

FURNITURE GLOSSARY of terms

A

Acanthus leaf

Used in classic Greek and Roman decoration, this popular 18th century motif is favored by Chippendale. Carvings of this Asian-native plant appear on cabriole legs and moldings.

Accent colors

Contrast colors used to spice up room schemes

A.F.F.

Abbreviation for Above Finished Floor. This is typically used on construction plans to note installation heights or objects.

Accent lighting

Decorative lighting used to draw attention to chosen objects and create mood and highlights. i.e., track lighting, chandeliers, and sconces.

ADA Guidelines

A set of requirements applied to the design and construction of all buildings to ensure individuals with disabilities have full access to the building and its facilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Adaptations

Newly made furniture pieces that capture the flavor of the original but are not authentic.

Ambient Lighting

Main overhead lighting in a space providing a diffused layer of uniform illumination

Antiquing

The process of making wood or fabric look old and used. This can be done through a finish, artificial weathering, or distressing. Antiquing can be applied to metal home accents, wooden pieces, and even leather to create an elegantly worn look.

Applique

French for "applied." Ornaments such as carvings, turnings, lozenges, etc., which are tacked or glued to a surface rather than cut from the solid wood.

Apron

Boards that are placed at right angles to the underside of a tabletop or seat of a chair, extending between the tops of legs. On case goods furniture, it is the perpendicular face below the lowest drawer between bracket feet.

Arabesque

A kind of scroll pattern in which leaves, flowers, fruit and geometric forms are intertwined

Armoire

French term for a wardrobe frequently used to describe a French-style wardrobe.

Art Deco

Style of architecture and furnishings popular in the 1920's and 1930's; characteristics include streamlined, geometric motifs expressed in materials such as glass, plastic and chrome.

Art Nouveau

Forerunner of Art Deco; style of decoration between 1890 and 1910 characterized by flowing lines, sinuous curves and forms derived from nature.

Attached Back

Attached back pieces feature cushions that are attached, and cannot be removed or flipped. Prevents pillows from being moved out of place. Attached back cushioning maintains the durability of cushioning because the back does not move or wear as it would if it were detached.

B

Bachelor's Chest

A small low chest of drawers which first appeared in the 18th century.

Back Splat

A section of flat, occasionally pierced wood in the center of the back of a chair

Back orders

Items on a purchase order with insufficient inventory to satisfy demand.

Balance

A state of equilibrium; can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Arrangement of objects around an imaginary central point to achieve a pleasing result.

Ball and claw

A turned foot of spherical form with a carved bird's claw clutching the ball. Inspired by ancient Chinese figures of a dragon claw holding a jewel

Ball Foot

A basic, historic style seen on chairs, tables or other casegoods, which appears like a carved ball sitting at the end of the chair leg. Also called bun foot.

Balloon back

A chair with a circular back resembling a balloon; popularized in Victorian times.

Banding

Veneer cut into narrow strips of contrasting color for decorative effect, typical of marquetry or inlay. Often used around the edges of furniture, drawers, etc.

Banquette

A long bench-like seat, often upholstered and generally built into or along a wall.

Barrel Chair

Semicircular upholstered chair with loose seat cushion. Originally made from wine barrel halves.

Bas relief

A sculpture or carving whose design projects a little from the surface.

Baseball Stitch

Upholstered furniture containing a triple stitch seam of fabric, with two visible stitches bordering a center stitch between the two pieces of fabric. Inspired by the classic stitching on a baseball, this stitch is a design feature and often contrasts with the upholstery of a sofa, loveseat, or chair.

Blanket Chest

A low storage chest with a hinged lid and often a lower drawer, serving also as a bench.

Beading

Decorative detail resembling a row of flattened beads.

Bench Seat:

A sofa or loveseat that utilizes only one long seat cushion. Bench seating is streamlined, attached cushioning. Sofas and couches, loveseats and other upholstered pieces can feature bench seating.

Bentwood chair

A chair popularized in Paris café culture made from wood bent using a steaming process.

Bergère

An upholstered French armchair with outwardly rolling arms and sections of its wooden frame exposed.

Beveled Glass:

Thick glass with an angled surface cut around the entire periphery. The bevel on a mirror or glass piece adds visual interest, and enhances the formality of mirrored pieces. The bevel is cut into the glass, and is usually showcased by framing.

