

# INTERIOR DESIGN

## Many couples buy furniture together before marriage

**/PRNewswire/** - Newlyweds are getting a head start on their new lives together by furnishing their first homes early.

Some 28 percent of married couples say they bought their first piece of furniture together before they stepped over the threshold, and 32 percent bought furniture within the first six months of marriage, according to a recent survey conducted by the American Furniture Manufacturers Association (AFMA).

And, it's not only when they buy their furniture that helps couples create their beginning, it's also how they shop.

### Furniture is exciting

"Furniture shopping is a very exciting experience for couples who are decorating their new home," says interior designer

Catherine Bailey Dunne, author of *Interior Designing for All Five Senses*. "They can follow a few basic guidelines to ensure the process is as easy and fun as it should be."

Dunne suggests crafting a master plan based on your dreams and demands.

"Every couple has a list of furnishings they need and a longer list of pieces they want. Begin in the room that needs the most furniture or where you spend the most time, and build from there," Dunne said.

"And, don't forget to treat yourselves every once in a while to a piece of furniture you've been dreaming about."

Finding the ideal starting point is easier than saying, "I do."

### Learn likes

First, learn what kinds of furniture you both like. Pick up some decorating books or browse at a local retailer to see what's available. "And, don't be afraid to replace furnishings that are worn out, have outgrown their welcome or no longer suit your lifestyle," Dunne said.

Dunne also emphasizes the power of accessories. Items such as lamps, picture frames, vases and area rugs are simple ways to add detail and style to a room. And, because most honeymooners' homes are filled with wedding gifts, pieces such as bookshelves, curio cabinets and coffee tables are perfect for displaying new treasures.

Newlyweds who don't know where to start greatly appreciate

Dunne's practical advice. In fact, 45 percent of those couples surveyed say they wish they had had a better understanding of their own taste and style before they began furnishing their home. And 44 percent of couples wanted more information about the varieties of furniture styles available.

Indeed, furniture manufacturers today are creating an even wider variety of furniture styles, that appeal to both bride and groom.

"The industry is responding to the needs of consumers with home furnishings that are both stylish and comfortable," said AFMA Vice President Jackie Hirschhaut. "It's easier and more fun than ever to decorate the way that you've always dreamed."

### Most decide together

The AFMA survey found that 87 percent of the newly married make their furniture decisions together. And, Dunne says that in furniture shopping - like relationships - togetherness is the key to success. "This is one of the first opportunities newlyweds have to express who they are as a couple," Dunne said. "They should discuss the styles they prefer, and what would be the best additions to their new life together. Above all, they should have fun designing a home that reflects their personality as a couple."

While most newlyweds usually don't furnish their new home all at once, Dunne advises they shouldn't underestimate what they can do. "I recommend cou-

ples select furniture and accessories they both love, keeping in mind that their furnishings will eventually be replaced as their family needs and style preferences change," said Dunne. "Nothing can replace the satisfaction they'll get from a home they are happy spending time in together."

Finally, newlyweds should be relieved to know the possibilities are endless. "From choosing colors to selecting styles, the most important thing to remember is that there are no mistakes," says Dunne.

The American Furniture Manufacturers Association (AFMA) is headquartered in High Point, N.C. - the home furnishings capital of the world - and has more than 350 U.S. furniture members.

### DESIGN CALENDAR

■ The Frank H. Boes Gallery, 420 Enterprise Court in Bloomfield Hills, will have an auction 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1, featuring property belonging to the estate of Marshall Fredericks and other estates and private collections. Call (248) 332-1500.

■ Decorating consultant Jennine Matlow is teaching classes in Oakland County: "Entertaining with Style" (7-9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1), "Decorating with Antiques and Collectibles" (10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Feb. 3) and "Conversation Pieces" (7-9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8) through Farmington Community Education; "Decorating with Antiques and Collectibles" (5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6) and "Entertaining with Style" (5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13) through The Longacre House in Farmington;

and "Decorating with Antiques and Collectibles" (7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27) through West Bloomfield Community Education. Learn innovative and affordable ways to decorate and entertain using items you have in your home. For costs and other information on the classes, call Farmington Community Education at (248) 489-3333. The Longacre House at (248) 477-8404 or West Bloomfield Community Education at (248) 635-2290.

■ Crafting, decorating and coloring guru Katie Brown will demonstrate creative party decorating at a free event 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, at JoAnn etc in the Auburn Mile Shopping Center, 600 Brown Road at Baldwin in Auburn Hills. Brown, soon to host programs on HGTV and the

Food Network, will share her knack for mixing homey appeal with a hip sense of style and a touch of romance. She will offer homespun tips on decorating and entertaining, including some from her new book, *Katie Brown Entertains*, while demonstrating affordable how-tos that take the stress out of decorating and entertaining.

■ Haberman Fabrics, 117 W. Fourth in Royal Oak, presents a variety of home decorating classes. They include the three-session "Advanced Designer Pillows," Mondays, Feb. 5-19 (\$45). Pre-registration is required. Call (248) 541-0010 or visit [www.habermanfabrics.com](http://www.habermanfabrics.com). ■ Haberman Fabrics, 117 W. Fourth in Royal Oak, will present "Designs for Living," four decorating seminars with Maureen Klein, Feb. 17-18. The store

will donate \$5 of each seminar fee to Habitat for Humanity. The Feb. 17 seminars are: "Window Wonders," 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and "Tablescapes," 2:30-5:30 p.m. The Feb. 18 seminars are: "Off the Wall... And On," 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and "Ruffles and Flourishes," 2:30-5:30 p.m. Before Saturday, Feb. 3, you may submit "design challenge" photos for Klein's review; contact Haberman Fabrics for more information. Costs are \$45 for each seminar; \$80 for one day's morning and afternoon seminars (which includes lunch); \$115 for three seminars (which includes lunch on your full day of sessions); or \$150 for all four seminars (which includes lunch both days). Advance registration is required by phone, (248) 541-0010; by mail; in person; or visiting [www.habermanfabrics.com](http://www.habermanfabrics.com).

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