

INFURNITURE

LIVE

Editor's Choice

The pages of *Metropolitan Home* turn three-dimensional this week as the style-setting magazine launches its first-ever furniture collection, an homage to contemporary living fashioned by designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz. But it's just one of the new and noteworthy collections debuting in High Point this fall. For more choices, see page 40.

A New Day

Trade show veteran Casey focuses on minimizing hassles, improving High Point visits for marketgoers.

By Jo Fleischer

It's all about improving the experience, says High Point Market Authority President Brian Casey, who yesterday kicked off the first High Point Market that bears his personal stamp.

Since his appointment six months ago, the Market Authority has been striving to address a range of issues. Retailers and exhibitors are applauding Casey's fast start, especially his recent announcement that 30 High Point-area hotels have agreed to offer blocks of rooms with rates reduced by as much as 40 percent for the March event. In one case, rooms will be available for as little as \$59 per night.

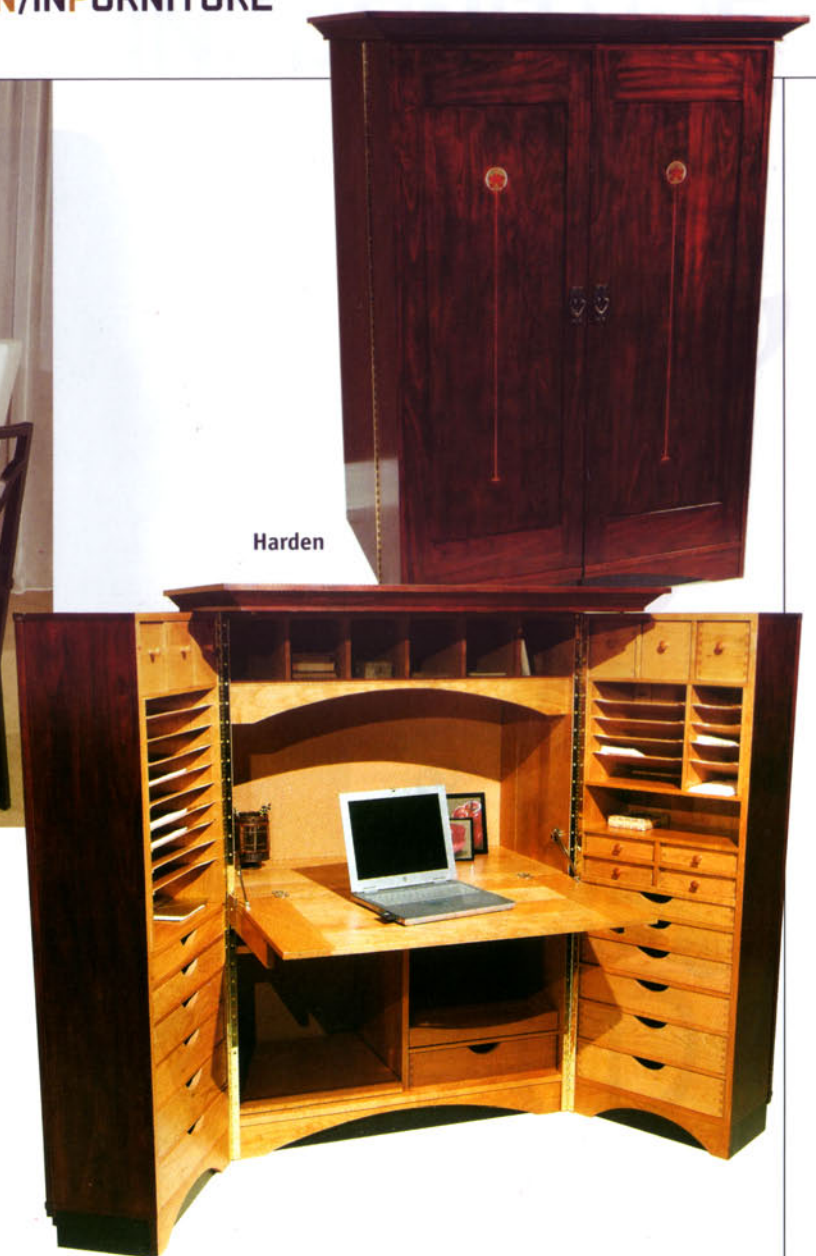
The Market Authority has also convinced auto rental companies to lower rates, expanded free airport shuttle service, added more "go-anywhere" vans in High Point, provided six nights of entertainment, scheduled free meals and cocktail events and streamlined its registration process.

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Editor's Choice

By Mark McMenamin

METROPOLITAN HOME COLLECTION It's a tricky proposition when a magazine turns from covering style to creating it, from facilitating brands to becoming one. That's why publishers haven't had that great of a track record as licensors—until, perhaps, now. One thing's clear: Just a day into the fall furniture market, we can safely declare the much-hushed-about Metropolitan Home launch as this market's must-see collection. Designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz says he arranged his conceptions "like a show...a set," and divided by white sheer panels—like pages?—the mix-and-match settings seem to float in and out of view (like pages).

Releasing the consumer's suite/set sensibility is an obvious goal here, showing how a pair of slim sideboards can work in the bed-

room. More consequentially, for many, it could very well unlock whatever mystery of modernism is left. From the sheltering white sofa with a faint taste of Shaker to the laminated cork-top tables, there's a sense of approachability, even nurturing, that we typically don't expect in modern settings. But tension is always present, whether from juxtaposing petite nightstands against an expansive headboard, or creating a gallery installation of dining tables. With many items shown in two or three different versions, it creates a custom milieu. It's only appropriate for a collection that seems destined to draw out the individual in retailers and consumers alike.

AMERICA'S NEW MISSION AT HARDEN The rage for Arts & Crafts furnishings finds its most

winning new ally at Harden this month, with New York designer Ron Cosser's artful, elegant take on Mission style. The scale is leaner and the imagery more sedate, but there's no mistaking these quarter-sewn oak and cherry pieces as worthy heirs to the Craftsman tradition. The decorative through-line in the series comes from inlay, with stylized motifs rendered in copper, brass, aluminum and stained glass. Accent pieces, such as the blanket chest and copper-top wine table, lend a sense of discovery to the setting. The absolute show stealer here can only be described as a desk in a box, and perhaps more than any single item you'll see this week, it has Buy Me Now written all over it. With an initial focus on dining and occasional pieces, it's a short-and-sweet, 13-SKU debut that offers lots of promise for what's to come. ►