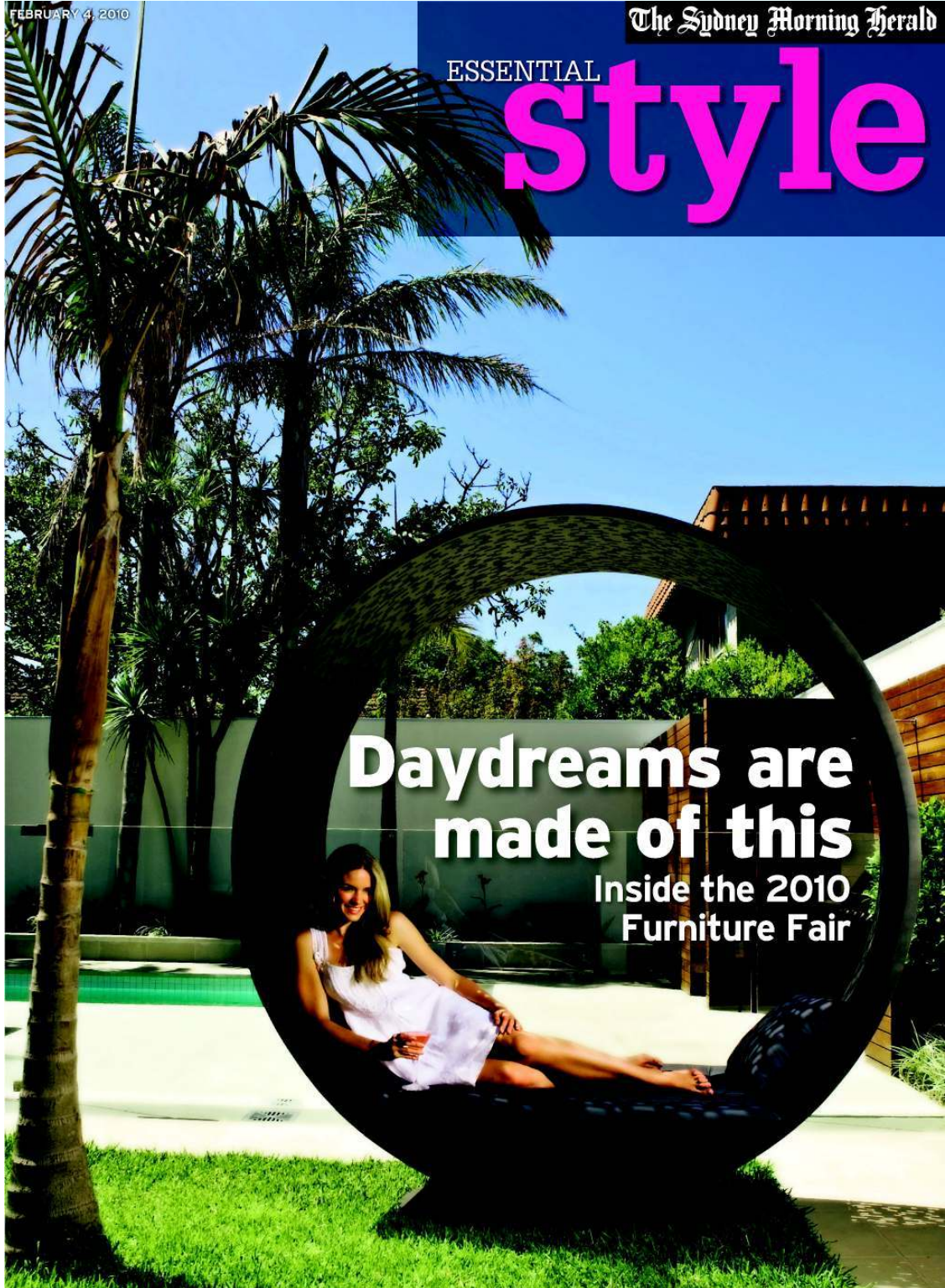


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Furnished fantasies

The year's most covetable furniture pieces are on show in Sydney at the fashion week of home decorating. **Susan Redman** forecasts the trends coming soon to a store near you.

