

## **Furniture buyer's guide**

### **Where to Shop:**

You can find furniture in all types of retail venues today, from huge mass marketed warehouses to small independent specialty stores. With so many choices, it's important to make sure you're looking in the right place for you. We are locally owned and operated and have been in the furniture business for years. We understand that when shopping for furniture, you are looking for the right balance between style, comfort, quality and price. We're here to guide you through the choices to find the best value for your money; furniture you'll love for years at a price you're comfortable with. Come to our store to see the latest styles, touch and feel the fabrics and materials and be helped by our friendly staff in our low pressure environment.

### **Come Prepared:**

Choosing the right furniture is a balancing act between price, quality, comfort and style. Before you begin shopping, sit down and gather your ideas. What pieces are you looking for? How much are you planning to spend? What space do you have available? What styles do you prefer? What features are important to you? Are there certain colors, fabrics, or shapes you want to use as part of a decorating theme? And how will your lifestyle, including whether or you not you have children and pets, influence your needs? It also helps to sketch out your available space and bring it with you to the store. If you come prepared, you'll save yourself time and energy when confronted with all the choices available on the market today.

### **Match Your Furniture to Your Lifestyle:**

It's important to factor your lifestyle into your furniture decision in order to get the most of your money. Consider how often you plan on redecorating. If you are searching for furniture to last for years, plan to spend a little more time and money. If you like to add new pieces and redecorate often, try to find furniture that is more flexible. For example, look at neutral colors that match a variety of color schemes. If you love to entertain, it's worth it to pay for the matching server. If you spend most evenings curled up with your family, don't waste money on matching items you won't use.

You may love the clean lines and refreshing style of that white linen sofa, but if you have a two year old who loves grape juice too, you could be in for a real heartbreaker. Consider how much wear and tear your furniture will be subjected to. And don't forget to factor in how much money and time you are willing to put into the upkeep of your new furniture. Are you willing to have fabrics steam cleaned? Do you enjoy a weekend adventure with sandpaper and stain to freshen up your end tables? Would you ever take your furniture to a professional to be repainted or reupholstered? Most furniture can have its life extended with some extra TLC, if keeping the same pieces for many years is important to you.

Be careful not to sacrifice everything for functionality. There are so many brands and styles of furniture available today, you should be able to find a good compromise between personal style, comfort and durability. If you have a good idea of what qualities are important to you based on your lifestyle, it will be easy for us to help you find the right furniture for your unique needs.

### **Discover Your Favorite Styles:**

There are so many styles to choose from, discovering which styles you prefer is a great place to start looking. Think about your friends' and family's homes and their style. Flip through some decorating books or even take a preliminary trip to our showroom to see first hand what styles are available. Consider shapes, colors, textures and materials when looking at different styles. Here is a quick outline of some of the most popular styles today.

#### **Traditional**

If you want your furniture to look simple and homey, consider the traditional furniture style. This style usually has neutral colors and simple floral patterns. The fabrics are usually matte and not very textured. Pieces are balanced and look easy to relax in without any extensive fussing required to look settled and in place.

## **Casual**

If you like the comfort of traditional furniture but want a more modern look, look into the casual furniture style. These pieces are often overstuffed and oversized. They utilize many natural and neutral colors like gray, beige, whites and denim blue. They look as comfortable as they feel. Wood pieces in this style usually tend to be made of soft woods and have a chunky look to them.

## **Contemporary**

Contemporary furniture uses a wide variety of materials such as metal, glass, stone and wood. Departing from traditional style, contemporary furniture makes regular use of bold, bright colors. Floral patterns are very rare, though contemporary furniture often uses other patterns such as geometric shapes or animal prints. Like traditional furniture, contemporary furniture tries to avoid any fussy details like extra pillows, pleats and tassels.