Bleaching

The process of chemically treating wood to provide a lighter, more uniform color.

Bolster

A long, often cylindrical, cushion or pillow for a bed, sofa, etc.

Bombe

(Pronounced Bombay) A low, usually heavily decorated chest of drawers with outwardly bulging front and sides.

Bonded Leather/ Durablend™

A polyurethane/leather blended upholstery. A composite material made of leather, polyester, cotton, and polyurethane. It contains about 17% genuine leather. Pieces of leather are applied to a polyester/cotton blend material as a backing, and then polyurethane is applied to the top to get the consistent look and feel. You gain the look and feel of leather, along with the easy maintenance, without the cost.

Bonheur Du Jour

A delicate 18th century French ladies writing desk having a small glazed cabinet on top.

Bonnet top

Also called a Hooded or Dome top. A full dome or curved, covered top section.

Bookcase Headboard

A headboard for a bed that has space to store books, radios, clocks, and other small items. Sometimes called a storage headboard.

Book Match

A method of veneer matching where pairs of adjacent slices of veneer, as they are cut from the log, are opened up like the pages of a book, producing a mirror image of the grain pattern.

Bow front

Outwardly bowing front of an item of wooden furniture.

Box Match

A veneering pattern similar to diamond match and angled to create a series of consecutive squares radiating out from the center.

Brace Block

A piece of wood or metal, fitted into an angle of a piece of furniture to add strength or rigidity.

Bracket foot

A foot resembling an “L” on its side placed at the corners of cabinet furniture.

Breakfront

An item of furniture divided vertically into three sections, with the center section projecting forward.

Broadloom

Carpet woven on a wide loom.

Brocade

Used in fine, formal upholstery, it has raised surface patterns resembling embroidery.

Broken pediment

A decorative feature placed at the top of an item of furniture, which resembles a camel's hump. The center section of the hump is removed (hence the term "broken") to make room for additional ornamental features.

Buffet

A buffet/sideboard without a hutch or storage cabinet on top. The French definition of the word is "a small sideboard; a place to keep dishes."

Bun Foot

A foot shaped as a slightly flattened round ball typically used on chests of drawers or upholstered chairs.

Bureau

A desk built on top of a chest of drawers. The desk is revealed when a flap or "fall" is lowered. Occasionally a bookcase sits on top of it.

Burl:

A variation (or "knot") in wood grain that creates a pattern when cut thin; often used for veneer or inlay. Burls are naturally occurring in wood, and can be mimicked in manufactured pieces to add an organic appearance.

Burnishing:

Hand rubbed polishing to enhance the natural color of the wood. Burnishing adds a beautifully worn look to wooden pieces, and gives depth and warmth.

Burr veneer

A veneer specially cut from a log to produce a highly figured, wavy pattern.

Butler's tray

A wooden tray with high sides and handles, which sits on top of a table or folding trestle. Occasionally made with folding sides which, when lowered, creates an oval shape.

Butt Joint

This is a type of joint where wood ends meet perpendicularly at right angles without overlapping or notching.

Butt Match

Veneer arrangement similar to book match, but joined end-to-end in a continuous strip. This may also be called end match.

Butterfly Table

A small folding table with splayed legs generally turned. The top has wing brackets underneath to support drop-leaf wings on either side.

C

Cabinet furniture

Generic name given to storage furniture.

Cabriole leg

A table or chair leg with a gentle "S" shape which curves outward at the top and then curves inward while tapering gradually. Named after an early French term for "goat" (literally "goat's leg") it is common on Queen Anne and Chippendale style furniture. Occasionally referred to as a Queen Anne leg.

Camel back

Used to describe furniture with a curve like a camel's hump along its back.

Candelabra

A large, branched candlestick.

Canopy

Literally meaning a "roof", as created over either a four-post bed or protruding outwards like a hood from an item of cabinet furniture.

Capital

The uppermost part of a column or pilaster, which crowns the shaft; often decorated.

Cartouche

The French word for cartridge, this refers to a scroll-like ornament, often an oval shape which was frequently used as the central motif in a design, and sometimes in a corner of a coved cornice.

