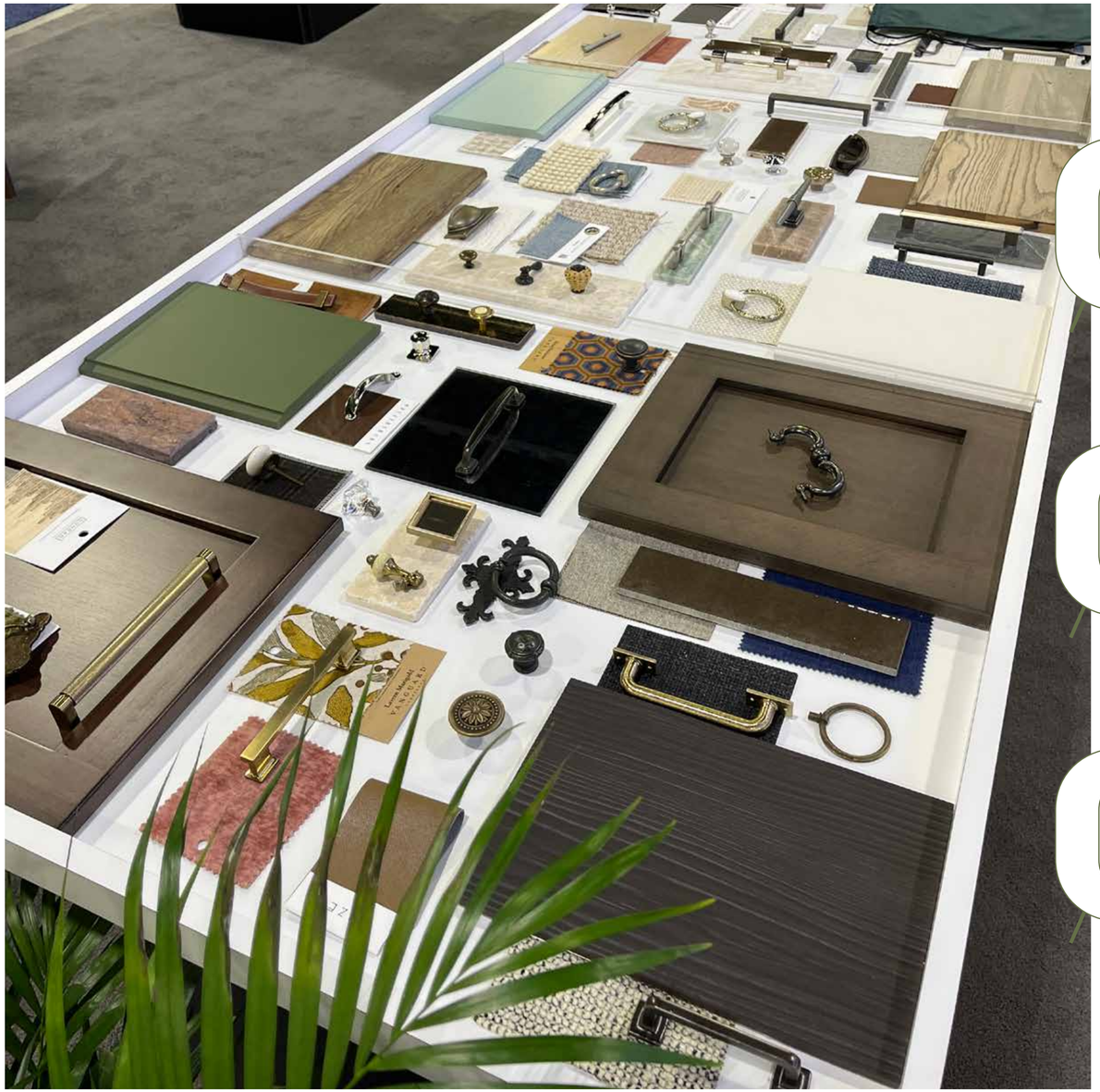
SHERWIN-WILLIAMS®
DESIGNHOUSE | *Industrial Wood Coatings*



IWF Atlanta show recap

2026



01. FINISHES & COLORS

02. MATERIAL INNOVATIONS

03. FEATURED BOOTHS

NOTES FROM THE SHOW



IWF 2026 demonstrated that the future of woodworking is being shaped by two parallel forces: smarter manufacturing and elevated design. While exhibitors emphasized automation, connected production systems, and operational efficiency, the show also underscored the growing influence of **color, material, and finish** as key drivers of product differentiation and consumer appeal.

