

More formality

Range of upholstery fabrics limitless

AP — There's an unusually wide choice these days with upholstered furniture, as the fashionable style variations range from the formality of 19th-century parlors through the simplicity of country kitchen or porch to the ageless look of fine leather.

A fashionable interest in novelty conjures an image of an adventurous hostess entertaining in a room made to look like the inside of an Indian wigwam, a Parisian sewer or a 1950s American diner.

The 19th-century style appears to be the way to go. Ellen Frankel, editor of 1,001 Home Ideas magazine, says that at the recent furniture market in North Carolina, there was a return to dressmaker details reminiscent of the Victorian era, with contrast welting, bows, beautifully detailed skirts, a slipcover look on furniture that is actually upholstered and pleats and double ruffles.

Robert Herring, vice president of Schumacher, a fabric supplier to high end furniture companies, also endorsed the 19th century as a treasure trove of ideas for today. His company is preparing a "Natchez" collection dominated by high-style Victorian — watermark silks, damasks, brocades, moires and velvets with embossed effects.

ACCORDING TO Sterling Collett, vice president at Drexel Furniture Co., more formality in fabrics is the watchword. Besides the damasks and brocades of traditional luxury, needlepoint and tapestry fabrics are growing popular — at the expense of casual stripes, plaids and textured fabrics that have been a mainstay over the past several years.

Among the most popular fabrications in the Drexel showroom this spring were upholstered pieces covered in medium green moire velvet and ruby red figured damask. Extensive multicolored fringe and braid trim were applied to the pieces.

For the future, Schumacher is betting on the ethnic look. "By and large," said Herring, "American

Please turn to Page 9



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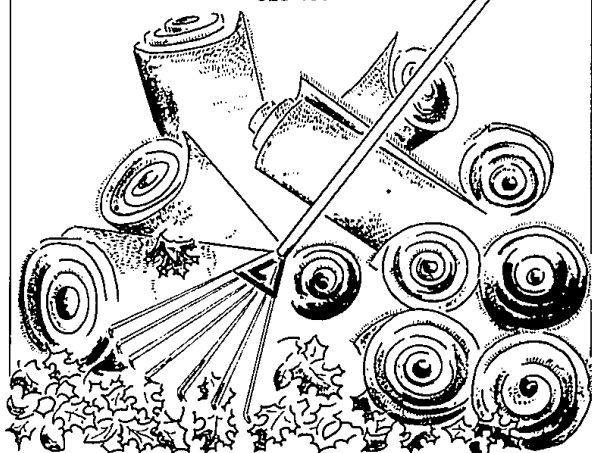
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