Casegoods or Case Pieces

A category of furnishings and home accents that is not upholstered, and is used for storage. Casegoods typically features drawer and cabinet storage, and can be used in most rooms of the home.

Casters

Wheels that allow home furnishings to roll around. Each of a set of small wheels, free to swivel in any direction, fixed to the legs or base of a heavy piece of furniture so that it can be moved easily. Casters add versatility and easy mobility to a variety of home accents and furniture pieces.

Canterbury

A portable magazine rack.

Cedar Chest

A rectangular storage chest made of solid cedar or cedar veneers to prevent moth damage on woolens.

Center Match

An arrangement of two veneer sheets of uniform size, matched in the center on a single face. Also called balance match.

Chairback Headboard

This is an open headboard style resembling the back of a dining room chair.

Chaise Lounge

An upholstered settee with an arm at one end and a back that tapers down to seating level.

Chamfer

To bevel and edge.

Charles of London:

A style of sofa or chair defined by its low rolling arm. Traditionally inspired by British furniture tradition, this style features dropped arms, with a classic rolled shape.

Checkerboard Match.

An arrangement of small squares of veneer with their grain lines alternating in direction, producing a checkerboard effect.

Chenille

Fabric with thick needle-punched design. Chenille is soft to the touch, durable, and found in home accents, furniture upholstery, and rugs.

Chest on chest

A large chest of drawers on which sits a slightly smaller chest of drawers.

Chesterfield

A leather settee with deep-buttoned upholstery and large rounded back and arms.

Cheval Mirror

A long freestanding mirror that swivels through its center to enable full-length viewing.

China Cabinet

A cabinet with a glass front and typically sits on a buffet or shallow cupboard.

Chinoiserie

Painted or lacquered furniture using designs drawn from Chinese art.

Chintz

Printed cotton fabric, frequently glazed, used in country or casual decoration.

Chippendale

Name applied to Thomas Chippendale's eighteenth-century furniture designs, including the camelback sofa and the wing chair.

Classic

Refers to design based in the artistic standards, principles and methods of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Club Chair

Low back upholstered chair with arms. Club chairs are streamlined, often scaled down, and are versatile in use. These chairs can be used in dining, or in arranging seating areas.

Coffee Table

A long, low table used in front of a sofa. Also called a cocktail table.

Coffer

A storage chest having a hinged lid.

Combing

A decorative paint technique that gives a wall a look of age and depth by layering or 'washing' increasingly thinner coats of paint over one another.

Commode

Small, low chest of drawers.

Complementary colors

Colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel (i.e. blue and orange).

Concept

A comprehensive idea or generalization that brings diverse elements into some basic relationship.

Core

The inner layer of plywood or particleboard in veneered panels.

Corner Block

Triangular wood block used in the concealed structure under tabletops, inside cases, and at points of stress on upholstered furniture frames.

Corner-breaking

Taking the sharp edges off the corners on moldings, drawer fronts, doors, etc.

Cornice

Decorative section of wood that runs along the top of cabinet furniture and leans out at an angle to provide a pleasing finished appearance to the piece.

Couch

Also called a sofa; it is an upholstered seat typically for more than one person.

Coving

A curved molding connecting the ceiling and wall.

Credenza

A buffet, sideboard, or bookcase, especially one without legs. A piece of office furniture having a long flat top.

Crossbanding

A veneer banding in which one layer of veneer runs at a right angle to the next layer in order to offset shrinking, swelling, and warping.

Curio Cabinet

An enclosed glass cabinet for displaying a variety of products such as glassware and other collectibles. Sometimes simply called a curio.

Cutwork

Embroidered fabric with decorative cut-out designs that are outlined in a buttonhole stitch.

Cyma Curve

A simple double-curved molding with a reversed curve as its profile. Derived from Greek meaning, “wave”.

D

Damask

Formal fabric with textural contrast between satiny and dull.

Daybed

Similar to a bed but narrower and with a padded seat back at one end for leaning against. It is a versatile bed that can be used as a sofa, a sleeping bed, or a lounge area. Daybeds are common in guest rooms, as they double as seating and sleeping areas.

Density

Often used to reference the weight per cubic foot of foam. Density is independent of firmness, but is an important marker of foam quality: the denser the foam, the higher quality the foam. Foam with a density of 1.8 pounds per cubic foot is less likely to "bottom out" or flatten.

