



With new-age laminates, the focus is on design, quality and best possible performance characteristics

By Aruna Rathod

New surface decors give an individual appearance through their colours, effects and textures. Clients want to install contemporary, easy-to-maintain wood effect laminates in kitchens and bedrooms at home, while offices prefer laminates that are practical yet aesthetic.

The colour trend of the year 2020 as declared by Pantone is classic blue. Pantone is a standardised colour matching system, which utilises the Pantone number system (PNS) for identifying colours. The Pantone system is the standard language for colour communication from designers to manufacturers to retailers and customers.

“Pantone Inc. also highlights top seasonal runway colours, forecasts global colour trends, and advises companies on colour for products and brand visual identities,” informs Shankho Chowdhury, president, Decoratives Division, CenturyPly, adding that classic blue is the blue which represents comfort, serene waters and excitement of a new millennium. Classic blue is also a calming, timeless and elegant blue hue.

About classic blue, Parul Mittal, director, Greenlam, states, “This shade provides an anchoring foundation. Shades of blue bring a sense of peace to the interiors and lay a strong foundation for the rest of the décor to be built upon.” Giving a rare flair to spaces, Greenlam Laminates has a variety of options like breezy blues, such as electric blue, blue bell and blue galaxy. Not only do these shades add serenity to your space, but they are perfect for a relaxed refuge.

In the case of CenturyPly, they offer a range of blue shades in the solid range of laminates, which can be used as a statement piece, eye-catching accent or as a main colour of the space.



A practical choice

Laminates are a preferred choice because of various factors such as price consideration, high/low ambient temperature resistance, durability, and scratch-resistance; they also usually retain their look for years. Laminates are also easier to maintain. Interior designer Ridhi Agarwal, Hipcouch, explains, “Laminates come in multiple options, be it a wooden texture, a solid finish or a fabric as well as stone finish, which provides us with the luxury of choosing a correct style for the design. In this day and age of minimal design, having multiple yet economical options to choose from makes laminates a champion in the material world. Also, considering that laminate is a finished material, no extra work needs to be carried out after it has been pasted. In this fast-paced world, laminate is the go to material for luxurious-looking economical designs.”

Due to rapid urbanisation and increasing concrete structures, the trend is towards a natural look for interiors. Since natural veneers are an expensive choice as compared to laminates, CenturyLaminates offers a Veneer Collection, a range of laminates with veneer-like textures and finishes. Chowdhury explains, “This range provides plenty of design options and two distinctive textures with engraved surfaces that gives an exact natural tree bark feel and a raw veneer finish.”

When it comes to textures, Mittal believes that wood pattern laminates will continue to rule the industry for its classic charm. “Textures are measured by their tactile quality and whether they feel natural to the touch or not. In addition to that, laminates come in a variety of finishes such as suede, gloss, stone, raw silk, chased wood, sparkle, stucco, and more. Continuing its popularity, marble will continue to ride on the wave of being an absolute favourite of designers,” adds Mittal. Stone laminate finishes look breath-taking if paired with dark and dusky tones. On the other hand, if incorporated with pastel or subtle shades, marble pattern emanates a calm and cosy vibe as well.



Range for offices and homes

CenturyLaminates has a range of Woodgrains & Fabric, which gives home and office furniture a unique look. One can also choose from a range called Combination. Combination is used to enhance the look of your spaces with unconventional designs. An electric range of nature inspired high-definition digital laminates is called HD Laminates, which has a better cost proposition than texture wall paints. Their range also includes specialty laminates like Chalk Board, Marker Board and Magnetic Board that are widely used in offices, schools and universities.

Mittal advises, "When it comes to an office, one often prefers a minimalist look where various shades of grey, or laminates with stone pattern, gives your space a sophisticated and timeless feel. One can also incorporate jewel tones such as sapphire blue, ruby red or emerald green to make the space look lively. The HPL collection from Greenlam comes in a wide variety of solid colours and wood grains, which are durable and come with anti-bacterial protection for everyday use." As for homes, be it pastel colours, patterned showpieces or textured rugs, the possibilities are simply endless. With earthy colours like camel, beige and brown giving a relaxed and peaceful vibe to your home, the interest majorly lies there. However, while some prefer a lively and airy décor, others like to add a dramatic touch to their décor.

Laminates for furniture

Anti-fingerprint laminates is one of the flagship products of CenturyLaminates, specially meant for office/conference table tops, hospitals, toilets and reception areas. Solid surface look has been very popular and preferred by urban consumers. CenturyLaminates has introduced a unique range Silk Tuff in the 1mm category, which gives the look and feel of solid surfaces at an affordable price and is apt for table top surfaces as well as kitchen cupboards. It has a variety of design options from solid to stone to suite any application and décor.

CenturyLaminates also has a range of laminates ideal for retail and commercial spaces that ensures interiors look sharp and smooth – Monocore. "Monocore gives a uniform look to any surface as it eliminates the concern that the solid colour designs have in the edges. It is produced using a unique technology wherein the same colour decorative surface is used as the core layer, which gives a seamless finish," explains Chowdhury.

