

Fabulous FURNITURE

Don't just get the picture; frame it right

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO
STAFF WRITER

Videos, cable and satellite have brought the movies home. But while having a large screen television in your living room might make you feel as though you're at the movies, most people don't want their homes to look like movie theaters.

Entertainment centers, if selected properly, can preserve the big screen feel without compromising the look of the living or family room.

Instead of taking over a room, these units can downplay the size of TVs while providing more space for storage, said Paul Franks, owner of Franks Furniture of Wayne.

In business for 39 years, Franks has been offering customers the option of selecting customized entertainment centers for the past 18 years. And with the size of televisions on the rise, so are customized orders.

Most places that provide entertainment centers for big screen TVs provide two deep cabinets for either side of the set with a shelf above connecting the cabinets, Franks said. How-

ever, the cabinets must be just as deep as the TV.

At Franks, entertainment centers can be customized to conceal the set and provide any type of cabinetry the customer wants, from curio style cabinets and bookcases to full audio-visual centers with all the storage.

"We can basically give a customer just about any format they would like," Franks said, including corner arrangements.

With custom made centers, Franks said, customers don't have to worry about color variations since the entire unit is made and stained at the same time.

"A lot of our custom units are made to match furniture they already have," he said.

Susan Edwards of Sherwood Studios of West Bloomfield said customers want something that will house all their components as well as matching their decor.

DVDs, satellite, cable, video games and surround sound are a part of the picture in many area homes.

"It's not just the VCR and the cable box anymore," Edwards said. "They don't want a TV on a stand anymore. They want it housed in something that looks like furniture."

And there's a lot to choose from at Sherwood Studios with options of wood, laminate and mirror-type entertainment centers in manufactured or custom styles.

And customized orders can include built-in bookcases, curio display cabinets, electronic doors, and remote-controlled lighting displays.

Custom centers are typically made for TVs 32 inches or larger. Prices can range widely, of course, but a custom unit with a pair of pocket doors, full-extension drawer for tape and CD storage and room for a VCR in a fully enclosed cabinet starts around \$899.

A customized three-piece unit made of oak or cherry wood, of which Franks sells a lot, can run around \$4,000; \$2,500 for an entertainment center that looks like it's three pieces, but is actually two horizontal pieces.

"People don't mind spending a little more in that area than they did before," he said, referring to the many home viewing



Home theater: This big screen home theater wall system is an example of custom cabinetry available to fit any TV and audio systems.

opportunities including special sporting events.

Edwards agreed. When it comes to entertainment centers, customers with large televisions are willing to spend \$3,000 to \$15,000 for a place to house their entertainment necessities, she said. Individuals with standard size televisions can find

units at Sherwood and Franks for a lower price.

Often customers come in with an idea of what they want and when they realize what can be done, they want more, Franks said.

And it's often the woman who is concerned about the look of the unit, he said.

"Usually the man wants a big TV and he's not as concerned if it has a fancy cabinet," Franks said. "The woman wants it . . . to look as nice as the rest of the furniture. We try to make it look the least obtrusive."

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