Dentil molding

A decorative feature composed of rectangular blocks (“teeth”) spaced at equal intervals, typically along the length of a cornice. Favored in 18th century design.

Diamond Match

Four pieces of relatively straight-grained wood veneer cut diagonally then joined to meet in a central diamond shape.

Dinette

Small-scaled dining furniture with a table and four to six chairs designed for kitchen use, but also used in small dining areas.

Distressing

An antiquing process that makes new wood look old and used. Usually entails surface marks and indentations that are added during the finishing process. Dovetail- A type of joint generally used to join the front and sides of a drawer by having wedge-shaped projections on one piece of wood interlock with grooves in another piece of wood.

Diversity

Variety and multiformity. The opposite of unity and just a little adds interest. Too much can make a design chaotic.

Double Pedestal

A tabletop supported by two supporting columns. The two supporting columns, or pedestals, allow sturdiness and give the table a distinctive, symmetrical style.

Dovetail

A type of joinery using interlocking wedge shapes, often used in drawer construction. They are associated with quality of drawer construction. Its purpose is to stabilize drawer fronts so that years of use won't loosen them. In earlier construction, concealed or discreet dovetails were common. Dovetail construction and detailing is a classic, traditional feature common in English design, and found now throughout quality made furniture.

Dowel

A round grooved wooden pin, peg, or rod that is fitted into the holes in two pieces of wood to hold them together.

Down

Soft, fluffy feathers from very young birds or from the undersides of older birds or fowl. This is used for stuffing pillows and cushions, often combined with polyester fibers.

Drawer Guide/Slide

These strips of wood or metal are placed under the center or on the outside of drawers to serve as a track on which they are drawn back and forth.

Dresser/Dressing table

An item of bedroom furniture consisting of a low table with drawers, usually with a kneehole and frequently having a mirror attached to the top.

Drop leaf table

A table with hinged leaves which can be lowered to save space when not in use. The leaf is an extension piece, and on a drop-leaf table, hinges are to be lifted as needed to put the extensions in place.

Drop-in Coil Springs

A pre-made wire assembly usually containing coil springs, which is inserted into the seat frame below the deck to provide a desired level of seating comfort and elasticity. These springs add structural support and maintain seat height.

Durapella® & Duraplush™

High-tech fabrics that consist of 100% Micro Denier polyester suede. Also called microfibers.

Dust Panel

A thin, horizontal board between two drawers in a chest to diminish dust accumulation.

E

Eclecticism

A style in which furnishings and accessories of various periods and styles are deftly and harmoniously combined.

Edging

A method of protecting a veneer panel by applying a thin strip of solid wood, metal, or plastic at the edge of the panel. Also called banding.

Eight-way, hand-tied

A marker of high quality furnishings, these are the hand-tied springs in a sofa to hold the supportive springs in place. In today's furniture, most sofas feature metal clips and wires that keep coils in position.

Elastic Webbing

Interwoven synthetic and nylon-blended strips that provide a foundation for upholstered furniture in the arms, backs and seats. Replaces sinuous springs or eight-way hand tied coils. As alternative, elastic webbing provides support for cushioning along all seating areas of sofas and couches, loveseats, accent chairs, and other upholstered pieces.

Embossing

A type of design that is produced on a surface by hammering, stamping, pressing, or molding.

Embroidery

The art of working raised and ornamental designs in threads of silk, cotton, gold, silver, or other material, upon any woven fabric with a needle.

Emphasis

Directing special attention or effort to a specific object or area.

Enamel Finish

A coating of paint that can be brushed and sometimes rubbed to a high gloss.

End Table

Small side table that may be used at the end of a sofa or beside a chair.

Engineered Wood

Any restructured composite of wood, including oriented strand board, particleboard, and plywood.

Etagere

A free standing open cabinet having several shelves used for display purposes.

E

Fall Front

The hinged front of a bureau that lowers to reveal the desk inside.

Fan Pattern

Width and evenness of paint coming out of spray gun.

Fauteuil

A French upholstered chair having open sides.

Faux

Literally French for “fake”, this term is used to describe things that appear to be of one material or finish, but in fact are not. An example is faux books where bookends are used to create the effect of a real library.