High-pressure laminates and compact laminates are both suitable to use for furniture pieces. With respect to laminates, speciality laminates such as HD gloss, VRB, and anti-fingerprint laminates can be used for furniture pieces. Mittal explains, "Where HD gloss are more suitable for glossy surfaces, VRB is a wood-patterned laminate that resembles real wood and evokes the warmth of natural wood. Anti-fingerprint and Unicore comes in both laminates and compact."

Unicore is primarily used for premium furniture pieces, where one does not want the dark edges to be visible. Additionally, anti-fingerprint laminates keep the surface impression-free, making it easy to clean impurities or grease marks. Moving to compact laminates, sandwich compacts look brilliant for they have multiple colours on the edges.

Exterior use range

Exterior façades are high-pressure laminate sheets and used for exterior cladding. They are produced under great pressure and high temperature. Hardened resins provide effective weather protection to the HPL cladding, making it capable of withstanding erosion from natural elements. CenturyPly has a special range of HPL for exteriors called CenturyExteria.

"CenturyExteria is the world of exterior-grade designer high-pressure laminates that makes the outside of any building, home or office, look as beautiful as the inside. Exterior facades improve the performance and add to the longevity and performance of a building; they directly influence the room and building temperature, impacting and lowering the energy use for cooling systems," explains Chowdhury. These cladding solutions from CenturyExteria are a mix of functionality, design optimisation and aesthetics.

Exclusively for exteriors, Greenlam Industries manufactures exterior-grade compact laminates with GLE technology that makes them fade-resistant, weather-proof and fire-resistant, among other things, hence apt for exteriors. Mittal states, "Claddings from Greenlam come with special fasteners, which are made using non-corrosive materials that offer better colour fastening properties. These clads allow you to decorate your home, office or entire building structures."

Available in a variety of colours and designs, Greenlam clads can be used for innovative applications like main gates, pergolas, fencing and more.



Best use of laminates

In case of residences, laminates can be used for kitchen shutters, wall panelling, furniture pieces, wardrobes and doors. Mittal advises, "For kitchen shutters, it is ideal to go for HD gloss laminates as they are abrasion- as well as MAR-resistant and come in a glossy finish, which looks classy and refined. As for wall panelling, VRB laminates are advised for they provide a stark resemblance to real wood, which gives your décor a natural warmth, providing a sophisticated look and feel to your space."

When it comes to doors and wardrobes, it is best to use anti-fingerprint laminates as they are soft surfaces, which are impression-free. Typically, doors and wardrobes receive the maximum fingerprints, hence it is advised to choose anti-fingerprint laminates as these come in matt finish and are extremely easy to clean. "Furthermore, Unicore laminates are ideal for premium furniture pieces as these are unicolour with no visible dark edges. They blend flawlessly with the rest of the décor and aesthetically look very premium and upscale," adds Mittal.

Some of the common surfaces on which laminates are used in residences are on furniture, shelves, kitchens, wall paneling, highlighters and many more. With all the freedom and functionality provided, laminate finishes can add to the look of beds, chairs, doors, sofas, tables, walls, etc.

Chowdhury says, "Due to its strong resistance and various other USPs, laminates can be applied on wall shelves in the bathroom and kitchen. They can also be applied in bookshelves, bed, study tables in one's bedroom and living room. Kitchen cabinets can be topped with decorative laminates for a better glossy look, durability and scuff-resistant feature. It can enhance the aesthetics of a living space adapting to your modern-day living."

Latest textures and colours

Chowdhury observes, "Some of the distinctive textures are woven textile/ fabric and natural stones that are popular and always in demand. Textures are preferred for specific applications like wall panelling or bathroom interiors. Metallic shades of bronze, burnished copper and nickel are also being used for walls and furniture to give a rustic and antique look to the interiors. Leather finish is also one of the textures which has always been preferred for wardrobe application, wall paneling." Solid colour design with woodgrains design has been an emerging trend which is widely used in bedrooms, living rooms as well as kitchen applications.

Mittal states, "Wood patterns are always in high demand, since they provide an extremely warm aura along with a natural touch. They come in multiple patterns such as synchro, santhia, hand-scraped, olmo, super gloss and many more." When it comes to textures, it solely depends on the usage of laminates. For instance, one would not use a texture with deep grains on horizontal surfaces as they are supposed to be cleaned regularly, which will take more time.

New on the block

CenturyPly has introduced the Veneer Collection with KeringMatne as an affordable range and Nature Plus in the premium range. KeringMatne is a range of laminates that is close to nature with its raw textures. It is a perfect combination of rich textures and modern design. This range is for those who want to bring some part of nature into their homes. Nature Plus is finely designed and beautifully finished, showcasing natural woodgrain textures and a great outdoor feel. Nature Plus is perfect for those who are looking to add nature's elegance to their interiors.

With a wide collection of 30 designs, out of which 16 were launched in 2019, CenturyPly has introduced classic/ original high-selling species like ash, oak, acacia, pine, wenge, walnut, anegre and teak. Silk Tuff, which was also introduced last year, gives the look and feel of solid surfaces. Stone designs in this range have widely been used in table-top application in domestic as well as commercial spaces, and can be used on vertical applications such as walls and wardrobes.