TREND WATCH

Spring SUMMER 2026

by Sharon Adler

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SHARON ADLER'S knowledge of merchandising spans over 30 years, including 8 years with Associated Merchandising Corporation (AMC), the preeminent overseas sourcing and product development arm servicing the leading department stores in the U.S. and Europe.

Adler spent seven years sourcing and developing product for 2 leading seasonal wholesalers, the Director of Product Development for Santa's World (Kurt Adler) and Department 56 Inc. After leaving Department 56 in 2002, Sharon joined Li Fung, the world's largest global sourcing company, as Director of Trend and Color overseeing the art department and all products of home merchandise. She attended seminars and trade shows globally and produced color and trend reports for major wholesalers and retailers in all categories of home furnishings. Sharon is currently consulting in trend, color, product development and global sourcing in the home furnishings industry.







NOSTALGIA, GATHERING AND PLAY SHAPE THE SEASON AHEAD

After a long winter, Spring and Summer 2026 are arriving with renewed energy centered around gathering, gifting, hobbies, and outdoor living. Buyers should expect consumers to lean into products that feel joyful, nostalgic, social, and multi-generational as several major events drive purchasing throughout the season.

MOTHER'S DAY & THE RISE OF SOCIAL HOBBIES

Mother's Day on May 10 continues to inspire gifting across categories, but this year the biggest growth extends beyond traditional gifts. Mahjong, Canasta, crafting, and puzzle culture remain strong lifestyle drivers for consumers of all ages. These hobbies are no longer just for mothers—they are becoming family-centered activities enjoyed across generations.

Puzzles continue evolving with creative formats including 3-D structures such as cars, homes, and circus themes. Packaging is also becoming part of the trend, with tin-shaped containers, novelty zipper carriers, and collectible designs replacing traditional boxes.

Across categories, playful motifs remain important. Florals, dots, and mixed stripes are appearing alongside food-inspired icons including cherries, strawberries, olives, and citrus. These themes are extending into jewelry, candles, accessories, tabletop, and novelty gifting. Expect continued demand for whimsical items such as olive earrings, fruit-themed hair clips, and food-inspired décor.

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MEMORIAL DAY AND OUTDOOR LIVING

Memorial Day on May 25 signals the start of a strong outdoor entertaining season. Buyers should watch for continued momentum in retro Americana, nautical influences, and gingham check patterns paired with fruit and food graphics.

Consumers are focusing on connection and entertaining outdoors with family games, gardening accessories, pool inflatables, beach items, and casual hosting essentials leading seasonal purchases. The mood is relaxed, nostalgic, and highly giftable.

FATHER'S DAY AND SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT TRENDS

Father's Day on June 21 aligns with a busy season of sports viewing and summer gatherings. The FIFA World Cup and the U.S. Open Championship will bring additional opportunities for entertaining and themed gifting.

Classic masculine gifting categories are evolving with elevated presentations including leather-bound books focused on golf, sports, and travel interests. Card games, entertaining napkins, barware, grilling accessories, and chef-inspired gifts continue gaining traction for Father's Day assortments.

Retailers should also anticipate increased demand for products designed around hosting and viewing parties as consumers gather both in-person and at home throughout June.





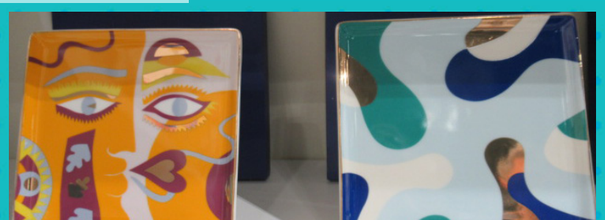














JULY 4TH AND AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

The 250th Anniversary of American Independence will make July 4th especially significant in 2026. Vintage Americana and modern "Home Sweet Home" themes are expected to drive tabletop, apparel, paper goods, and home décor.

Classic red, white, and blue palettes are being softened with fruit-forward summer motifs including strawberries and cherries, creating a fresh nostalgic look that will continue throughout the season and into late summer retail presentations.

Card decks, picnic entertaining, patriotic tabletop, and nostalgic graphics will remain important categories as consumers celebrate heritage, home, and gathering traditions.

TREND WATCH: RETRO MODERN ABSTRACTS EMERGING

Alongside the nostalgic and novelty-driven trends, Modern Abstract Prints are emerging as an important directional trend for late summer and fall. Expect to see bold shape combinations, layered color stories, painterly graphics, and artistic pattern mixing influencing fashion accessories, home décor, tabletop, and stationery.

More trend direction will continue to emerge heading into August.

LOOKING AHEAD

Keep watching for our July Trend Watch featuring highlights from the Fancy Food Show along with early Fall 2026 trend direction.

Enjoy your summer season and successful selling ahead!