Sustainable Surfaces for Furniture: Continental Focuses on Tactile Qualities and Performance

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BY CONTINENTAL AG

Sustainable materials and high technical standards set to bring fresh energy to the world of furniture in 2024

- Holistic approach to sustainability covers raw materials, manufacture, usage and recycling of the furniture film

- Variations with grooves and ribs add visual accents

Hanover/Pordenone, Germany/Italy, October 12, 2023. Continental will be presenting sustainable approaches for furniture in 2024 at the Sicam international exhibition of furniture hardware and accessories. A selection of surfaces and decors will offer tactile experiences and excellent technical performance. More than 650 exhibitors are expected to attend the fair in the north Italian town of Pordenone from October 17–20.

> Consumers are looking for sustainable products – and furniture manufacturers are seeking companies who produce the components needed to make them," explains Jörg Biller, Head of Interior Living EMEA at Continental Surface Solutions. "This is why we have developed many of our products to embrace and continue this trend.

One example is skai rPET PureLux, a plain-colored design laminate with anti-fingerprint effect and soft-touch feel made from 100 percent recycled PET material in the polymer. This furniture film helps to conserve natural resources thanks to its high proportion of recycled material and is manufactured in Germany in environmentally and socially responsible conditions.

staynu technology enables exceptionally resistant surfaces

Besides shrinking its carbon footprint and establishing a circular economy with materials such as skai rPET PureLux, Continental also believes firmly in achieving a positive sustainability impact during product use. This involves incorporating special properties into materials, such as antibacterial coatings, an anti-fingerprint effect and resistance to disinfectants. The staynu technology, which combines these properties and forms the basis for high-level technical performance, plays a key role here. Surfaces treated with staynu are remarkably resistant to dirt, very easy to clean and scratch-proof, while the anti-fingerprint effect puts an end to the irksome task of wiping marks away. These properties help to give furniture surfaces a long life, making them sustainable in the truest sense of the word.

Design trends: reinterpreting classics

As well as sustainability and technical performance, Continental's team of surface experts also focus on producing special designs. Ultra-matte surfaces that invite the user to touch them are the current trend, along with grooves and ribs.

> They exude a sense of safety and security,

explains Jörg Biller. skai Milano uses natural-looking wood decors combined with individually selectable colors, with the chosen shade providing a visually defining feel-good factor. The new ribbed structures creating both pale/dark and light/shade effects enhance the homely feel.

Also included in the company's exhibition portfolio is the furniture surface material skai Casella Eiche – a reinterpretation of a classic that leaves its rustic roots far behind. The focus here is on a natural feel. With its matte finish and unusual veneer styling, this decor demonstrates that oak can also have an understated, elegant effect.

> The natural feel of the wood grain adds an exclusive and modern touch to the classic oak across a full color spectrum ranging from light bleached to dark brown," says Biller. "Minor inclusions and cropped flowers bring movement into the design.

The wood decor skai Milano produces an interplay of light and shade with its grooves and ribs, creating the impression of organic depth in the process. This can be used to bring deliberate emphasis to interior design. Furniture fronts, carcasses, partition walls and large wall

panels are just a few examples of applications that can be given a more vibrant feel in this way.

The ceramic decor skai Memy is a concrete-based fantasy decor that offers a fresh and modern take on the stone effect. Small, light-colored stone inclusions create a microstructure interspersed by discreet veins of quartz. The result is an authentic look of stone, with a modern, minimalist feel. This decor is equally suited to large-surface use on 1D, 2D and 3D fronts.

Continental and furniture makers explore new directions

Continental produces the skai surfaces in Germany and sets new standards in the process. Its factories use exclusively renewable energies and leftover materials are recycled wherever possible. The facilities achieve an extremely high level of energy efficiency and exhaust gases are filtered. Added to which, the distances the products need to be transported to get to European furniture makers are short.

> Many of our customers are ready to explore new directions," explains Jörg Biller. "The market is unstable and fragmented, which makes it all the more important to respond flexibly to changing customer requirements. We're keen to make our contribution as a supplier and introduce new approaches. That is why we are shining an even brighter spotlight on sustainability and are increasingly offering more PET films, above all variants with 3D effects.

Continental will be exhibiting its wide range of materials and designs at the Sicam show in Pordenone (Hall 4, Stand B13) on October 17–20. After all, sustainability starts at the surface…

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