

Be Careful When Buying Dining Room Furniture

Dining furniture buyers "in the know" look for comfort, beauty, durability and easy care.

"Beautiful dining furniture has good proportions," a housing and home furnishings specialist asserted.

Patricia A. Bradshaw with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University System, said colors and patterns in dining furniture should be ones the buyers like and can live with

for many years.

"Look for sturdy materials and finishes that wear well and require little care—that people enjoy touching.

"Poorly finished wood is rough, feels raw, and looks cloudy.

"For table tops, finishes with scratch, heat and alcohol resistance are good, and plastic-surfaced tops offer durability. Table underside should have a finish, if it's wood, to prevent shrinkage."

Turning to construction details, the specialist advised leaning on tables to see if they rest firmly on the floor. Also, check legs for glides or tips that won't mar floors.

"Look for careful welding and bolting of furniture with metal frames. Rubber shock mounts often hold wood and steel together. Shocks add comfort at low cost and should be firmly attached."

Miss Bradshaw described good

chairs as being engineered for comfort—they let feet rest flat on the floor and support the back just below the shoulder blades.

"A seat 16 inches deep gives good back support for most adults, and a slightly slanted chair back is better than a straight one. Slats or spindles should feel comfortable against the back."

The specialist cited captain's chairs as "really not good—their rounded backs make people pull

shoulders forward into tiring positions.

"Springy chairs usually provide comfort. Springiness is found in chairs of metal tubing, bentwood, plywood or laminated wood—and those with seats mounted on hard-rubber shock absorbers.

"Check these chairs for balance. Some, including low-cost chairs with pedestal bases, are poorly weighted and tip easily.

"Also, chairs should be level and

have tight joints.

"Chair seats should feature easy-to-clean material—sturdy fabric with a spot-and-stain-resistant finish. Seats with plastic or fabric upholstery should be easy to remove and recover."

Miss Bradshaw also recommended choosing furniture easy to dust, clean and move.

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