This report highlights the most impactful design themes observed across the show floor, including emerging color and finish directions, innovations in surface texture, and advances in material development. From the continued rise of wood-look materials and tactile surfaces to expanding opportunities for customization and personalization, exhibitors showcased how design and manufacturing are increasingly working together to create more compelling and market-responsive products.

For DesignHouse, **IWF 2026** reinforces a clear industry shift: as manufacturing capabilities become more sophisticated, CMF is playing an increasingly important role in helping brands create meaningful distinction, deliver premium experiences, and connect with evolving consumer expectations.

Melissa Eurillo

Melissa Eurillo
Asst. Marketing Manager of Color & Design
Sherwin-Williams Industrial Wood DesignHouse





01. FINISHES & COLORS
2026

1. *Pale Finishes*
2. *Warm Neutrals*
3. *Earthy Darks*
4. *Trending Pairings*

PALE FINISHES

Pale wood tones emerged as a defining aesthetic at the show, appearing across decorative panels, laminates, wrapped components, and engineered surfaces. Light oak, blonde wood, and softly weathered natural finishes reflected the industry's continued shift toward brighter, more calming interiors. This lightness is fueled by consumers gravitating toward soothing, wellness-driven environments, where light woods create an inviting foundation while supporting the layered neutrals and warm minimalism shaping today's residential spaces.







GET THE LOOK


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SWG019411


SWG018951

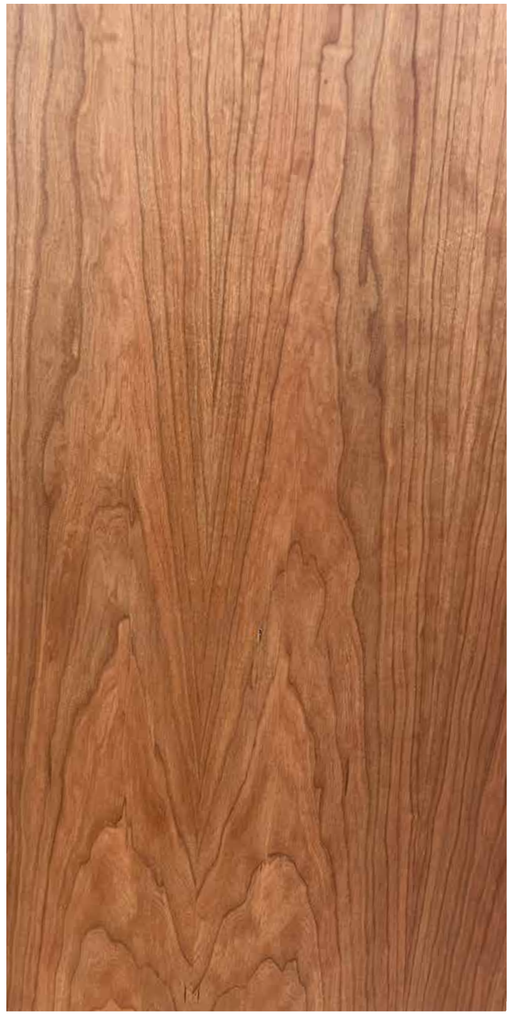

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WARM NEUTRALS

Warm neutral wood tones remained prevalent, reflecting consumers' growing desire for interiors that feel inviting, familiar, and emotionally grounding. Honeyed oaks, soft walnut-inspired browns, and toasted beige wood looks appeared across surfaces, aligning with broader design shifts toward comfort, quiet luxury, and modern nostalgia. As homeowners continue to seek spaces that foster a sense of warmth and connection, approachable mid-tone woods are providing a foundation for layered, lived-in interiors that feel both timeless and contemporary.







