

Decorator's Notebook

Stress-Free Lifestyles Top Decorating Decisions

(NAPSA)—In their quest for a stress-free lifestyle, Americans are increasingly demanding more for their homes—everything from environmentally safe paints to temperature-controlled plumbing devices to upholstery fabric protection that can sustain whatever an active family can dish out.

People spend hours deciding about the look, price, and feel of upholstery fabric. Many times, they don't even think about fabric protection as an option, yet it is one that can affect the wear and tear of furniture for years.

Some consumers opt for protective slipcovers. Others choose a topical protection that is applied to the fabric. However, many are embracing an entirely new approach used by the world's leading hotels: Crypton®, a highly engineered textile with protection that essentially comes from the inside out.

Your choice will depend on what you want the protection to do. Selecting fabric that employs this new technology can extend the life of your furniture by combining breathability, stain resistance, water repellency, antibacterial and light resistant properties.

"There is a direct correlation between the type of protection used and fabric wear and tear," explains Andy Pacuk, Senior Vice President, Product Development, at Robert Allen, one of the nation's leading designers and distributors of residential fabrics. "Fabric performance should be as important as design, especially for living rooms and other high use areas of the home."

Robert Allen recently introduced three new collections of fabric incorporating Crypton, which encapsulates every fiber and provides the highest level of performance available today.

What consumers want

Robert Allen saw the need for a comprehensive collection of high performance, hardwearing fabrics for the home, without sacrificing luxurious feel or compromising style. "We developed decorative stripes, geometric and floral



High-tech upholstery can be used to help extend the life of a piece of furniture.

patterns, and organized them into the neutral, light and dark palettes that consumers prefer. These fabrics provide the best overall protection for family life," said Mr. Pacuk.

Research by *Furniture/Today*, a furniture industry publication, indicated that half of the consumers surveyed said they shopped for upholstery that hides stains and doesn't quickly show signs of wear. More than a third said they were looking for fabric that could be easily cleaned.

Here are some important questions to keep in mind when buying upholstery fabric:

- What are my choices for fabric performance?
- Who designs the fabric? What is the brand name?
- Does the protection/performance of the fabric extend the life of the furniture?
- Does the protection sacrifice luxurious feel or compromise style?

So when a salesperson writes up a sales receipt and tells you that the fabric price includes performance features, ask questions and choose what's engineered into the fabric as carefully as the color and pattern you see.

For more information, tips and creative fabric ideas, call 1-800-240-8189 or visit the Web site at www.robertallendesign.com.