

Care Is Needed Picking Furniture For First Apartment

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mize on. Since this is the furniture you tend to keep longest, it makes sense to spend more of your budget for this part of your furnishings.

First, lift up the piece you are considering. It may look substantial, but if it's hollow and phony it will feel light and fragile, and won't be able to take the use you're going to give it. (Of course, this test won't apply to plastics and other contemporary materials, but this rule of thumb is true for all wood furniture.)

Good chests and dressers can be judged by the amount of care given to the finishing. Poorly made items will have rough interiors. The care given to the exterior sides of a piece is also significant. A manufacturer who skips leaves the sides completely untouched.

Chairs, tables and chests should stand solidly on the floor and not rock. Drawers should slide easily. Doors should swing freely and not drag.



TRADITIONAL FURNITURE, like this room by Broyhill, often looks best in a formal, balanced arrangement. To keep the room from looking static, real plants pick up the motion suggested by the floral design on the upholstery. Small love-seats are a good way to set up a conversation corner, since they take up less floor space than separate chairs, and let people face each other, which they can't do on sofas.

Tables should be braced at points of stress with corner blocks or braces and reinforced with stretchers between the legs.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BUY FIRST? A good bed. It's used eight hours a day—one third of your life—and, it's the one item with which you have most contact.

PITFALLS TO AVOID? Number one is the tendency to look for something for nothing. Stick with recognizable brand names and shop reputable dealers. They're the people who will work with you.

Very often, for example, newlyweds start to buy furniture before they know where they're going to live. And, when they've rented the apartment, they discover the item doesn't fit! A good dealer will be more apt to make arrangements to help correct such honest mistakes.

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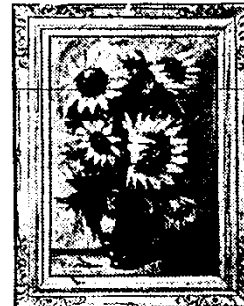
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