Australian furniture design has come a long way since the slab hut and the colonial cedar tallboy. From beautiful outdoor lounges to European-influenced dining suites and Asian-inspired homewares, Australians have embraced an international style. We are proud of our homes, too. Milou Ket, the Dutch trend forecaster, publisher and guest speaker at this week's 2010 Australian International Furniture Fair at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, says that, like Europeans, Australians take a great interest in interior decorating.

"It shows we value our individuality, we take more care of memories and belongings and we try to make our homes more personal," she says.

Reflecting that sentiment in our ever-increasing interest in decoration and interior design, the AIFF event is exhibiting 30 per cent more local manufacturers than in previous years, displaying the wares of more than 200 Australian and international companies.

The event, which starts the Asia Pacific calendar of furniture and furnishing trade fairs for the year, is promising to inspire buyers. The popular homewares section, Decoration + Design, is set to unearth emerging talent, reveal the latest interior trends, explore new textile production and generally raise the bar in sustainable design.



This year's wow factor

1 This red ikat Empire sofa from Ruby Star Traders, \$4900, is a glamorous example of the ever-popular East-meets-West style of interior decoration. Ruby Star's owner and founder, Karin Gardiner, travels to India throughout the year. The result is an eclectic and vibrant mix combining the latest in international designer trends with traditional Indian craftsmanship.
10 Bridge Road, Glebe, NSW, 9518 7899,
www.rubystar.com



2 Designed in Australia by MRD and handcrafted in China, this Scandi entertainment unit with an oak finish, \$1800, and matching Low chair, \$599, are part of one of the many furniture ranges at MRD Home. When they're teamed with some of the company's sophisticated homewares, you get an idea of some of the Melbourne-based supplier's super-stylish collections.
MRD Home, (03) 9348 9911,
mrddhome.com.au



3 Pod chairs have really made a comeback this summer but none so delightful as this lacy rattan version, the Zara, \$725, from Equator Homewares. It's designed by company owner Kerry Haig and handmade



in Vietnam and, like all Equator designs, is crafted from natural fibre and eco-friendly production methods.
Equator Homewares, 9571 5000,
equatorhomewares.com



4 With the continued move towards incorporating indoor and outdoor living spaces, Satara's range of hand-woven synthetic furniture, including this completely weatherproof Bukawu double day bed, \$3800, gets the thumbs-up in the style stakes, leading the way in this sector of furniture design.
Satara Outdoor Living, (03) 9587 4469,
satara.com.au



6 Dealing in French antiques and reproductions, Vixen & Velvet from Melbourne has a well-trained eye for spotting pieces that exude glamour and decadence in one. The collections the company has on display at the AIFF include restored vintage furniture, wrought-iron and steel industrial accessories, carved garden estate pieces and classic reproductions such as this Louis-style white bergere chair sourced in Egypt.
Vixen & Velvet, (03) 9533 2777,
vixenandvelvet.com



5 This dining table, \$2399, and open-rack shelving, \$1699, are part of the d-Bodhi range of furniture, which is crafted in Indonesia but sold around the world. Bringing new life to old wood from a range of sources, including railway sleepers, d-Bodhi is distributed in Australia by homewares company Meizai.
d-Bodhi from Meizai, (03) 9279 2800,
meizai.com.au



Edgy work of up-and-coming stars

New and emerging furniture designers get their chance to star in one of the most creative sections of the AIFF, The Edge. Designer Uli Hasel has been the curator of the event since its inception seven years ago and is "blown away" by the talent taking part this year.

"Wow! We never had so many designers and so many pieces in The Edge before," Hasel says. She has nominated facet-shaping developed from natural fibres such as rattan and eco-friendly production as particularly strong trends in the work on display.

