Fabulous FURNITURE 2001

Gatherings find it great in great rooms today

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
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Americans used to gather in living rooms in their bungalows or ranch homes.

But look at where they meet now: the great room.

"They used to have a separate room to gather, either den or family room, but only occasionally was the living room used," said Bill Wolf, owner of Newton Furniture in Livonia, which also has stores in Bloomfield Hills, Novi and Sterling Heights.

Today's homes replaced the living room, den and family room with the great room. "Today people are using the great room to watch television, sit and relax in the furniture or use the entertainment center," Wolf said.

"It's changed dramatically over the years. The chairs, sofas and recliners are more comfortable, and there's better quality covers and leather."

Today people use three rooms, the great room, kitchen and bedroom of the home. "The great room is where they go to relax," Wolf said, as people use entertainment centers with DVD players, CD players and stereo equipment to enjoy a room full of sound.

"I think the great room has changed in how it's equipped," said Ken Kucab of McLaughlin's Furniture in Southgate and Novi. "That change in equipment now includes the home theater and in terms of seating space needed in the room."

Since there is so much entertaining, the room is casual, said Kucab.

Accessories include the torchiere, which is a floor lamp with reverse lighting with a dimmer switch.

Sectionals can help fill up those wide open spaces, Kucab said. Fabric colors can vary from brown and rust to blue. Cherry wood is popular on accent or end tables. Animal motifs also play a big role in the decorating scheme.

"The colors of animal skin, such as zebra and leopard, those types of look-alike fabrics are popular," Kucab said.

Don Wurm, owner of Laurel Furniture in Plymouth, said entertainment centers remain the focal point in great rooms. "They've eliminated the living room and instead you see the great room in newer homes," Wurm said.

Homeowners also use bookcases alongside the entertainment center in the room.

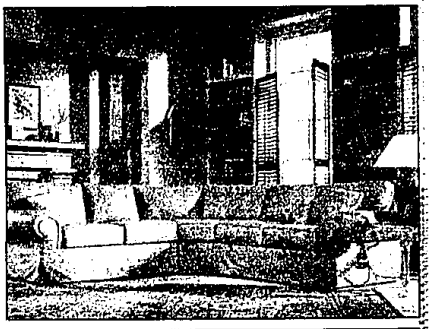
"People use this room on a regular basis," Wurm said. "They are also buying computer desks and putting them in the family room. These computer cabinets can be closed up."

That allows the family to store the computer in a central location of the home where parents can keep an eye on children surfing the Internet.

Accessories usually include lamps, end tables, pictures and clocks, decorating the room in a traditional style.

"Sometimes people purchase transitional pieces, such as a sofa with wood feet on it instead of a skirt," Wurm said.

That allows homeowners to change decorative styles from room to room.



Simply great: *Today's homeowners use the great room to watch television or just sit and rest on large sofas.*

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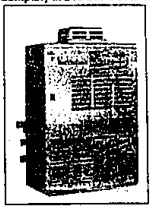

Jeffrey Moss is vice-president of Advance Plumbing Supply Co. In Walled Lake and Detroit. Call (800) 560-7474 toll-free. Have a plumbing question? Write to Jeffrey at Advance Plumbing Supply Co., 1977 E.W. Maple Rd., Walled Lake, MI 48390.

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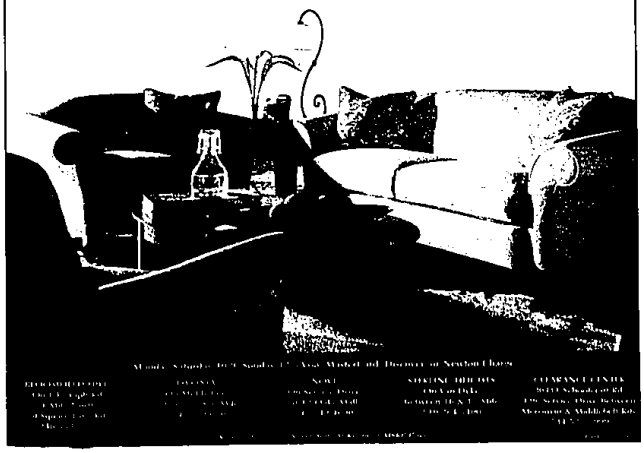

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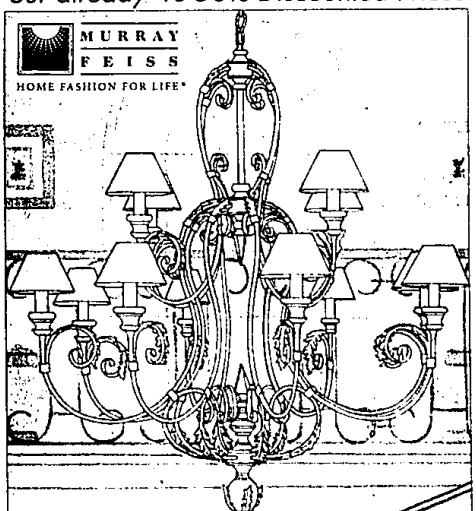

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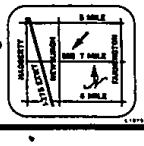

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