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OFF DUTY --- Design & Decorating: Fresh Picks: News From the Design World

By Hamilton, William L, The Wall Street Journal,
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THE SITE

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The democratization of high-end design continues with Dering Hall (deringhall.com), a virtual hub of decorating and design resources once available only "to the trade" (decorators and designers themselves). The site has, to start, 100 "storefronts" that showcase work and new products by the architect Robert A.M. Stern, designers Madeleine Stewart and Cullman and Kravis and others, with links to their businesses. A selection of featured items, for sale directly on Dering Hall's site, will become available in November. Peter Sallick, one of the principals, hopes the venture will actually expand the offerings designers themselves can provide. "One of the challenges of home furnishings is that it's expensive to launch products into the world-managing showrooms and stores," Mr. Sallick said. "The online world offers a new way of doing that."

THE FINNS

Classics, Refreshed

Alvar Aalto is the architect who gave the modernist world three legs to stand on, with his classic 60 white-birch stackable stool, designed in 1933 for the Viipuri library in his native Finland. Now Artek, the company that Aalto founded to produce his furniture designs, is making that world a more colorful place with three new paint-lacquered models, in yellow, blue and brown. The stools are also a part of Artek's recently introduced Quick Ship program: flat-packed for convenience, and easy to assemble (\$310 each; the four-legged E60 is \$365, m21.com). For those who need a bigger fix of Finnish design, Marimekko, the famous fabric folks, opened a 3,800-square-foot flagship store on Thursday at 200 Fifth Avenue in New York City. us.marimekko.com

THE EXHIBITS

Lots of Play for Charles and Ray

What can you say about 70-year old designs that look new? To be safe, you could say they were by Ray and Charles Eames. The California designers who embodied the American ingenuity that they celebrated -- creating a well-reasoned, whimsical, postwar world of chairs, toys, houses and leg splints for the Army -- are the subjects of two exhibitions. "Collecting Eames: The JF Chen Collection," with more than 450 pieces on display (largely for sale), is at the Los Angeles gallery JF Chen, through Jan. 14 (jfchen.com). "Eames Designs: The Guest Host Relationship," at the Architecture + Design Museum, also in Los Angeles, through Jan. 16, uses an installation of words and objects to illustrate the couple's belief in the poetics of the everyday (aplusd.org). Also, a replica of the living room from the famous Eames Case Study House is on exhibit at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art through March 25.

Credit: By William L. Hamilton

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