GET THE LOOK



SWG018203



SWG019494



SWG019570

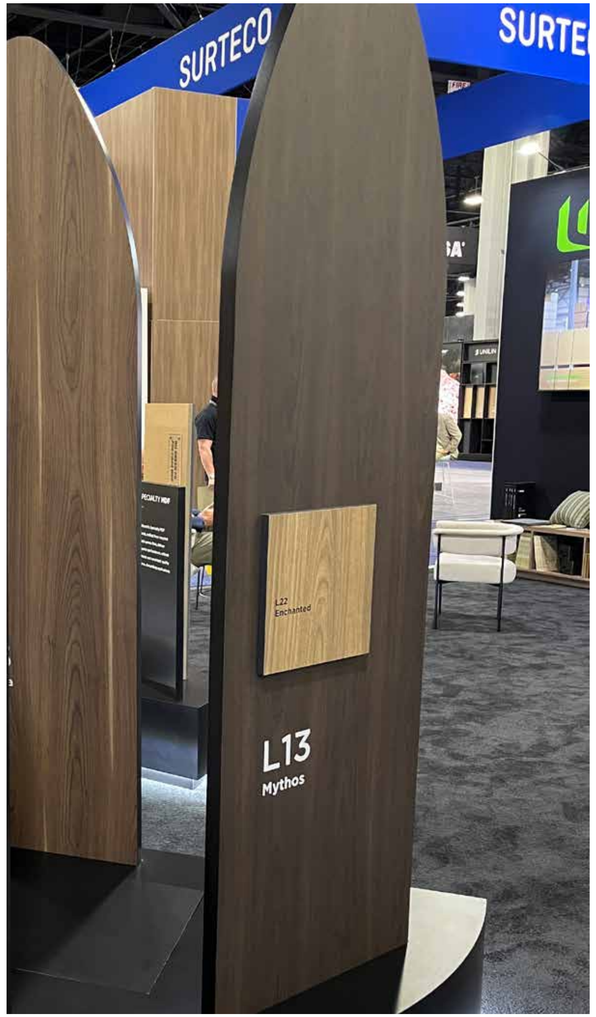


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EARTHY DARKS

Dark, earth-inspired browns made a notable statement, reflecting a growing desire for interiors that feel restorative, grounded, and deeply connected to nature. Rich walnut tones, darkened oak visuals, and soil-inspired browns appeared throughout, echoing broader shifts toward organic, mineral-driven color palettes. With consumers seeking refuge from an increasingly digital world, these deeper wood tones offer a sense of stability and permanence, bringing the richness of natural landscapes indoors.







GET THE LOOK


SWG019738


SWG019404


SWG019555


SWG018404

TRENDING PAIRINGS

Two-tone color applications remained a prominent design story, reflecting consumers' desire for interiors that feel more layered, nuanced, and personal. Popular pairings included watery blues with light oak tones, mineral-inspired greens paired with warm mid-tone woods, and deep charcoal finishes balanced by softly bleached wood visuals. Together, these combinations create a more curated and individualized aesthetic, allowing homeowners to introduce color and character without overwhelming a space.

