

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

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FABULOUS
FURNISHINGS

Y Styles inspired by the past. Baroque is making a comeback — as in curvy chairs à la Marie Antoinette, dramatic high-back banquettes and slick, black chandeliers. Chicago-based Kehoe Designs Event+Style (kehodesigns.com), an event design and production firm, is debuting a Baroque-style line of rental furniture. "It's going to be a huge trend in the next two years," predicts Bridget Johnson, Kehoe's creative director.



Ottomans, as seats or tables.

Pieces that perform double-duty can be a planner's best friend. "I like ottomans because you can arrange them in so many ways," says Finlayson. "I once used snake-skinned ottomans at an event and arranged them in pods with floating candles in the middle." We love this tufted white rectangular version (\$350 for a five-day rental) from Taylor Creative Props (taylorcreativeinc.com).

PHOTOGRAPHS (THIS AND OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT): CHRIS FINLAYSON, TAYLOR CREATIVE PROPS, LOU FERRARO, KEHOE DESIGNS



THE LATEST STYLES IN EVENT FURNITURE TAKE INSPIRATION FROM UNEXPECTED SOURCES

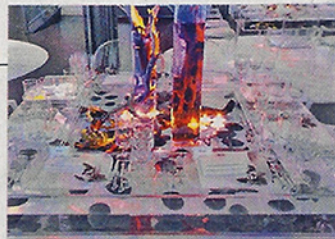
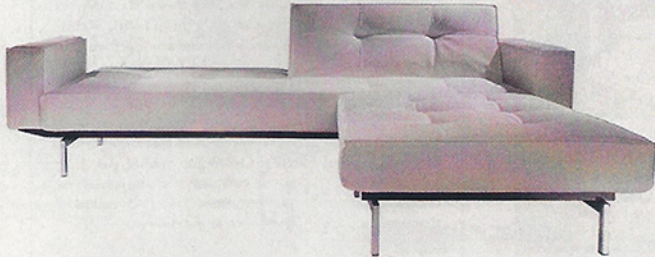
FABULOUS FURNISHINGS

By Jennifer Davis

Special-event furniture has gotten a lot more fun — and functional — than the solid bar stools and black couches of yesteryear. Today's creative planners and rental companies are customizing headless bars, using ottomans and modular furniture to maximize space, and making the old look new

again with dramatic Baroque touches. "For higher-end events, everyone wants nontraditional furniture that is big and comfortable," notes Sarah Finlayson, creative manager for event management company Blue Plate Chicago. "What follows is a closer look at the hottest trends in event-floor decor."

Y Flexible furniture. Event venues are never one-size-fits-all. Modular furniture, which can be rearranged like a puzzle to make different seating and table combinations, works with any shaped space. This year, Cort Furniture (cortevents.com) will debut the new Oz Sofa (below, \$495), Sectional and Ottoman (\$325 each) collection, which can be reconfigured in hundreds of ways. Dallas-based event planner Steve Kemble, who calls himself "America's Sassiest Lifestyle Guru," says flexible furniture is hot. "The 'Oz' is one of my favorite pieces on the market now," he enthuses. "Planners want furnishings that let them use their imagination."



A Stand-out tables. The buffet or dining table should be more than a place to plop your dishes. Why not get creative? Blue Plate Chicago's Sarah Finlayson likes to use nontraditional pieces like roadside farm stands set with flowers, or wooden planks draped with Moroccan silk. For dining, she loves Kehoe Designs' water tables (pictured), which are Lucite and filled with water and rocks. "They look great with sushi," she says.