# **Need furniture? Take a trip to North Carolina**

Hickory – a small town on the western side of North Carolina-offers some of, if not the best, furniture shopping in America.

Approximately 60 percent of the nation's furniture is produced within a 200-mile radius of Hickory. It is about an hour from Charletto, N. C., less than at two-hour flight from Detroit Metro or about a 10-hour drive. People travel from all over the world to visit and buy furniture in this small, but growing town.

# Shop-'til-you-drop

Borp they dead to shop until you drop — literally. There are some 60 furniture stores in a very small area around Hickory. When I say stores, I mean mega, gigantic, multi-floored, mind-When I say stores, I mean mega, gigantic, multi-floored, mind-blowing stores. One popular location is the Hickory Furniture Mart. When you walk in you are given an 86-page booklet that describes the various stores that describes the various stores within the mart and a map for the four floors of merchandise covering around 700 manufacturers. Types of furniture range from traditional to contemporry, French, or nostalgic, to iron or lodge-look, for children or grown-ups, either mass made or handmade. There are also stores that excellige in rues lines. that specialize in rugs, linens, lights and mirrors.

My plan was to look for a con-

temporary, dining room table that would expand from six to

If you are going ...

ten people. Sounds simple doesn't it? Many ads for stores indicate that you can save 30-76 percent over regular retail prices in your home state. I wanted to see if that was true.

First I checked in at the welcome desk to get my booklet and some tips on where to lock for contemporary dining room tables. The receptionist was very helpful and suggested about six possible stores to check. She also gave me a coupon for Jessica's Vernada Restaurant located in the building.

After checking the price, getting a brochure and the salesperson's card, discussing the thousand of different options for finishes, sizes, leg styles and expansion choices, I was exhausted. Furniture shopping in Hickory requires time, patience, good walking shees and don't forget a pad and pen for taking notes.

Great Deals?

# **Great Deals?**

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Did I find a bargain? No, but I also ended up choosing an Italian made table. Margins and deals are much less if the piece is not manufactured in the North Carolina area. Locally I can purchase the table (which is in stock) for just over \$800. The price includes tax and delivery. If I purchase the exact same table from the Hickory Furniture Mart, Intro Outlet I would pay just over \$860 total delivered, and I have to wait eight to 12

weeks to receive it.

There are still many advantages to making the trip. Many manufacturers will custom build whatever you want. I visited the Robert Bergelin Company show-room named after their father who started the business in 1960. Now they have 30 employees, including craftsmen and a restored mill used to manufacture handmade, quality wood furniture. This company begins making the piece only after you have chosen, for example, the size, type of wood, finish, logs and apron style, number and type of leaves and shape of the top. This is personal service you don't often receive from large furniture stores.

furniture stores.

Another advantage to going to Another advantage to going to Hickory is the stores do not charge sales taxes to out-of-state residents. Many also offer deep-er discounts if larger purchases are made. Shipping is an added cost; however, the furniture stores have contracted carriers to combine shipments for lower costs. You wait longer for doliv-cry but costs are low neer pound. ery, but costs are low per pound



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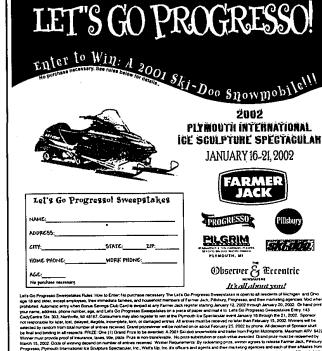
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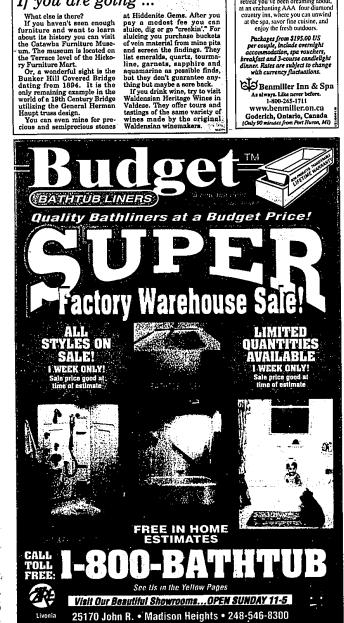
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Of course the amount of furniture and accessories to choose from is another advantage of shopping in Hickory.

Sale!

If you are serious about going, contact various outlet stores on





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