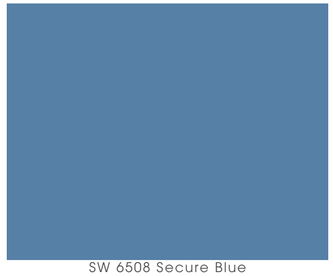






GET THE LOOK

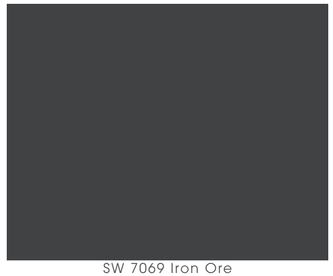

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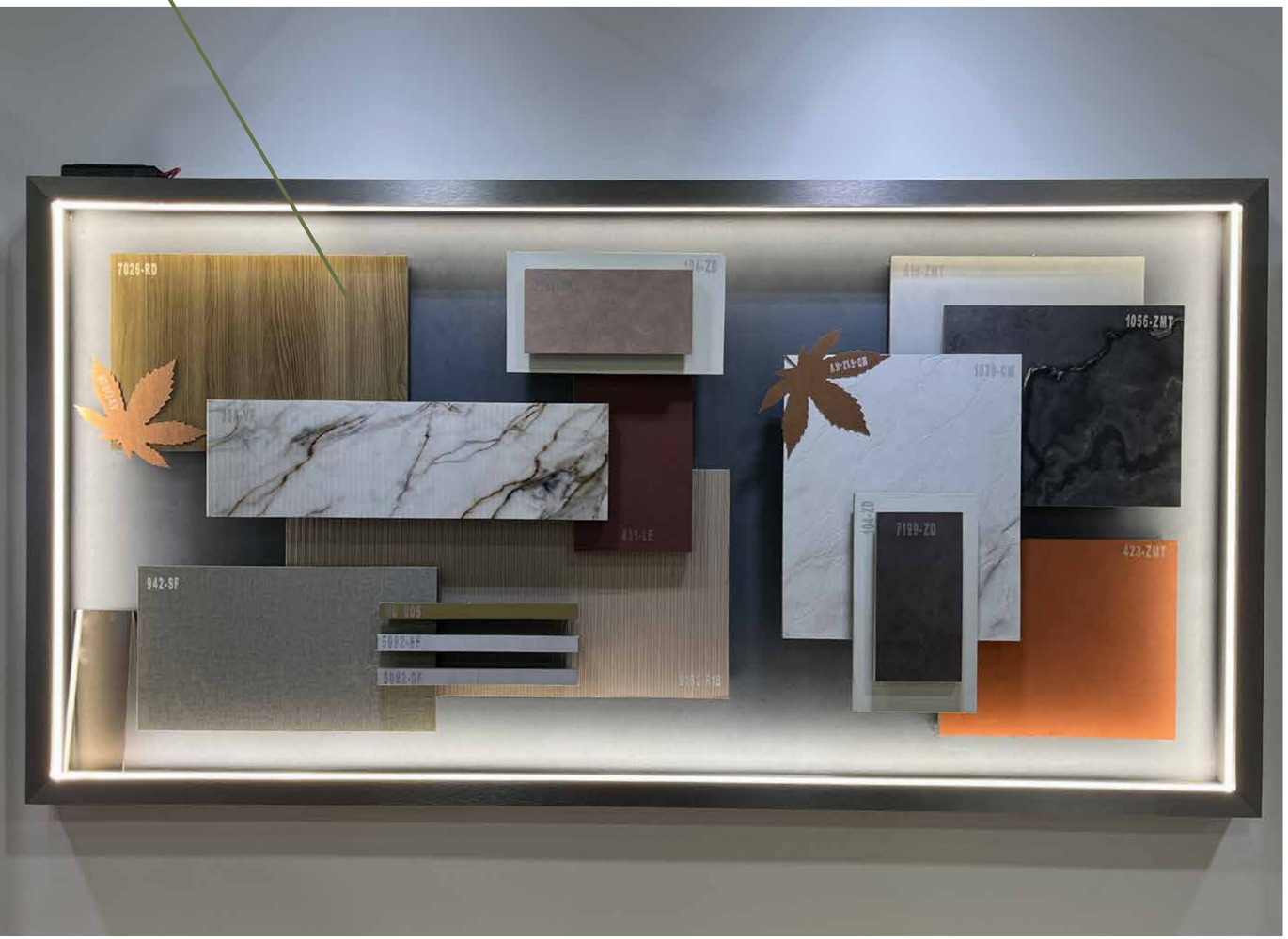

SW 6508 Secure Blue


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SW 9654 Taiga


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SW 7069 Iron Ore



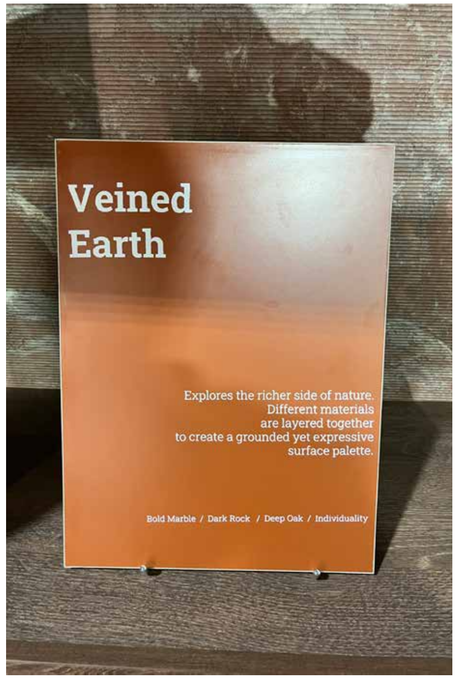
02. MATERIAL INNOVATIONS
2026

1. Texture
2. Wood-Look Materials
3. Customization

MATERIAL INNOVATIONS









TEXTURE

One of the most compelling themes at IWF 2026 was the growing role of surface texture as a primary design tool rather than a secondary finish attribute. Across decorative panels, laminates, wrapped components, and engineered surfacing materials, exhibitors showcased advanced embossing technologies, wire-brushed effects, sawn textures, weathered wood visuals, and ultra-matte surfaces designed to deliver a richer sensory experience. From a CMF perspective, this signals a broader evolution in how color, material, and finish work together. As color palettes become more tonal and nuanced, texture is emerging as a critical layer of differentiation, bringing depth, character, and emotional resonance to a design.

