



N E W S R E L E A S E

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**BAKER® INTRODUCES NEW DESIGNS TO THE LAURA KIRAR COLLECTION  
A Breadth of Furniture, Upholstery, Accessories, Lighting and Fabrics Bridge Earlier Forms**

**CHICAGO** (April 17, 2010) – Baker, a premier furnishings manufacturer and designer, introduced new furniture, upholstery, lighting, accessories and fabrics to The Laura Kirar Collection at the Spring 2010 International Home Furnishings Market in High Point, N.C. Designed by internationally renowned designer, Laura Kirar, who first partnered with Baker in 2006 with a collection that has received media and commercial accolades worldwide, the new forms enhance her original works with 28 pieces for the bedroom, living room dining room, and occasional pieces for the home.

Kirar brings to Baker a strong background in residential, commercial and contract design. Kirar is the founder and creative director of TRU design, a New York-based agency, a think tank for various creative projects from hospitality design to branding, from high-end residential to product design. Her products and interior designs have been shown in myriad publications throughout the world. A testament to Kirar's unique voice is her product partnerships with Kohler Interiors that span all four businesses with collections also designed for ANN SACKS, Kallista, and McGuire.

Kirar's inspiration remains solidly founded on late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century design, continually honed by her world travels and commercial and private works. One of the greatest influences at this juncture in her career has a very personal note – a hacienda that Kirar and husband, Richard Frazier, have been restoring. This true labor of love is located in a picturesque village on the Yucatan peninsula between the azure waters of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. The exotic and fertile plantation with its earthy, primitive landscape is surrounded by coastal plains lush with trees, plants, and flowers, low mountain ranges and expanses of desert.

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Nestled within this paradise is the worn weathered beauty of the home that when first found had returned almost completely to nature but now is being thoughtfully brought back to its original splendor through Kirar's careful ministrations. This remarkable place and all the beauty that unfolds around it has woven itself into Kirar's aesthetic – the clean, simple shapes, uniformity, proportion and the integrity of superb craftsmanship remains but is infused with brilliant color, organic references and a wealth of materials selected for its casual, yet luxurious nature.

“My works are certainly influenced by my travels and the impressions and memories I take away leave their indelible mark throughout my works subtly remarking not only the destinations but the journey. These are the touchstones of my approach. Mainland China, India, South America and especially Mexico have provided a source of inspiration evidenced throughout my new designs and interiors.”

Nature's organic, irregular beauty, vibrant color, simple, yet complex form, textural nuance, multi-dimensional finishes and decorative applications all come together in a feast for the senses. Kirar's latest pieces are functional works of art with strong geometry and pleasing forms evoking the simple pleasures that define casual luxury. “There has been an evolution in my creative work,” said Kirar. “Right now I'm attracted to the juxtaposition of raw earth and manmade splendor, of measured and classical proportions overgrown by time, elements and unruly vines – as a creator of spaces and objects. It implies a history, a kind of interrupted formality that is casual luxury in its truest sense.”

Kirar selected American walnut for many of her new designs and expressive inlays of highly figured walnut and white oak, and new to Baker, paldao veneers. Paldao's heartwood is gray to red-brown in color with a grain pattern can be varied dependent upon the cut from straight to interlocked or wavy as well as yielding crotch patterns, swirls or irregular striping. Warm American Walnut and deep Manor House wood finishes, as well as a natural clear lacquer, were selected for the collection, and many of the pieces can be custom finished in any of Baker's 16 standard and four premium wood finishes.

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Four new finishes designed to exude a natural appearance and rubbed to a low sheen also join the diverse offerings:

Oro: A warm honey-colored, hand-rubbed finish

Plata: Shades of silver, hand-rubbed to expose the varying colorations

Platino: White silver shimmering with warm gold undertones

Chatain: Deep, warm brown with a transparency to expose the figured veneer's wood grain

Completing the assortment is an array of exquisite hand-applied finishes, embellishing pieces with a mottled Tortoise and Shell multi-step faux finish, glossy Chalk, Soil and Dove lacquers, and 24 karat distressed white gold leaf, copper leaf and silver leaf metal finishes. Adding to the magical line-up is an organic mix of glass, mirror, leather, steel, iron and brass and decorative elements including nail head trim, exclusive Kirar designed hand-cast premium solid brass hardware, welt and intricate stitched details, and complex mortar and joint construction.

“I created little black dress pieces and natural embellishments in abstract or literal form,” said Kirar, “These are timeless designs reinterpreted.”

Renowned for her understanding of the nuance and detail required in the execution of fine custom upholstery, Kirar also developed two new suites for the collection. The Medida series, which in Spanish means to “measure,” includes a Sofa, Chair and Ottoman, its strong architectural form features high barely rolled arms with the roll seamlessly carrying across the back, deep, comfortable back and seat cushions and slightly flared wood legs. The Claro Armless and Corner Chairs, which in Spanish translates to “working together,” is an extraordinary statement in design. The chic and understated forms rest upon a solid walnut plinth base that can be interconnected to create any size configuration.

The Kirar designs are handcrafted to Baker standard, fabric is hand-cut and sewn on-line one inch at a time, then hand tacked and re-tacked to a perfect flow match on all four sides. Endless quality checks are made to ensure perfect pitch and correct cushion selection for extraordinary comfort and support. Solid maple frames are hand-constructed with corner blocked, glued, screwed and dowelled in Old World fashion and true eight-way hand spring-to-base tying, positioning more springs to support pressure points, so furniture maintains its beauty for years to come.

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Dressing the upholstered forms are 17 new fabrics in an exciting range of saturated color inspired by those found in nature and the use of natural fibers. The colorways begin with a set of warm neutrals and move into brilliant accents of color – Sage, Quince, Periwinkle and Bougainville. The textures include a proprietary linen paneled herringbone, glazed raffia rib, a painted linen, and a distressed cut velvet. Together with her existing assortment of fabrics and leathers for Baker this offering comprises a rich and compelling story combining natural elements with a modern day chic sensibility.

Kirar brings her artist's perspective in an expressive compilation of lighting and accessories to round out the collection. The handcrafted table lamps, chandelier and sconce are offered in a range of materials and finishes from brass and alabaster and carved black marble to silver leaf, glossy and matte lacquers and Murano glass. Custom fabricated hardware is finished in Polished Bronze with a series of handcrafted custom cotton and cinette shades in Ivory and Black and fitted with diffusers for soft, ambient light. The luminaries accommodate 40 to 60 watt incandescent bulbs, come standard with high/low sockets, and are Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved.

Baker Knapp & Tubbs, Inc. includes Baker furniture, Baker Knapp & Tubbs Showrooms, and Baker Stores. Along with McGuire Furniture Company, Ann Sacks tile, stone and plumbing company, Kallista plumbing, and Mark David hospitality furniture, it is part of the Kohler Interiors Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of Kohler Co., a global leader in kitchen and bath designs.

Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Kohler, Wis., Kohler Co. is one of America's oldest and largest privately held companies. Kohler is a global leader in the manufacture of kitchen and bath products, engines and power generation systems, cabinetry, tile and home interiors, and international host to award-winning hospitality and world-class golf destinations.

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