

Room for Design

Good design stays in style

When furnishing your first home, it is best to shop within a plan or a general theme. Simple but well-designed pieces that can be blended and co-ordinated with others later will be an advantage.

You should keep three points in mind when selecting furniture — good design that will not promise to go out of style, flexibility, and sturdy construction.

Design is a personal thing. It should be chosen on the basis of individual taste developed through an understanding of the principles of good design, with suitability and comfort in mind.

Look for unadorned furniture. It will serve you best now and will mix with other pieces later on. A simple classic design doesn't suffer from mass production. Avoid purchasing a cheap imitation of more costly, hand carved items.

Don't be misled by a fad. If a piece of furniture isn't right for your needs and doesn't appeal to you, no matter how "in" it may be at the moment, don't be pressured into buying it.

You don't have to pay a lot for good design. It is quite possible to find well-designed furniture for a modest price if you shop carefully and are willing to forego unnecessary and often objectionable embellishment.

FLEXIBILITY IS AN IMPORTANT consideration. If a piece of furniture can serve a variety of purposes, it will be useful for many years. When it can be used in one room now and in another later, you double your investment.

A middle-of-the-road upholstered piece such as a sofa can be reupholstered another time or two if it is comfortable and well constructed. If it is one that will always blend with whatever style your room may have, you can enjoy it indefinitely.

Construction quality must often be left to the integrity of the manufacturer and the word of the salesperson, but with wood furniture that has an ex-



by
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posed frame, such as a chair, it's possible to examine the construction.

Notice if it is hard wood or soft wood. Hard wood costs more, but is well worth the difference in furniture that you will use for a long time.

See if the back legs are a continuation of the frame. This makes for a stronger, more durable piece. Joints should be double-doweled with corner blocks fitted, glued, and screwed into place. Look for dovetail joints on drawers.

NATURAL WOODS ARE PREFERRED by most age groups today. The use of oak is on the increase and has a great appeal for several reasons. It takes naturally to casual life styles, is versatile and in good supply. It is also available in a wide price range from budget groups to top-of-the-line. Oak is easy to live with, and, because of its light color, it doesn't close in a small area or apartment room. There is a more open, spacious feeling with oak.

To be an intelligent shopper you should become familiar with the style names of commonly used pieces of furniture. Certain identifying names have been given to different styles of furniture and, although details such as legs, arms, and backs will vary widely, the general shapes can be easily recognized.

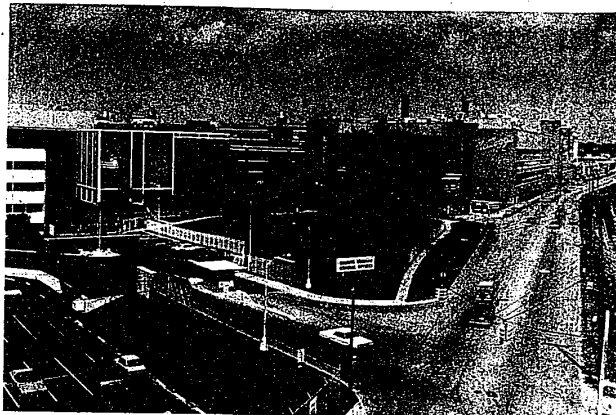
Upholstered chairs and sofas are identified by their general shape,

height from the floor, and types of backs, arms, and legs. Although some details such as cushion treatment and trim will vary with the individual designer, they can usually be identified.

Many different kinds of tables are used today. Decorative details will vary according to the style of the period, but the general characteristics remain the same. You will note that even the most traditional tables are available with glass tops for a more eclectic appearance. This modifies the traditional period.

Case furniture is a general term for pieces of furniture used for holding things. In cabinet work it refers to the shell of a piece of furniture, such as a chest of drawers, or any type of cabinet or wall unit.

Many furniture firms use plastic where they once used wood. See-through acrylic furniture is attractive and seems to occupy no space, but if abused it will scratch easily. The simplicity of the acrylic look is very acceptable with the home furnishing fashion of today and will be around for many tomorrows.



Bus leaves for Battle Creek

A tour of Kellogg's, the world's largest producer of ready-to-eat cereals, is on Farmington Community Center's agenda of summer events for Friday, June 22. An air-conditioned bus leaves at 9 a.m. for the vast

facility in Battle Creek which receives a quarter of a million visitors each year. Fee is \$17, payable at the center. Telephone reservations will be accepted by calling 477-8404.

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Opera theater opens design competition

A total of \$500 in prizes will be awarded by Michigan Opera Theater (MOT) in a competition to select the cover design for the 1979 season program book.

In addition to a \$375 first prize, the winning artwork will be reproduced as a poster to be sold at performances and at the MOT Opera Boutique, opening at the Renaissance Center in late June. Also offered are second and third place prizes of \$75 and \$50.

The competition is open to any professional or student artist in Michigan. Any medium will be considered if it can be photographed for reproduction as an 8½-by-11 color process cover. Two dimensional work, however, is preferred.

Entries may include elements from MOT's 1979 productions and should reflect the spirit of Michigan Opera Theater. For its ninth season, MOT will

present Verdi's "Il Trovatore," Puccini's "La Bohème," Tchaikovsky's "Joan of Arc" and an American work.

Each entry must include the artist's name, address and telephone number, but the artwork itself should not be signed until the winners are selected. Numbers will be assigned when artwork is submitted to MOT.

Judges will be David DiChiera, general director of Michigan Opera Theater; Joy Hakanson Colby, Detroit News art critic; Skip Davis, vice president/creative, George N. Sepey and Associates of Southfield; Marshall Fredericks, sculptor, whose works include the "Spirit of Detroit"; and Joseph Maniscalco, Detroit area portrait artist.

Deadline for entries is July 11. For information regarding the competition or to inspect previous program books call John W. Webb, director of marketing, Michigan Opera Theater, 963-3717.

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