Fiberfill

A soft, synthetic material used as cushioning in upholstered furniture, bedding, and comforters. Polyester fibers are most commonly used.

Fiddle back

A back splat shaped like a violin, common in Windsor chairs.

Filigree

Ornamental openwork of delicate or intricate design that is usually done in gold or silver wire.

Finger Joint

A process by which the ends of pieces of lumber are machined and fastened together by using glue. The machined edge looks like a series of fingers. The objective is to reclaim short unusable pieces of lumber into longer useable pieces.

Finial

A decorative knob that caps the top of a bedpost or lamp. Finials are a traditional design element, but have been modified for use across various styles. Finials can additionally be found on accent pieces.

Finish

A treatment that is applied to wood to protect the surface and to make it more durable and resistant to stains and burns, to accentuate the natural grain, to lighten or deepen the color, to make a dull or glossy surface, or to change the color completely as by painting, lacquering, polishing, antiquing, distressing, etc.

Fire Cut Veneer

A combination of straight-grain and heart figure veneer produced by slicing half of a log directly through the center or heart.

Flared Arm

An upholstered arm that rolls out away from the midline of the sofa or chair. Flared arms resemble scrolls that move outward and draw the eye away from the seating area of the piece.

Flat packed furniture

Also called KD, flat-pack or self-assembly furniture. Refers to furniture that is to be assembled by the end user.

Flock

Short fibrous particles that are applied by various processes to the surface of fabric, paper, or wood to give the appearance and feel of velvet or suede.

Flip flop sofa

A Japanese-style bed consisting of a soft mattress placed on a wooden frame. Some models fold to create a settee.

Fluting

Shallow vertical grooves, usually parallel, used to ornament a surface. Often used on columns or pilasters in classical architecture.

Fly Speckling

A technique of antiquing that makes tiny spots in the staining process.

Folk art

A broad category of handmade art objects, new or antique, that display a charmingly naïve, unsophisticated quality.

Footboard

A supporting piece at the foot end of a bed, sometimes decorative.

Form

Fills the space and defines the area. A good Visual Merchandiser will also look at the negative void areas as well. There are three basic categories for form; rectangle (rectilinear), the triangle (angular) and the circle (curved):

- Rectangular form gives room sturdiness but can be monotonous if overused.
- Angular/Diagonals are used to attract attention and imply motion. It can be used to increase size relationships.
- Curved forms imply change and continuity. Using circles and pinpoint or drawn attention to objects.

Four Post Bed / Four Poster

A bed having a post at each corner supporting a canopy.

Four Way Match

A veneer pattern produced by the combination of book matches and butt matches.

Frame

The supporting structure of a piece of furniture.

French Provincial

A term describing countrified versions of formal French furnishings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; often referred to as "Provençal" today.

Fretwork

Interlaced ornamental woodwork, usually in a complicated repeating, geometric pattern. This is often used in backs of chairs, beds, in china cabinet doors, or on table aprons and legs.

Frieze

A heavy pile of upholstery and drapery fabric with rows of uncut loops. Usually made of mohair, wool, cotton, or man-made fibers.

Fringe

A decorative border of thread, cord, or the like, usually hanging loosely from a raveled edge or separate strip.

Futon

A folded mattress on a frame that can be folded up for seating or down to form a sleeping surface.

G

Gate Leg Table

A drop-leaf table whose leaves are supported by extra legs that swing outwards like gates.

Gesso

(Pronounced jesso) A decorative feature created out of plaster commonly used on picture and mirror frames. Frequently finished by gilding or painting.

Glider:

A mechanism that allows the chair to glide back and forth on a hinged or ball bearing assembly. Often coupled with swivel and reclining motion, gliders allow for a smooth horizontal motion.

Gilding

A technique for applying gold to furniture and other surfaces.

GMROI

Gross margin return on investment. A calculation that clarifies how much gross margin is made on a piece of furniture compared to how much inventory is needed in stock.

Grain

Variations in color and texture made by the size and arrangements of cells and pores of a living tree and is revealed when wood is cut through the trunk in an essentially horizontal direction.

Grommet

A plastic, metal, or rubber ring that is inserted into a hole made through another material. They may be used to reinforce the hole, to shield something from the sharp edges of the hole, or both.

