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THE LAP OF LUXURY

High-end manufacturers share their strategies for targeting consumers seeking luxury

BY AMY MCINTOSH



Noir's strategy of targeting luxury consumers includes consistently producing new products. Pictured here, the company's new introductions for the October 2019 High Point Market.

Today's retail landscape features an abundance of affordable online and in-store options for home furnishings, but the luxury consumer is still out there, ready to be catered to. Designers and consumers in the market for home furnishings generally are seeking beautiful pieces that complement their particular styles and budgets, and when that budget is higher, luxury manufacturers can capitalize.

"Luxury furniture seems to be an ever-evolving target," says Luke Simpson, President and CEO of Durham Furniture. "Where it perhaps once had to do only with a designer or company name, we believe more and more that consumers are seeing luxury furniture as having several key characteristics —

quality of build (and durability), overall buying experience from the retailer, sustainability and eco-friendliness of the manufacturer and manufacturing process, and overall options in the furniture itself. At the same time, luxury furniture doesn't necessarily come with an 'over-the-top' price tag. Consumers are demanding value for their money at a mid-to-high-end price point."

At higher price points, customers can purchase quality furnishings that last longer and are customized precisely to fit their needs.

"What is luxury for one person may be very different from what is luxury for somebody else," says Bob Silva, Director of Marketing and Purchasing for Noir. "As such, we design and manufacture each item by recognizing and bringing out the distinct qualities that make it luxurious."

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Customization is a hallmark of luxury furniture companies. The Chateau Fontaine Collection from Durham Furniture is pictured here in a Mineral Gray finish, but the collection can be customized in a choice of more than 40 finishes.

FINDING THE CUSTOMER

It's important for any manufacturer to identify their ideal end user, but for many luxury brands, this consumer is difficult to define on demographics alone. While the target high-end consumer used to be Baby Boomers, Millennial incomes are growing, giving this generation more purchasing power and more influence in this market.

Some brands, like Theodore Alexander, have targeted product collections aimed at specific luxury consumers.

"We have brands at Theodore Alexander that target a range of demographics," says Neil Robinson, President of Theodore Alexander. "TA Studio is designed for the emerging affluent Millennial, while Theodore Alexander is more for the consumer moving into their dream home. We tend to interact with these consumers when their purchasing power and disposable income are at their highest."

LOCATION ALSO PLAYS A ROLE

"The typical Nathan Anthony end user is living in major metropolitan areas with disposable income," says Tina Nicole, Co-founder and Lead Designer for Nathan Anthony. "They may own more than one home. We also have a suburban audience who want to express their personalities in their home decor, and who want distinctive furnishings. They will purchase what they love and are not necessarily price-driven."

To target these luxury consumers, the brands often go where the audience is, whether that audience is interior designers, retailers or end users. Often this involves integrated marketing campaigns that present a consistent message to the brand's target audience across a variety of platforms. Successfully associating a brand with the "luxury" label means a streamlined, cohesive marketing approach.

"We have national ad campaigns running in top shelter magazines that create unexpected aspirational moments," Robinson says. "These 'moments' are reinforced by social media campaigns, website content, trade showroom displays and Theodore Alexander-branded retail galleries. The look and feel of these campaigns are tailored to evoke a sense of luxury: everything from the scale of

the furniture and the rooms to the models, as well as the activity in the scene. We further enforce the idea of true luxury through our heritage of quality, fine furniture construction and design on our branded social media accounts and website."

COMMITTING TO QUALITY

Higher prices are typically associated with luxury furnishings, but often the adage, "you get what you pay for," applies. These premium price points ensure high-end consumers are getting the quality, craftsmanship and customization they are looking for.

"We have not, nor will we sacrifice quality in the build of our product, using only the highest-quality lumber and finishing processes, and working with skilled tradespeople with many years' of experience," says Simpson of Durham's manufacturing process. "We continue to train internally to ensure our product and processes are of the highest quality."

Customization is critical for attracting and retaining the high-end consumer, according to Nicole, so it's critical to work with interior design clients and other customers to provide custom upholstery and finishes to meet every project's needs. "It's a luxury to be able to surround yourself with beauty, comfort and singular objects that speak to your individuality," Nicole says. "We equate singularity with good and interesting designs."

Higher prices also allow manufacturers to offer more handmade pieces with high-quality materials. When customers know brands have invested in quality materials and craftsmanship, they can feel good about investing in pieces that will stand up to the test of time.

Ultimately, the luxury consumer wants what every consumer wants: attractive furnishings that fit their budget and complement their style and personality.

"End users are savvy," Silva says. "They are always looking for something fun and different. Noir meets those needs by continuing to make new and interesting product that we, ourselves, find to be fun and interesting. If we love what we make, there is a customer out there that will love it as well."

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DELUXE DESIGN

Luxury furnishings offer customization, quality and unique silhouettes.

BY AMY MCINTOSH

These overscale candleholders from Global Views are made of lead crystal. Designed to complement each other, the polished crystal columns also stand alone as stunning sculptural statements. www.globalviews.com



The Hamilton Bedside chest by Jonathan Charles is inspired by the symmetry and balance of the American Neoclassical style. The table features a hand-rubbed Mapa Burl enhanced by brass pulls made in the company's in-house foundry. www.jonathancharles.com



Theodore Alexander's Landry bookcase is made of hand-carved beech with knotty walnut and oak veneer. It has an LED-lit interior with four beech-framed and glass-inset shelves. www.theodorealexander.com



The Revelin motion sofa is part of Bradington-Young's customizable upholstery program, Luxe for Living, which offers more than 60 stationary and motion seating silhouettes. The program includes sofas, loveseats and sectionals, along with coordinating recliners, ottomans and a queen sofa sleeper. www.bradington-young.com

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Hooker Furniture's Torian credenza features nine push-to-open metal-wrapped drawers in a golden finish. It is part of the Melange Collection, a curated group of one-of-a-kind artistic accent pieces that blends colors, textures and materials to create a vibrant assortment of luxurious, versatile and timeless designs. www.hookerfurniture.com



The Argyle cabinet from Fine Furniture Design's Quintessence collection features a unique, dimensional pattern on the door fronts using contrasting veneer grains and finishes to create a tile look. It is framed in carved wood facets and a noir finish on online dyed pearwood. www.fdm.com

Equal parts metallic sculpture and table lamp, the Claudius table lamp from Noir gives a room dynamic form and some luminescent ambience. www.noirfurniturela.com



The Titter Feeler Fletcher dining table gives traditional style a fresh twist with carved and stepped double-pedestals, all hand-finished in its exclusive Sky. All Titter Feeler furniture is bench-built in LaGrange, GA. www.titterfeeler.com

Inspired by the swooping shapes of classic 1930s-era automobiles, the 96-inch Juliet sofa from Nathan Anthony features a gently sloping profile that wraps effortlessly around the sides to the bottom of each front edge. Shown in plush blue Aspire velvet, the sofa rests on three tapered metal legs in a choice of three elegant finishes. www.nafurniture.com



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