

Colours ease euro-styling into North America

In Canada, Arborite is an iconic brand that is still synonymous with the retro laminate surfaces common in the 1950s and 1960s. The company, and the material bearing the same name, have evolved considerably, however today, Arborite is found in a variety of environments, from hospitals and retail to five star hotels. The company excels in supplying designers, architects, and specifiers with the perfect laminate for any space by offering a range of premium textures and over 200 designs. Teresa Gentile, Marketing Manager, highlights Arborite's latest offerings, which are inspired by the latest European design trends.

Arborite's new collection includes an original finish texture and 36 fresh designs (7 pearlescent, 9 patterns, 10 woodgrains, 10 solid colours), but this launch is less about each design, and more about how they harmonise with other materials. "It's customary for companies to push their design rationale," says Ms. Gentile, "but I'd rather tell the trend stories that inspire our work. So when architects and designers are searching for ways to express how a project is supposed to feel, they understand we are coming from the same place. That we consider more than just the laminate."

Ms. Gentile, who is closely involved in Arborite's design development, says they take a lot of their inspiration from European design trends. "These historically took a while to arrive in North America. Now that our world has globalised, that's no longer the case. The issue is no longer when will new European designs arrive, but how will they be applied in a way that does not feel out-of-place? One of our strengths is our ability to adapt European styles to the North American market. As with language, you cannot simply make a cross-culture substitution and expect a concept to make sense. We take the best design ideas worldwide and

translate them- adjusting scale, colour, composition, texture. We maintain the message of the new global styles, and ensure our North American clients can specify them fluently."

Arborite is part of Wilsonart, one of the world's largest manufacturers of laminates and other engineered composite materials. Within this global group, Arborite is positioned as a design-driven supplier of laminate for the hospitality, retail and office furniture markets. "In Canada, we're still associated with countertops, but that's a small part of our business now," says Ms. Gentile. "Arborite as a material is very sturdy and can handle a lot of wear and tear, you don't have to replace it as often as other surfacing materials. As a result, it's cost effective and sustainable material. It's also non-porous, easy to clean and hygienic. These combined benefits make Arborite a popular choice for designers and architects in a variety of decorative surfacing applications.

Given that quality design is playing an increasingly important role in commercial, healthcare and retail environments, Arborite is well positioned for continued growth.



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