Gusset

Frequently used to fuse any number of load-bearing columns with beams or trusses together. The members can be bolted, riveted or welded to the gusset. Their function is critical to the integrity of the structure they are supporting.

H

Hardware

A generic term used to describe any metal fitting that goes onto furniture i.e., handles, locks, hinges, escutcheons, etc.

Harmony

The feeling created when tools are used together to provide a look that is pulled together.

Hardwood

A general term for the lumber of broad-leafed or deciduous trees in contrast to evergreen or coniferous trees, which are termed softwoods.

Hassock

A stuffed cushion used for a footstool or ottoman

Headboard

A panel rising above mattress at the head of the bed. Often supports the bed rails.

Heat Transfer Printing

The technique of printing a fabric by transferring a printed design from paper onto fabric via heat and pressure.

Highboy

A high chest of drawers, deriving its name from haut bois, which is French for "high wood."

Homespun

Originally, this was a fabric loomed by hand at home, but now the name of a loose, coarsely woven, power-loomed fabric that uses textured and bulky yarns to create a hand-woven look.

Hope Chest

Synonymous with a cedar chest and dowry chest.

Hue

The common name of a color. It indicates the color's position in the spectrum or in the color circle. It is determined by the specific wavelength of the color in the ray of light.

Hutch

A two-part case piece that usually has a two-door cabinet below and open shelves above, originally dating from seventeenth-century England.

I

ILD (Indentation Load Deflection)

Method for testing and measuring the firmness of latex foam. The test and measurement is done to a 4" x 15" x 15" piece of foam placed on a flat surface. Then a round metal plate, 8" in diameter pushes down on that piece of foam. The amount of pressure, measured in pounds that it takes to compress the foam 25% (to 3") is referred to as the ILD. The greater the number the firmer the foam.

Illumination

Impacts the perception of space, form, line, texture and color by creating shadows and color. The intensity of hue will be affected by illumination. Strong dark colors absorb light while light tints reflect light.

Inlay

A cut ornamental setting of a contrasting material (such as marble) in wood. Inlays are a popular design feature in tabletops, and add visual interest. Inlays can be stone, tile, glass, or two-toned wood to contrast with the base layer of the furnishing.

Innerspring Mattress

A mattress with a center core of springs for buoyancy and resilience. A protective pad surrounds the springs.

Iridescent

Brilliant, lustrous, or colorful in effect or appearance. In fabrics it is a changeable effect due to the color arrangement in the warp and filling yarns to provide contrast and interest.

J

Jacquard

A formal, highly decorative fabric that includes damasks, tapestries, brocades, and all cloths with elaborate figures woven on a jacquard loom.

Japanning

A technique for decorating furniture which involves coating it with a hard, often black, lacquer and then applying oriental designs.

Joint

When making furniture, this would be the junction at which two pieces of lumber unite to form a support or make a closure.

K

Kiln Dried

Wood that has been dried in a control-heated chamber, as opposed to air dried, and is more likely to warp because the drying is less even.

Knee Hole

A space beneath a desk or dressing table designed to accommodate a person's legs to enable them to sit comfortably when using the top as a work surface.

Knitted Fabrics

Fabrics that are formed by knitting. The interlocking of loops of yarn rather than interlacing two sets of yarn as in weaving.

Knock Down Furniture

Also called KD, flat-pack or self-assembly furniture. Refers to furniture that is to be assembled by the end user.

L

Lacquer

A durable varnish applied in several layers to protect furniture's surface. Finishes can vary from matt to glossy. Lacquer enhances durability to hard surfaces, and can add richness to the finish depending on the style of lacquer.

Ladder Back Chair

A style of country chair with horizontal slats in the back that resemble a ladder.

Laminate or "Lam"

Applied covering to boards, which provide different appearances such as colors and grains (see also paper, vinyl). A synonym for "replicated."

Lattice

An openwork crisscross or fretwork made of thin, flat strips of wood or metal. Usually found on chairs and headboards.

Lazy Susan

A revolving tray or stand of wood or metal.

