

# SAVVY SEATS

Seat suppliers sound off on event seating

BY ALEXANDRA GUDMUNDSSON



Chairs in action: Drake offers traditional folding chairs (top left) and modern seats such as the Elle stool (above), while Chameleon's chairs (at right) include the ruched Chloe, suede Cloth-Back and fancy Fanfare (top to bottom). AB Elements provides event seating at the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles (top right).



**D**IEGO Discacciati, vice president of marketing at East Brunswick, N.J.-based Drake Corp., says there are two opposing camps on the subject of seating. "Event designers are always looking for new and particular items," he explains, "but rental companies investing in inventory are very conservative on the subject, and only a few embrace innovation in chair styles." Drake's top-selling seats are traditional folding chairs and chiavaris, although the company offers something for the more adventurous chair-buyer as well.

One product that "the innovators go crazy for," according to Discacciati, is the Elle stool. The seat looks contemporary and stacks for "great functionality," Discacciati says—a potential boon for event planners plagued by seating problems. Neatly stashed extra seating is always welcome because "it is very difficult to predict" the number of seats that will be needed, Discacciati says.

**STACK UP** Inglewood, Calif.-based Chameleon Chair Collection also offers stackable seating. Chameleon's chairs are delivered in a "custom storage and transportation dolly that efficiently transports 36





chairs with backs and cushions," says Rhonda Couchigian, Chameleon's vice president of sales and marketing.

Clients are "looking for a modern, clean line," Couchigian says, noting that one of the company's most requested styles is a white chair with a suede back and cushion. The Governors Ball following the Academy Awards this year used these chairs for a special effect: "As the lighting design in the room changed throughout the night, the chairs appeared to change colors as well," Couchigian relates.

**CHIC CHAIRS** Labeling the traditional ballroom chair cover with a sash or bow tie as "passé," Roberta Karsch, president of Reseda, Calif.-based Resource One, agrees that a sleek look is preferred today. "Clients are looking for a contemporary, clean aesthetic look," she notes. Resource One is the only distributor of Philippe Starck-designed Ghost chairs, Karsch



Improving on tradition: Designed by Philippe Starck, Ghost chairs from Resource One include the Victoria style (above).

says, a product that satisfies the "design-driven" client by providing a more modern seat. An updated interpretation of the classic Louis XV armchair, the Louis Ghost chair is roomier than the traditional ballroom chair. The Victoria Ghost chair has no arms and is the same size as the ubiquitous chiavari. The line is offered in a rainbow of colors, including "emerald green" and "pink/orange."

**COZY UP** Offering a wide range of seating options, including stools and club

chairs, Alex Barker, owner of Lake Balboa, Calif.-based AB Elements, points to an increased demand for lounge furniture. "Social and corporate events are more open," he says, "with less constrained settings that allow for more interaction and productivity." At a corporate event featuring "sleek and modern" lounge seating from AB Elements at Los Angeles' Pacific

Design Center, "Guests were drawn to sit together in an inviting atmosphere overlooking the Los Angeles area skyline," Barker says.

Seating with a bit of bling is a popular option, too. Barker notes, "Our chrome-accented furniture line acts as a mirror and looks spectacular when coupled with ambient lighting at an event." ■

**RESOURCES** *AB Elements*, 818/442-1572; *Chameleon Chair Collection*, 310/677-2500; *Drake Corp.*, 732/254-1530; *Resource One*, 818/343-3451