



## Dwell on Design 2016: Nine notable innovations

BY BONNIE MCCARTHY

Contemporary design devotees circled their (sleek, WiFi-enabled) wagons at the annual Dwell on Design show in downtown Los Angeles late last month to commune with like-minded souls and synthesize a vision of what modern means today.

Presented by Dwell Media and the editors at Dwell magazine, the event invited design enthusiasts and industry professionals to “step into our pages” via an extensive showcase of products, demonstrations, house tours, panel discussions and workshops.

The future was definitely on display. Here are nine influences to note:

### 1. Dwell.com

In an ambitious move to compete with websites such as Houzz, Pinterest, Instagram and popular blogging platforms, Dwell Media took advantage of the show's audience to preview a newly transformed website. Dwell president Michela O'Connor Abrams called the new Dwell.com “contextualized commerce.”

Abrams said readers want more than an online version of printed material — they want to connect, shop, write, share, discuss and ogle in real time. In addition to accessing editorial features written by Dwell staffers, users create an online profile, “follow” friends and influencers, share pictures, blog their own “stories,” vet design professionals and shop. (Most photos will be tagged with retail information.)

“It's a little bit different than a straight-up social-media site,” said Ethan Lance, vice president of product development. “You're going to come here specifically because you want to join a conversation about design — and we're going to take it farther than just the design of architecture and interiors.” Lance said that lifestyle brands, food, travel and other categories will also be represented. “If you're into design, you're going to be into a lot more than homes.”

The company plans to launch the new site in August.

### 2. New art from old wheels

Artists see the objects around us differently. Cases in point: Carolina Fontoura Alzaga and Scott Mann, who showed their work inside Dwell's gallery-inspired Prime Edition space.

Lighting designer Alzaga, of Los Angeles-based Facaro, presented elegantly edgy chandeliers made from used bike chains, which she gets from bike shops in the area (\$600-\$22,000, at [facaro.com](http://facaro.com)). “It's what would normally end up in the dumpster.”

Scott Mann, owner of Seminal Studios in San Luis Obispo, Calif., created the original Fender Lounge using a fender from a Peterbilt semi-truck with a tufted cushion reminiscent of an iconic Barcelona chair. Models made with new, modified fenders from Peterbilt start at \$3,000.



VINCENT MARTINEZ

### 3. Dsignedby

Irena Kilibarda, owner of Serbia-based Dsignedby, presented two sleek tables from her Black & White series in the IMM Cologne showcase. Made from Corian, metal and wenge wood, they are available online at [archiproducts.com](http://archiproducts.com) and [1stdibs.com](http://1stdibs.com).



MIRKO NAHMIJAS/DSIGNEDBY.COM



MTI BATHS

### 4. Trophy tubs

Stand-alone soaking tubs were popular at Dwell. The latest models are sculpted with a range of synthetic materials that are easier to clean, offer improved solutions for removing scratches and can be fitted with a gently massaging air-bath function that uses jets of air to create effervescence instead of old-school jets of water.

### 5. Disappearing walls

Floor-to-ceiling retractable or folding walls of glass remove barriers between indoors and out and have become a signature of super-sexy modern homes.

At Dwell on Design, industry leader Fleetwood Windows & Doors, based in Corona, Calif., provided soaring examples of glass walls and windows promising not only abundant natural light but also the option of fresh air, bringing new meaning to the term “open concept.” For instance, the Series 3070 pocket door system has individual glass panels that disappear into the wall.

### 6. Smart kitchen

LG debuted Signature Kitchen Suite, its new luxury brand of WiFi-enabled appliances.

Innovations include refrigerators that recognize the addition of fresh groceries and automatically adjust temperature and an app that monitors appliance condition and updates consumers via push notification. The Speed Clean oven can be cleaned quickly without toxic chemicals or hours of heat. It works intensely for 10 minutes to loosen interior debris, which is easy to wipe out by hand.