

## COVER STORY

# Sofabeds have come a long way in variety

*People are waking up to sleeper sofas*

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**M**ention the word *sofabed* to just about any adult over the age of 35, then watch their reaction. The perception is this versatile piece of furniture provides seating as hard as a rock and just about as attractive. While that might have been true 20 years ago, *sofabeds* — or sleeper sofas as they are known today — have come a long way.

At Laurel Furniture in Plymouth, variety in size, style and fabric give sleeper sofas the edge over conventional sofas unable to accommodate overnight guests.

Available in twin, full or queen size, sleeper sofas ensure the proper fit for a room. Sectionals are quite capable of offering a double bed on one end and a recliner on the other. From rolled arm camelbacks, sleeper sofas offer additional bedding in style.

"My sales of sleeper sofas have tripled in the last three to four years. Manufacturers are making more styles than they were 20 years ago because people are demanding them more. They used to be boxier, now they

fit right in with today's decor. The camelback is the most popular. Everybody's buying them young and old," said Don Wurm, owner of Laurel Furniture.

"People buy the sleeper sofas mostly for out-of-town visitors. The love seat is just the right size for older people who are downsizing and moving into a condo."

That's two good reasons to consider buying a sleeper sofa over a plain old sofa, but what about cost? Years ago, Wurm said, the difference in price between the two was several hundred dollars. In today's competitive market, sleepers run only about \$150 to \$200 more than a regular sofa.

## Expanding horizons

Thinking about buying a *sofabed* could change your way of thinking. Use your imagination to rearrange your living space and make rooms do double-duty. Consider these creative possibilities: For that first home or now that the kids are grown and on their own, turn a second or extra bedroom into a sitting room, den, study or

an intimate area for conversation.

According to interior designer James Hostnik at Scott-Shuptrine Furniture in Troy, the working (at home) class is sold on sleeper sofas because they not only offer comfortable seating but space for overnight guests, plus the capability to house a computer command center in the room.

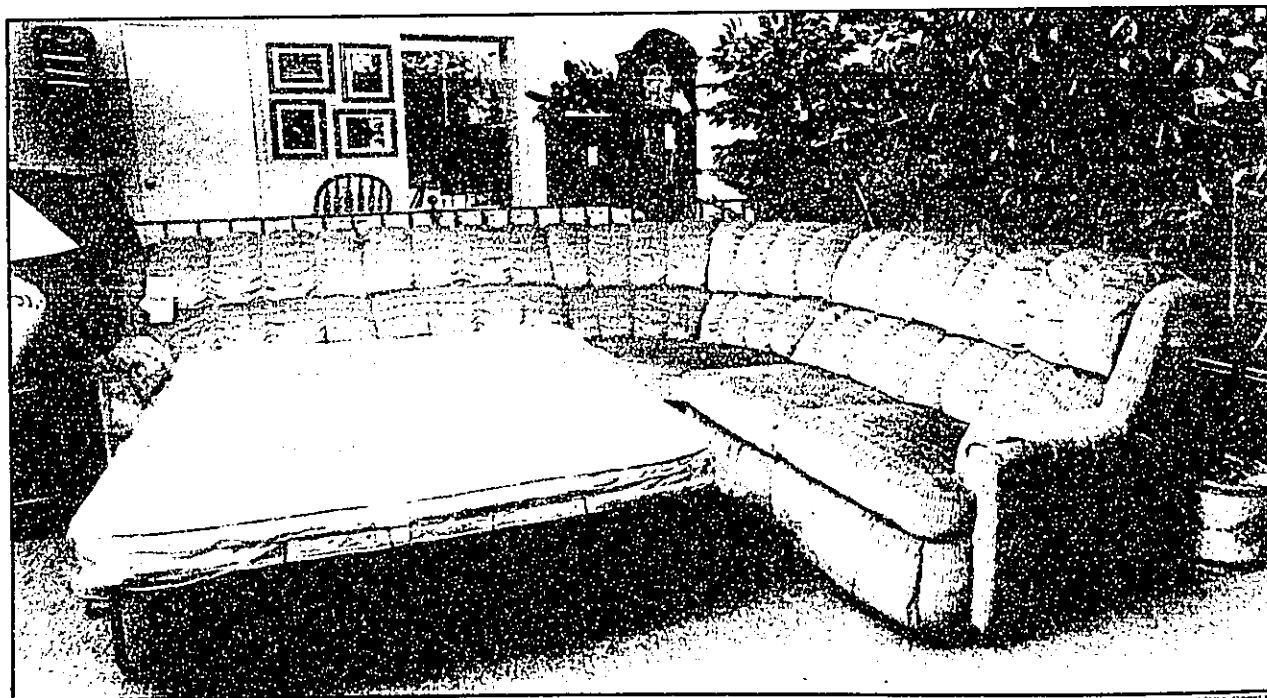
"There's a big demand for them.

People are converting guest rooms into home offices and they want an office look," Hostnik said.

"Most sleeper sofas are very much indiscernible anymore from a standard style sofa, you can have a beautifully designed room. They are available as chairs, love seats, twin and full, and are so much better to sit on. You don't have to sacrifice anything these days."

*Sofabeds* have undergone terrific makeovers in the past few years. Laurel Furniture manager Bob Sigmon compared the *sofabeds* of old to the first Model T's Henry Ford produced on the assembly line. The only

See SOFA, 9D



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL HEDGECOCK

**Comeback:** *Sofabeds, or sleeper sofas as they are known today, have come a long way as far as style, variety of fabrics and sizes.*