## **Formal**

Formal furniture often incorporates antiques or is based on furniture from major movements in art history. This style is full of details, including ornate carvings and very strict symmetry. Lots of dark hard woods are used in this style, usually with very glossy finishes. Pieces can be very tall and often coordinate intricately with one another. Fabrics used in this style are elegant, including silks, velvets and brocades. Unlike traditional furniture, this style frequently employs details like tassels, buttons, pleats and fringe.

## **Mission**

Mission style furniture can also be referred to as arts and crafts style. This style is characterized by simplicity, durability and practicality. Hard woods are used abundantly, often with repeating wood slats as details. The simplicity of the style brings out the beauty of the wood, grain and the art of quality craftsmanship.

## **Asian**

Asian furniture is a growing trend in the furniture industry today. There are many styles within this group, but they often share common features. Materials such as bamboo and exotic woods like ginkgo and kiri stand out in this style. Many pieces are constructed to be very close to the ground, including tables and beds. The ornamentation of this style of furniture varies greatly between the specific countries or cultures they originate from. Look for differences in the amount of hardware, lacquer coatings, hand painting, materials, symmetry and featured animal symbolism in different varieties of Asian furniture.

## **Retro**

Another growing trend is the retro furniture style. This style relies heavily on designs and colors used in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Certain colors like avocado green, burnt orange, dark brown and robin's egg blue are very common. This style can incorporate newly manufactured furniture with original items from that time period for a cool, funky design.

## **French Country**

This style incorporates many specific patterns that immediately identify it as French. These include a variety of toiles and fleur de lis, as well as other patterns like bold stripes or checks. This furniture often looks distressed and usually incorporates many pieces with complimentary, but not exactly similar, patterns in one space.

## **Leather**

Leather furniture used to be constrained to offices and studies. Not anymore! Leather is a growing trend in every day areas of our homes, including family rooms. Leather sofas come in all kinds of styles, from traditional to modern. Leather is easy to care for and looks distinguished and comfortable. Use it as a unifying theme or as an exciting accent.

These are just some of the popular styles available today. If you have an idea of what styles you like, come visit our showroom and let our friendly sales people guide you towards what may fit your taste. And remember, you don't have to be strictly confined by just one style, let it inspire your design and open up new possibilities!

### **Not All Wood Is Created Equal:**

Wood furniture is very popular and most people have at least some wood pieces in their home. Not all woods are created equal. Use this as a quick guide to help you evaluate the woods you'll encounter as you shop for your new furniture.

Solid wood furniture is either made of hardwood, softwood, or a combination of the two. Hardwood is as it sounds; strong, dent resistant and durable. Common hardwoods used in furniture include cherry, oak, walnut, mahogany, teak, maple and ash. Generally, hardwood furniture is more expensive. It also will last longer and has the potential to live on for years to come as heirlooms and antiques.

Softwood furniture is usually less expensive but still made of solid wood. Common softwoods used in furniture are cedar, pine and fir. Softwood furniture is a great place to start if you like to put your own personal signature on the items in your home. They are usually inexpensive enough to play with, painting or staining to match your own personal style and tastes.

You will also run into furniture that is not solid wood, but has either wood veneers or wood laminates. Wood veneers are very thin layers of high-quality fine woods that are secured to wood of less quality, such as softwood, plywood, or particle board. Veneers are used in furniture of all qualities and price levels, so don't discount this option for furniture that looks like fine hardwood but isn't quite as expensive. Wood laminates are very similar to veneers, but the thin top layer is a hardwood imitation that is bonded to composite materials like particle board. Wood laminate is usually much less expensive. It's not just the type of wood your furniture is made of that determines its look. The joints and finishes used usually link furniture to a particular style and are often the small details that turn an acceptable piece into an exceptional piece. Finishes are not just for decoration, but also for protection from the elements. The better the finish, the longer the wood will maintain its original appearance. Some pieces are finished in a deliberately rustic manner, which is great for hiding small scratches and fingerprints in high traffic areas.

We know you are confronted with many choices when shopping for new furniture and we hope this short guide is helpful to you. Please feel free to call or stop by for more advice and information from our friendly sales people. We're looking forward to helping you find the perfect furniture for your home!