MATERIAL INNOVATIONS









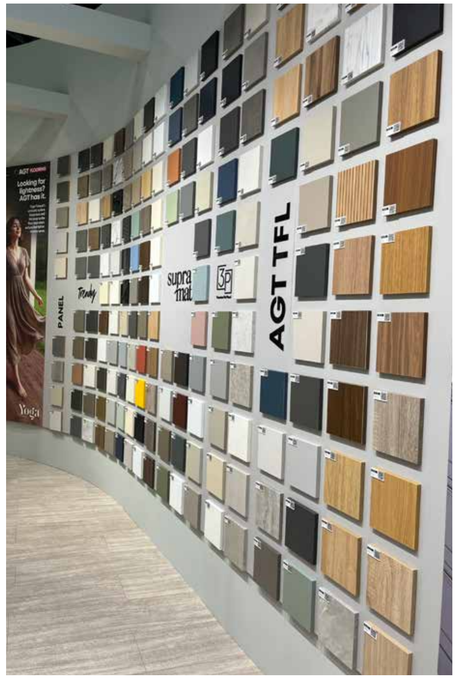
WOOD-LOOK MATERIALS

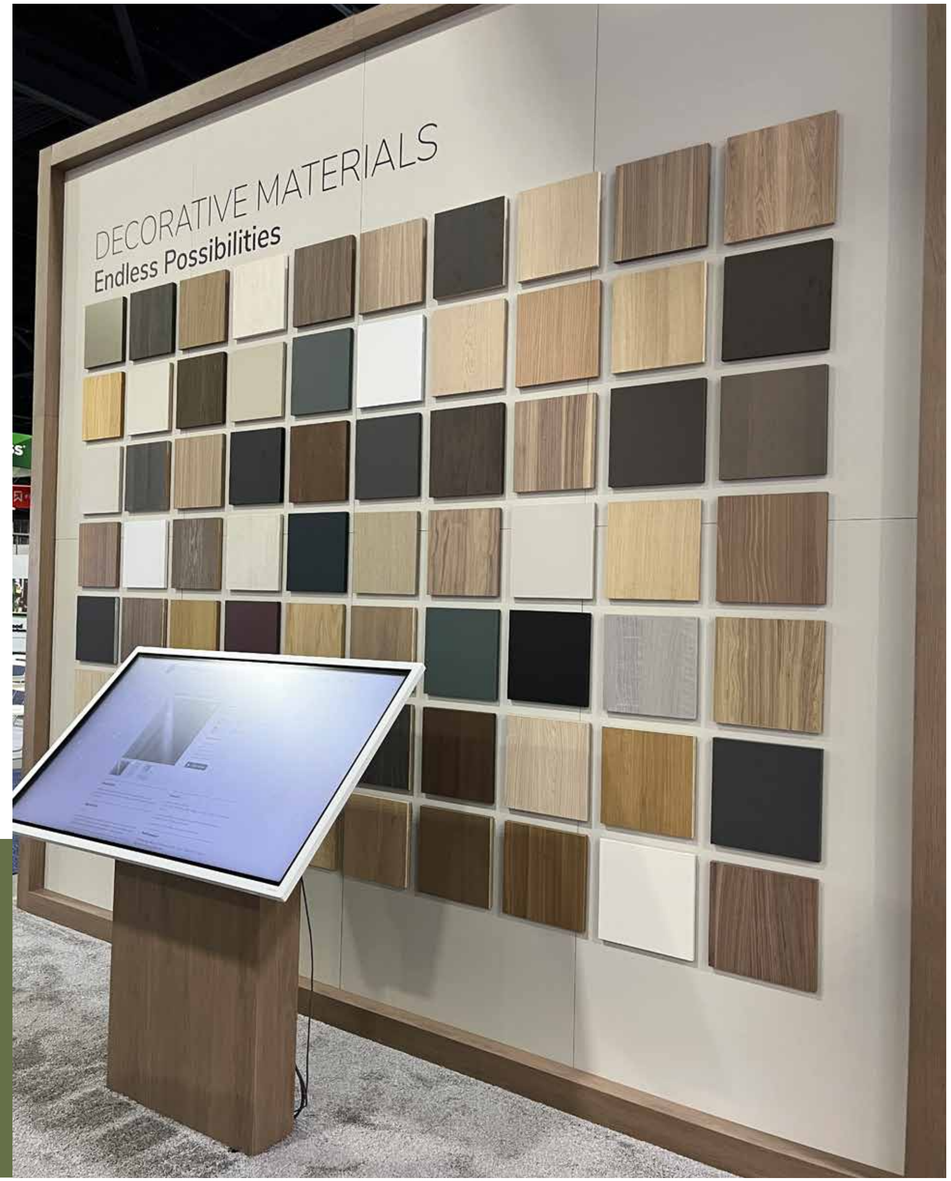
Another dominant theme throughout IWF 2026 was the continued rise of wood-look materials as the preferred design language across cabinetry, furniture, closets, and architectural applications. The industry's focus has shifted beyond wood-looks visuals alone, with texture emerging as a critical component in achieving believable wood aesthetics through wire-brushed effects, sawn textures, synchronized grain patterns, and low-sheen finishes that enhance both visual and tactile authenticity. As consumers continue to gravitate toward biophilic environments and nature-inspired interiors, manufacturers are responding with surfaces that deliver the warmth, comfort, and craftsmanship of wood while offering greater consistency, durability, and design flexibility.

