

# Fabulous FURNITURE 2002

## Design the living room for just that, living

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY  
CORRESPONDENT

Living rooms in the 60s and 70s were functional with a couch, coffee/end tables and television. Living rooms in the 80s and 90s were a tribute to luxurious fabrics, expensive artwork and beautifully crafted woodwork.

Today's living rooms are a fusion of function and aesthetics.

"People's lifestyles have changed," explained Christine Thurston, assistant General Manager of The Great Indoors of Novi. "People have brought into the whole electronics (market)."

Depending on one's budget, living rooms now may include everything from a big-screen television, complete with a DVD player; wall-to-wall stereo equipment; and a whole computer set-up featuring a scanner, laser disc burner and mini-cams. And while the electronics can be scaled down, experts agree that living rooms must be 1) inviting, 2) comfortable and 3) accessible.

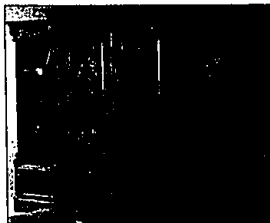
"(Living) rooms are no longer a showplace," confirmed Dave Gorno, assistant manager and designer at Classic Interiors of Livonia. "When people have friends over, they want people to be drawn into the room, not walk by it."

Durable fabrics are common in living rooms of 2002, especially if children live in the house. Mixed woods are also popular — an oak entertainment center, a maple end table, and a cherry coffee table in one room. Traditional style colors are warm, including burnt umber, lighter browns and darker greens.

According to Lynn Marie Smelser, an Ethan Allen designer in Livonia, "trends have been going to the traditional look since just before the millennium, at least in the Midwest market. People want the comfort of the past."

Accessibility is another key design element today. People want to "live" in their living rooms, but they also want to conceal some things when company arrives. Newer entertainment centers and computer armchairs allow families to hide things behind doors when not in use.

"I have a client who is buying a big-screen TV, but only wanted to see it when it was on," said Thurston. "We are designing a black screen that will allow him to watch television



Heckman is one of the many furniture lines you'll find at Classic Interiors Furniture in Livonia. This three-piece entertainment center with bookcases from Heckman's Cardigan Bay Collection features fluted columns with Georgian molding at top, and a hand-rubbed golden waxed finish.

while it is on, but when it's off, it looks just like a (decorative) black screen."

Gorno has a client who wanted baskets built into her living room design to accommodate quick pick-up of her child's toys when company arrived.

Living rooms today are designed to bring people together, both family and friends.

"Despite the belief that families are drifting, I get an awful lot of interest from people who want to invest in family time," said Thurston. She believes incorporating computers into the main living area is one solution.

"First, people can monitor what their kids are looking at on the Internet; but they can also be available to be a resource (of information) when the kids find something on-line," she said.

Scenicism is another feature of today's living room. Since all rooms need a focal point, or something that pulls a room together, many designers recommend a family heirloom.

"A lot of people have antiques that they want to incorporate, but they don't want it to look like their grandmother's house," Smelser said. Planned placement of the antique, along with family photos, can bring warmth to the room.



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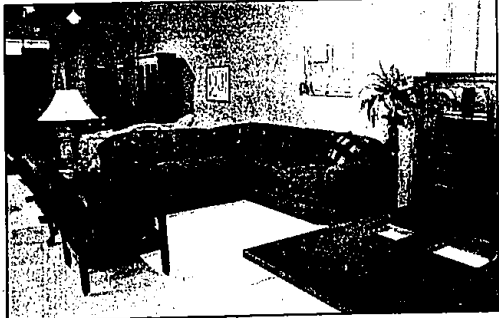
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