Leaf

A board or panel that is used as a tabletop extension. Some leaves are hinged to the table surface and must be raised to a horizontal position, as in a Pampero or gate-leg table. Other leaves are drawn out from beneath the table surface, as in the draw table. In other tables, the top can be separated and extended so leaves can be placed in the opening.

Leather Match

Upholstery that features top-grain leather in the seating areas with skillfully matched vinyl everywhere else.

Lift Chair

A reclining chair with a mechanism that raises the chair off the ground, elevating the sitter to a standing position. Lift chairs are great for people with difficulty standing from seated position.

Line

Works with form to emphasize or outline a space or materials used in a space. Horizontal lines can be used for a more relaxed look and to emphasize the length of a wall or item. Vertical lines added formality and height to an area.

Lissere

A delicate, multi-colored jacquard woven floral stripe.

Loft Bed

A single bed that is elevated from the floor requiring stairs or a ladder. Loft beds save on space, and free up floor space for additional storage. Loft beds are ideal for students and children.

Long Case Clock

Also referred to as a grandfather clock. A clock housed in a tall wooden case containing weights and a pendulum.

Loose Back

An upholstery furniture piece in which the back pillows are detached from the back frame. Specifically allows for cushions to be flipped. Loose back cushioning on sofas and couches, loveseats and other upholstered pieces is versatile and allows cushions to be flipped and moved as needed.

Loveseat

A two-seated sofa.

Lowboy

A small table with drawers on cabriole legs.

M

Mantel

The complete facing around the opening of a fireplace, including any shelf used above it as well as any part that projects from the wall.

Marquetry

Heavy use of inlays over a large surface to create a panoramic picture.

Mattress Ticking

The fabric that covers a mattress.

Medallion

A round or oval ornamental motif.

Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF)

This is made by breaking down wood chips into fibers, mixing glue, and fusing the resulting mixture under heat and pressure to produce a board.

Miter

A surface slanted to another surface, it is called a miter when the angle is 45 degrees.

Miter joint

A diagonal joint formed by two pieces of wood. A miter joint is a simple joint type, and can be used in a variety of wood constructions.

Modular

Furniture constructed in units that can be arranged in different configurations.

Modular Carpet

A round or oval ornamental motif.

Moire

Fabric, usually silk, with a rippled, wavy pattern that gives a watered appearance or wood grain. It has a very traditional appearance.

Molding

Decorative strips of wood applied to furniture for visual effect.

Monochromatic Scheme

A color scheme limited to one color in various tones. The value and intensity of the hue are used to provide contrast. This color is often simple and sophisticated.

Mortise and Tenon Joint

Method of joining two pieces of wood where the projecting tenon of one-piece fits into the opening (mortise) of the other. Also called Tongue and Grooved.

Motif

A decorative design or subject.

Motion Furniture

Any furnishing that feature movement or mechanisms that allow for motion is a motion piece. Recliners, swivel chairs, rockers, gliders, lift chairs, sleeper sofas, futons, and folding pieces are each examples of motion furniture. Motion pieces can be power or manually operated, and vary in complexity.

Mount

Ornamental metalwork applied to furniture – usually cabinet pieces, sometimes chairs.

Muslin

This is a plain-weave fabric that may be bleached or unbleached. Usually used as uncovering on upholstered pieces to tie in the stuffing and padding materials prior to putting on the final upholstery fabric.

N

Nail head trim:

An ornamental trim of metal tacks that gives the illusion of nail heads. It is often found on the edge of leather and upholstered sofas, chairs and ottomans. Nail head trim is popular across various styles, and adds an industrial feel.

Neoclassic

A revival of the classic style and form.

Nesting tables

Small occasional tables that are designed to store one under another, typically in sets of three. Nesting tables store in a space-saving way, and can be separated as needed for entertaining, and use.

Nightstand

Occasional table, sometimes with cabinet, drawer, or shelf, used beside a bed to hold such items as a lamp, clock, or telephone. May also be called a night table or bedside table.

Non-woven

Fabrics that are produced by the bonding or interlocking of fibers, or both. The non-woven fabric is made by mechanical, chemical, thermal, or solvent means, or with an adhesive, or any combination of these, as distinct from weaving, knitting, or tufting.

O

Occasional Furniture

A generic term used to describe small pieces of furniture such as lamp tables, coffee tables or magazine racks.