MATERIAL INNOVATIONS



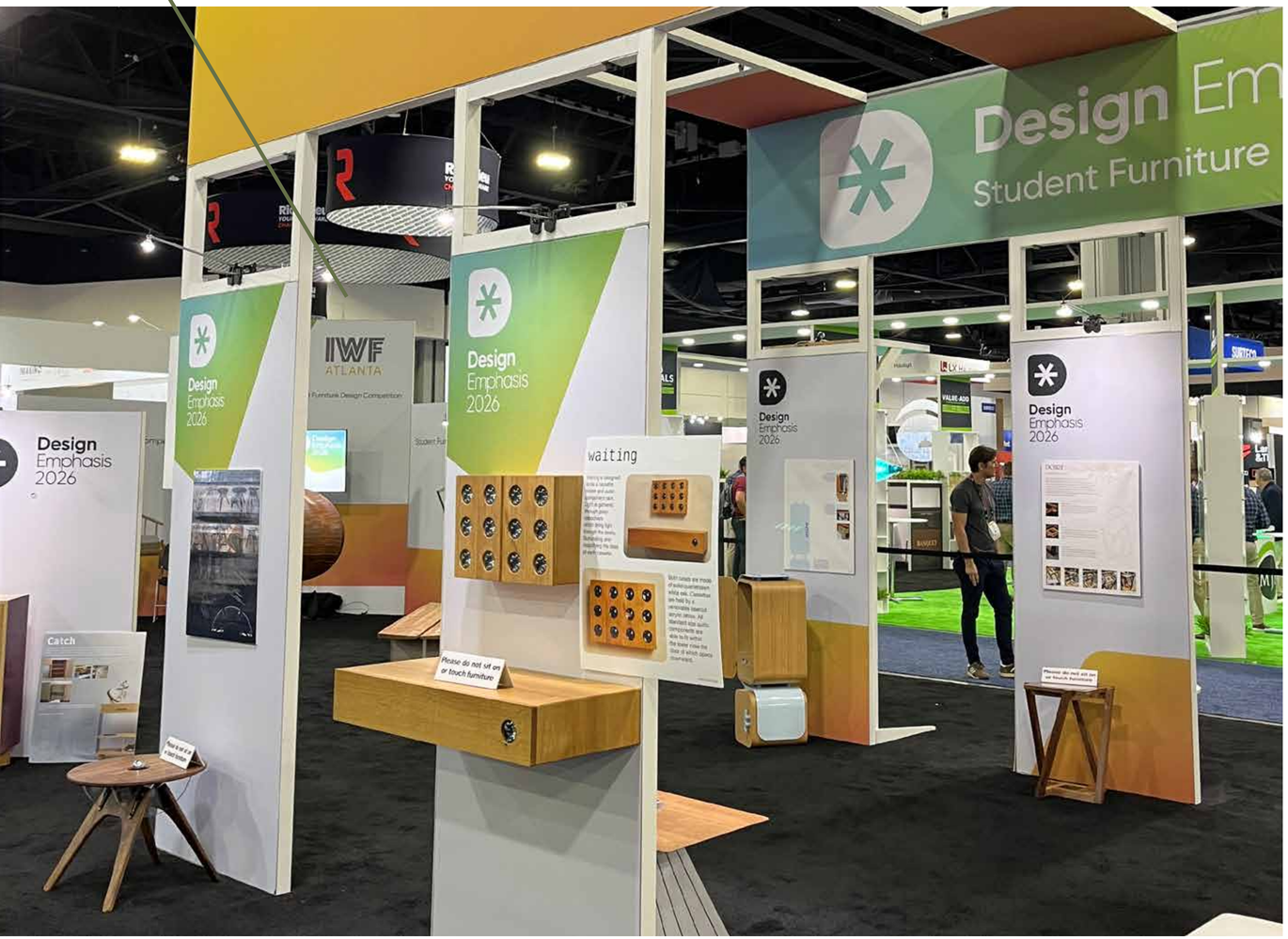






CUSTOMIZATION

The industry's continued investment in technologies and materials that support mass customization at scale was a key focus point. Across machinery, software, components, decorative surfaces, and cabinet manufacturing solutions, exhibitors emphasized greater production flexibility, allowing manufacturers to offer expanded design choices without sacrificing efficiency. As a result, finish and material programs are becoming increasingly important points of differentiation. Manufacturers are responding by expanding their offerings of wood looks, stain colors, opaque finishes, textures, and decorative details, empowering consumers to create highly customized environments without requiring fully bespoke products.



03. FEATURED BOOTHS
2026

1. Student Competition
2. Sherwin-Williams Booth

FEATURED BOOTHS



Best in Show







DESIGN EMPHASIS STUDENT FURNITURE COMPETITION

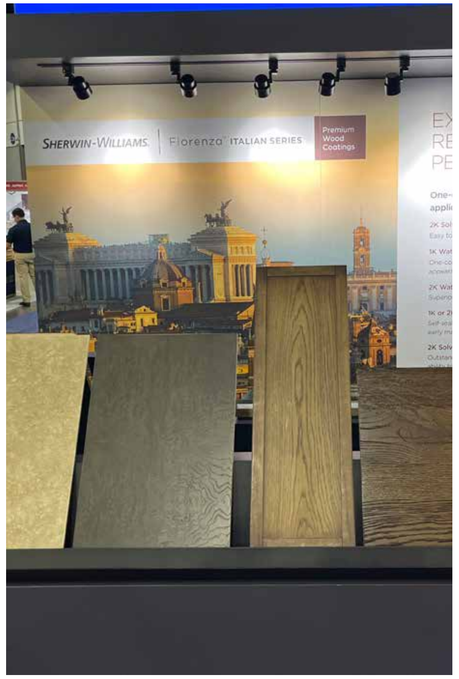
The Design Emphasis Student Competition reinforced many of the macro trends shaping today's interiors, including a growing appreciation for craftsmanship, expressive materiality, and emotionally engaging design. The strongest entries demonstrated how future designers are creating meaningful connections through wood, texture, and thoughtful construction, offering a glimpse into the aesthetic values likely to influence furniture and interior design in the years ahead.

The competition featured 78 projects from 14 schools, with projects judged on Design, Manufacturing, Marketability, and Workmanship. Best in Show was awarded to "Vanamera" by Nikki Tom of ArtCenter College of Design.

FEATURED BOOTHS









SHERWIN-WILLIAMS BOOTH

The Sherwin-Williams Industrial Wood booth continues to lead the industry in product innovation and color, material, and finish strategy. The booth featured the 2026 Colormix® Forecast panel assortment, dedicated color and trend displays, and key coating technologies including Florenza™ Italian Series, 80 Series, and EA HydroPlus. Through interactive finish presentations, flat-lay material displays, and trend-focused storytelling, we sought to position surface design as more than a finishing step, showcasing how color, texture, and advanced coatings can help manufacturers create more personalized, premium, and design-driven product offerings.



For more information about the DesignHouse, please visit: wood.sherwin-williams.com

To download our latest color forecast, the 2026 Industrial Wood Colormix®, click here.

Feeling inspired? Visit our Virtual Panel Studio to discover more finishes and trending color palettes!

Due to variations in digital displays, colors are shown as closely as possible to the actual stain colors.