

« [Back](#) | [Print](#)

Classic Leather rides with Harley

Partnership to enter new channels

Joan Gunin -- Furniture Today, January 20, 2009

HICKORY, N.C. — **Classic Leather** is hitting the road with a new licensed seating line with the iconic American brand **Harley-Davidson**.

The partnership is expected to help both the upholstery manufacturer and the motorcycle builder enter new distribution channels — motorcycle dealerships for Classic Leather and furniture stores for Harley-Davidson.

For furniture retailers, the multi-year exclusive licensing program will be unveiled at the Las Vegas Market, which opens Feb. 9. Classic Leather will be in a new permanent showroom in the World Market Center, space B-158.

Guy Holbrook, Classic Leather national sales manager, said the company was attracted to teaming up with the Harley-Davidson Motor Co. because of Harley's iconic status, global recognition, product quality, domestic base and fierce brand loyalty.

“All of those things resonate with Classic Leather,” Holbrook said. “The demographic overlay of their consumer and ours is a close fit. There are many great similarities: They were family-started and have family members involved, as do we.”

“And like us, they are focused on not only their core customer but are interested in attracting new customers,” he added. “Harley is a robust lifestyle brand, not just products and motorcycles. This is a way to reach new consumers and also to extend our own brand.”

Sue O'Connor, senior manager of licensing for Milwaukee-based Harley, described her company's traditional customer as male, over 40 and with an annual income of more than \$85,000. A Harley motorcycle can retail from \$7,000 to \$33,000.

There are as many as 800 Harley dealerships in the United States and another 600 in other countries.

Classic Leather was among several manufacturers that had been building OEM furniture for Harley-Davidson under a license previously held by a now-defunct Milwaukee-area retailer.

Targeting price points at the medium-high to high end, the new leather upholstery line will join Harley's existing branded “rec room” items such as pool tables, barstools, rugs, lighting and neon signs.

Under the agreement, Classic Leather is developing two distinct Harley furniture collections.

One line is The Enthusiast, which was previewed in the summer at the semiannual Harley-Davidson dealer show. The familiar bold black, white and orange bar-and-shield Harley logo is used on sofas, sectionals, recliners, chairs, ottomans and home office seating.

The Enthusiast line, which O'Connor said was well-received, is sold exclusively through motorcycle dealers. A sampling of the offerings available to Harley dealers is online at www.classic-leather.com.

Set to debut at the Las Vegas Market is a second offering, The Harley-Davidson Furniture Collection, featuring more understated, “edgier” designs that happen to carry the Harley-Davidson name.

Unlike The Enthusiast, these frames will be sold via traditional high-end furniture stores and interior design channels. This more refined collection will bear a simple metal plate (lozenge) affixed to the back of the base of the right arm identifying the Harley-Davidson brand.

“This sophisticated look will offer broad appeal even to those who are not Harley-Davidson consumers,” said Holbrook.



The more subtle collection has been designed by Pinnacle Award-winning Berry & Clark Design Associates. "Their styling is indicative of the Harley persona, the 'coolness'," Holbrook said. He added that some of the firm's designers ride Harleys "and they understand the brand's DNA."

Appealing to men and women, the designs will feature such sleek accents as metallic trim, he said.

"We want the furniture to speak for itself," said Holbrook. "It has an edgy cleanness that will grab consumer's attention and then, once they realize it's Harley-Davidson branded, it makes sense."

Select styles may be made available through both the motorcycle dealer and furniture store channels.

In addition to furniture stores, channels of distribution for the Harley-Davidson Furniture Collection will include specialty retailers, interior designers, catalogs and others. Additional pieces will be added to the collection in April.

Separate catalogs are under development for each collection.

[« Back](#) | [Print](#)

© 2009 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.