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AUSTIN



LETTER FROM NEW YORK

Destination Design

Austin designers sit pretty at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair

BY MICHAEL YATES

The International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York City is where more than 500 worldwide designers and manufacturers head to each May to showcase their hot new designs in hopes of attracting distributors, retailers and global business partners. If you want a spot on the 145,000-square-foot floor space to show your new pieces, it'll cost you \$42 per square foot.

That didn't stop four talented Austin designers from loading up their tables, chairs and benches and heading East.

Here's a look at some head-turning, Austin-made pieces that made some noise in Manhattan last spring.



Efrain Velez

Velez, a full-time architect, revisited his Tertulia folding chair and revealed a new version at ICFF—a non-folding version. This new piece uses thin sheets of steel or solid pecan and traces the elegant profile of its folding predecessor to find its posture and strength.

Payam Sarabi

One of the most straightforward of Sarabi's straightforward designs, the Linear bench has parallel components of heavy-gauge, custom-brushed stainless steel. For years, Sarabi has been perfecting his process of manipulating steel into a seamless product that seems like it appears naturally out of nowhere.



Laura Britt

Britt's new Vervano line of chairs, tables and desks was one of the surprisingly few collections really leading with an eco-punch this year. Her pieces use sustainably harvested maple and walnut, plant-based upholstery foams and people-friendly finishes and adhesives. Even so, there was more positive feedback for its aesthetics than for its green ethics. Simple but smart, classically proportioned chairs with subtle faceting made for a powerful statement.



Brooke M. Davis

Davis was looking to get her design style—recently, presenting furniture as organically patterned sculptures—noticed. It seems to have worked. She caught the eye of a Chinese government-sponsored program with her artistic-looking Allura line's organic but symmetrical texture.

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