

# Comfort and joy

COMFORT AND RETRO STYLE ARE IN VOGUE FOR FURNITURE DESIGN IN BARS, REPORTS MARK LUDMON

**L**uxurious, elegant materials such as marble, brass and wood provide a sense of opulence and durability at restaurant and bar Lasan in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. The stylish refurbishment, including reworking the bar area to make it more appealing as a destination in itself, was carried out by Faber Design & Architecture, adding upholstered teal barstools and comfortable banquettes in a shade of tan. "We've noticed a move away from industrial-inspired décor," notes Faber's creative director, Tony Matters. "Now people are looking for comfortable furnishings and warming colours rather than the pared-back, exposed brick and concrete minimalisations that has been so popular in recent years. I think perhaps this is a reflection of the growth of the experience economy we are witnessing: people want their social spaces to be enjoyable, visually stimulating places to spend time in and relax."

Comfort and contemporary style guides the latest designs from Morgan Furniture, a specialist in British-made contract furniture for hospitality. It has extended its Pimlico collection with a curvaceous upholstered lounge chair, Pimlico 144, with an oval seat pad and concealed swivel base. "The combination of plush floor-level upholstery and a subtle swivel gives the chair presence and a generous sit while maintaining a small footprint," explains design director Katerina Zachariades. "This efficient use



Lasan by Faber Design & Architecture

of space is a critical consideration when designing bar and lounge areas. Aside from bringing out everyone's inner child, a swivel chair can offer ease of access into confined areas." Morgan also has a subtle swivel on its elegant Siena 650T lounge chair which has a slightly larger footprint.

The hand-crafted Callisto collection from Lyndon by Boss Design offers crisp contemporary lines and comfort that evokes 1950s styles with a hint of retro cool. Developed for lounge bars, it includes an armchair and co-ordinating sofa available in compact and large sizes as well as an

elegant dining chair and contemporary bar stools. The top-stitched quilted detail contrasts with the angular under-frame made from high-quality American black walnut and traditional mortise and tenon joinery. "There's something about the bygone era that designers are really latching on to right now, and Callisto offers a wonderful retro seating solution," explains Lyndon's managing director, Tim Armitt.

With a nod to the 1920s, the Halycon collection from furniture specialist Libra meets demand for classic-style retro design.



## LIV WELL IN LEEDS

Split over two floors, Liv Bar has brought a new destination for cocktails to Leeds. Opened in Briggate last year by Sunny Dutt, it was designed to be a comfortable, chilled-out space. Working with Trent Furniture, he chose dark walnut tables and chairs and faux leather sofas to complement the light wood floorboards and bar area. Pieces include 12 tall Boston stools upholstered in brown faux leather, three poseur tables, 12 Portobello tub chairs and four Olympic coffee tables plus six black disc tables and 12 cube stools.





Halcyon Blue and Cappuccino  
Leather Bar Stool from Libra



Marlo armchair from GO IN

It features bar stools and chairs in soft pastel leathers and sleek occasional pieces in stainless steel and glass. "This theme is all about championing old-school Hollywood glamour," says Libra's managing director, Paul McLaughlin. "The Art Deco trend has been growing in popularity over the past year, and our Halcyon collection is a true celebration of the opulent look. This luxurious trend translates seamlessly into a bar or restaurant setting."

Leading hospitality supplier Eden Furniture offers plenty of retro and comfort seating but managing director Gary Vale sees no sign of the "shabby chic" and industrial styles losing popularity. However, he detects subtle changes to enhance the look of natural materials. "Rustic textures will still feature, with sawn or sand-blasted finishes on wood helping to bring out the beauty of the grain within the timber. Natural wood like this will be popular for tabletops and benches for an industrial-style look. These can still be contrasted against scaffolding legs."

Neutral colours are growing in popularity, Gary adds. "Greys in particular are great. Washed, greyed or weathered timber adds a neutral tone to any scheme. Pasadena



## MEI UME

With a palette of bold reds and pinks, Mei Ume is a stunning new restaurant and bar that has opened at Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square. Specialising in Japanese and Chinese cuisine, it features a pavilion-style design with sleek custom lighting, glassware and bespoke furniture, including bar stools in gold with ornate backs, all designed by AB Concept.



Callisto from Lyndon by Boss Design

pine, for example, features a particular striking grain pattern when washed and greyed, creating stunning table tops for a modern, natural look."

Reclaimed wood is in demand, both for top-end cocktail bars and more traditional gastropubs, says Tony Clark, owner of Trade Furniture Company, a leading importer of reclaimed Indian wood. "Unlike traditional woods, such as oaks or veneers that have a consistent colour and tone, reclaimed materials are more

distinctive and aim to keep the furniture as close to the wood's original form as possible. The bespoke construction of

each piece of furniture means reclaimed designs



Pimlico 144 from Morgan Furniture



unique looks for every individual fixture, with natural variations in knots and graining adding to the furniture's charm."

Reclaimed wood also matches operators' efforts to be more sustainable, Tony adds. "The 'upcycling' nature of reclaimed wood – with furniture crafted from sources such as doors, fences and roofing that would otherwise have been discarded – delivers an element of environmental awareness to their bars."

The current trend in furniture is all about combinations of new and traditional materials to create innovative and individual styles, says Jan Dammis of hospitality furniture supplier GO IN. "The choice of materials used in furniture design has never been greater. Elegant woods, trendy weaves and futuristic stainless steel are all available in an unrivalled variety of forms and colours. First impressions count. For this reason, it's important to stand out from your competitors with your furniture, so have the courage to go for impact and diversity, with a mix of styles, colours and the 'retro' theme which is still bang up to date."

Alongside a return to luxury in bar interiors, natural mix is proving to be a trend for 2018, with combinations of marble, metal, concrete and wood, points out Michael Sinclair, design director of hospitality specialist Catering Design Group. "The metallic hues of gold and bronze remain in vogue and the leaning towards fresh and natural will take these choices further as we see an upsurge in the use of polished nickel and silver in furniture. Interestingly, the second most prevalent theme on the rise is the contrasting 'Bake



Reclaimed wood from Trade Furniture Company



Eden Furniture at Dabbawal in London

Off' home-style with its muted pastels, pale wood and shabby chic groupings of varying colours within the same cluster. This echoes the ongoing desire among many consumers for a simpler way of life – think pastel seats accented with elements of burnt brown and oranges, offset by grey or hints of blue."

This colour palette extends to outside areas, points out Dan Gillmore, global marketing director at hospitality furnishings



UHS Group

specialist UHS Group. "To create a space that is stimulating, there are great ranges of outdoor contract furniture that are colourful, in metal, plastic or timber. Just add some seating in an olive green tone with some pastel pinks teamed with limed timber, throw a rug over the seat, backdrop it with a plant scheme and climbers, add some soft lighting, and there you have it: a space to chill."



## INNOVATE TOGETHER

Furniture in warm colours and plush upholstery provides a striking contrast to the industrial appearance of EDIT, a cocktail bar and restaurant opened by entrepreneur Marco Brignone in Turin in Italy. The interiors, designed by architecture studio Lamatilde, is characterised by raw concrete elements, black metal and exposed industrial electrical conduit and piping. These austere finishes act as the perfect backdrop to the armchairs, sofas, stools and ottomans from the 375 collection from Walker Knoll, a leading manufacturer of fine upholstered furniture, with a palette ranging from purple to violet. It supports Marco's aim for everyone to "eat, drink and innovate together" which gives the bar its name.