Hasel comments on a handful of her favourites chosen from more than 80 entries:



1. 1974 chair

By Paphop Wongpanich from Bangkok, who designs for Ministry of Space Co, Ltd.

"These funky, colourful and robust dining chairs would lift the mood of any family dining setting. They show a trend to bring back more colour into our living environment."

2. Scalloped seating

By Nita Robson, who is studying furniture design at North Coast Institute of TAFE

"In this low easy chair, I could sit in my favourite cross-legged position. It's been made by a computer-controlled flat-bed router used to cut shapes, in this case, out of sheets of plantation plywood."



3. Untitled beach recliner

By Timothy Lee, a student who is currently studying industrial design at the University of Western Sydney.

"This cane recliner is made for a holiday in heaven, even if it's at home in the backyard. Cane is back. It is easy to harvest and economical to transport and process. It is enjoying renewed interest from furniture designers and it will be exciting to see what they will come up with next."

4. Frangipani light

By Mary Harrington, who is currently studying industrial design at the University of New South Wales.

"This cardboard product is fun to assemble. Cardboard is a recycled product and recyclable. Many designers are divided as to which way is the better ecological route: to opt for a fully recycled or long-lasting product like the Spine Chair."



5. Spinne chair

By Ben Gumley, who studied furniture design at Lidcome TAFE before starting his own business, Mod Pod Design.

"This chair

stands out as it combines elegant lines of solid timber (sparse use of natural materials is the way of the future) with texture in the use of a random web of kangaroo leather cord."





Hot and cold fashions

Six experts identify the trends in interior design for 2010 and point the finger at those that are starting to lose their appeal.

David Heimann

Orson & Blake, Sydney

HOT

Tailored, subtle and handsome interior ideas including natural wood grains, antiqued leathers and suedes, linens, large-scale plaids and tartans, recycled ideas, eco chic, global accessories. Inspiration is from the natural world, bringing the outside in to create a truly familiar and comforting refuge at home.

NOT

A bombardment of overly feminine references in design, for example floral motifs, a jumble of pattern and decoration, the overuse of chandeliers, baroque gestures and faux-French shapes in furniture.



pendant lighting that's audacious, risky and over the top; and anything from the 1940s.

NOT

The pretensions: eave-less, brick, two-storey McMansions that lack common-sense design principles yet still manage to dominate our suburban landscape.

Marie O'Mahony

University of Technology, Sydney

HOT

I think we will see an emphasis on tactile qualities but in a subtle way. And at the high end of the market we will see finer, handcrafted techniques used to contrast with high-tech fabrics.

NOT

Super-sized sofas.



for instance, carpets and 3D effects. We want more functional, authentic and honest products. This will be applied especially to "green" products – products made with integrity and consciousness towards society and its resources.

NOT

A trend losing its appeal is this over-baroque, overdecorated direction with bling-bling.

Kathryn Ireland,

Kathryn Ireland Textiles and Design, California (US)



HOT

Colour and pattern. There's been a big David Hicks comeback [of the trailblazing mid-20th-century British designer] with geometrics. It's very '60s and '70s and very much a big part of a decorator's resources [and references].

NOT

The fad of excess. A room that's too "done" is out. Overproduction is gone. People are not going to decorate in one style. Theme decorating is out. It's more about who people are, displayed in the rooms they live in.

Fiona Barker

Fiona Barker Design

Sarah Lahey
 Colour Designs (Australia)

HOT

Pre-loved, eclectic furniture; really comfortable chairs; attention-grabbing



Milou Ket,

Milou Ket Styling and Design (the Netherlands)

HOT

Security and warmth in the form of more textures and tactility:





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Ministers for the interior

The latest in interior design trends will be on display from today at Darling Harbour.

The three-day Australian International Furniture Fair will feature more than 250 Australian and international designers.

The fair is also a platform for new and emerging designers.

At the International Industry Seminar Series, experts in textile colour and design will share their views on everything from forecasting trends to the latest textile developments.

Details: www.aiff.net.au.