

She finds the unusual everyday

By CORINNE ABATT

About 10 hours a week, Roz Mallin runs what amounts to a furniture idea clearing house from her office on the 12th floor of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

There was the woman who showed up with a log she had hollowed out and sanded and polished inside and out. She was referred to a florist's shop.

The man who came in with an unusual chair had better luck. Mrs. Mallin suggested some minor changes. Once these were made, the chair sold well.

"And now he's making a good living off that one chair," Mrs. Mallin said.

Before she opened the firm, Rozmallin, Ms. Mallin was a successful Chicago-based interior designer. She specializes in unusual, one-of-a-kind interior design showpieces for people who want something nobody else has.

She said she had noticed when she was a practicing interior designer that there was a wide selection of accessories "of the kind you expect to find, but try to find unusual things, something

different, something to make the house look outstanding."

SHE LOOKS FOR the superb craftsman who works alone or with a couple of loyal helpers. Factory products generally don't interest her. So far, she said, California has produced the best examples of the quality of craftsmanship and creativity she's looking for.

"There isn't a week that goes by that good craftsmen don't come to me with decorative accessories or furniture," she said.

She is concerned about the way furniture today is constructed and upholstered and disdain for makers who will put wood with a knot hole in areas covered by upholstery.

"The line we represent comes out of a very small factory in California. It's done the way upholstery used to be made by the fine craftsmen of 50 years ago.

"TODAY, PEOPLE BUY high style and pay a lot of money for style, but

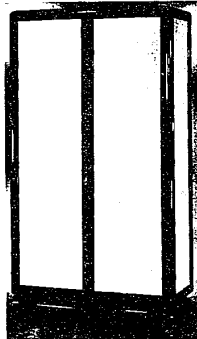
it's not quality. We like to combine style and quality."

A Rozmallin showroom is being completed at the Design Center in Troy. The firm has a fascinating assortment of one-of-a-kind showpieces such as a \$15,000 table or a wildly expensive chest or chair, but made with incredibly fine care and hundreds of hours of sanding and polishing. In addition, it will have a number of nationally advertised lines such as Clarence House fabrics.

It was the executives of the Merchandise Mart who came to her five years ago because they wanted a showroom of really prestigious furniture, antique rugs and Oriental antiques.

It was quickly established that there was a need for these showpiece items and it didn't take a veteran designer like Roz Mallin long to recognize a good thing when she saw it.

Rozmallin should be open at the Design Center soon. And it will include all of the one-of-a-kind pieces for which she has become so well known in the design trade.



Made of cane and lacquer, this Rami armoire is another of the unusual items carried by Rozmallin.

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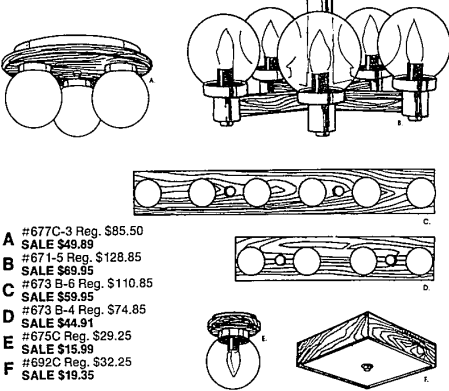
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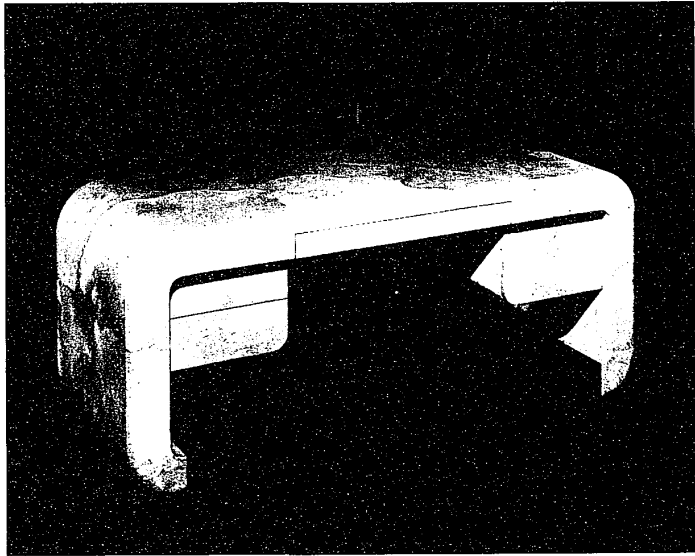
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Goatskin desk by Randolph & Hein is available at the Rozmallin showroom, which will be open to the trade at the Troy Design Center as of Sept. 25.

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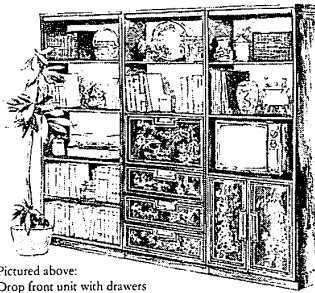
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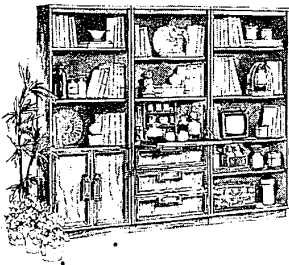
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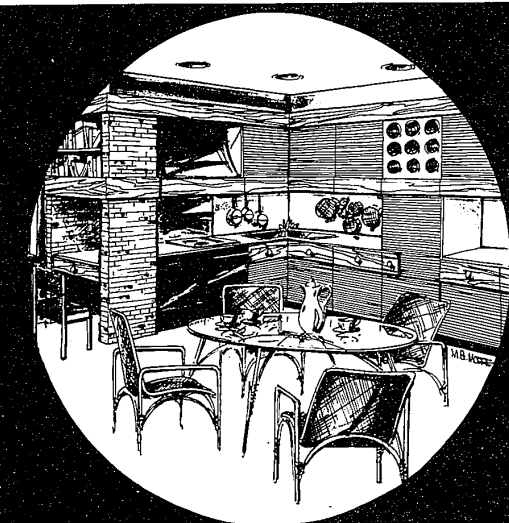
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