Olefin

A synthetic fiber that is extremely light, soil resistant, and an excellent insulator. This is often used to produce outdoor carpets and sturdy upholstery fabrics resistant to abrasion, pilling, and aging.

Ottoman

A long, low upholstered seat with no back: used with a chair as a footrest. If over scaled, can be used in place of a cocktail table.

Overlay

A piece of decorative trim applied to a flat surface. An overlay can be a veneer, and is an aesthetic addition to enhance the look of a surface. Overlays can be found on refurbished or reclaimed pieces, or on new furniture as a design touch.

P

Palette

A term used by artists and designers to describe a range of colors.

Panel

A surface set off from the surrounding surface by being raised, recessed or framed.

Parquetry

Furniture inlaid with geometrical designs similar to parquet floors.

Parson's Table

A square or rectangular table with wide, straight legs.

Particle Board

Panels that are manufactured by bonding wood particles with synthetic resins under heat and pressure. Used as the core for many plywood panels, as panels to be printed (engraved), or other uses in furniture construction. Also called fiberboard, chip core, hardboard, and medium density fiberboard.

Patina

A luster or shine that develops with use over time, characteristic of antique furnishings. Burnishing, or rubbing, a surface creates a patina over time. Antiquing and faux finishes can add patinas to a piece of furniture to give it a timeworn look. Metal, wood, and leather can have a patina.

Pattern

A repetitive component to a surface that can be used to modify scale, color or texture. They can be used to unit or clash with other items. Be very careful when working with multiple patterns.

Pedestal Table

A table supported by one or more cylindrical columns or “pedestals”.

Pediment

A decorative crest found at the top of tall pieces of furniture to achieve a pleasing finish.

Pembroke Table

A small rectangular drop leaf table.

Perspective

A means of showing a solid object on a surface to make it appear to have a third dimension. To make it convincing to the eye, sizes of distant objects are reduced; parallel lines tend to converge.

Pickled Finish

The result of rubbing white or off-white paint onto previously stained and finished wood.

Piecrust Table

A table, usually with a round top, that has an edge that is raised, scalloped or fluted; frequently a tilt-top table.

Pier Mirror

A tall mirror designed to be hung above a pier table.

Piercing

Decorative detail achieved by cutting shapes through thin wood such as chair splats.

Pilaster

A flattened column-like detail applied to furniture, bookcases, etc. as a decorative feature.

Pile

This is cut or uncut loops that stand up on the face of a fabric, making it thick and three-dimensional, in contrast to flat-woven cloth.

Pillow Shams

Covers for pillows to match bed coverings, when pillows are propped on top of the bed.

Pillow Top

Seat cushions or arm pads including an additional section filled with a poly-dacron material to add a level of comfort. Synonymous with comfort, pillow top accents add comfort to the arms, seatbacks, and seating areas of sofas and couches, loveseats, chairs, and other upholstered pieces.

Plain Weave

This is a basic weave in which the warp and weft are the same size and alternate under and over each other in a regular manner.

Platform Bed

A mattress that sets on the top of a wood or plastic platform or pedestal. Sometimes the mattress may recess into a frame on the top of the platform, and there is a shelf that may go partially or completely around the perimeter.

Plenum Space

An enclosed space in buildings, typically between the roof deck and suspended grid ceiling, used for heating, ventilating, and/or air-conditioning airflow.

Plywood

A structural material made of very thin layers of wood bonded together with the grain of each layer, or ply, at right angles to that of the next.

Pocketed Coils

Cylindrical innerspring mattress coils, individually enclosed in separate flexible fabric pockets, attached together to create support. Pocketed coils are common in sofas, chairs, and other upholstered seating pieces. They add durability and lasting firmness to furniture.

Polyester

Parts made from pressed wood and sprayed with polyester material.

Polyfoam

This is a synthetic resin that simulates latex foam rubber and is used for upholstered furniture, pillows, mattresses, etc.

Polyurethane

The ingredient of synthetic foam used in seat cushions. It is used to create the high-density foam associated with top quality furniture, and is known for durability. Made to wear well over time, polyurethane is a man-made material common in a variety of high-end upholstery and furniture.

POP

An abbreviation for Point of Purchase. Associated with tags and showroom signage.

POS

An abbreviation for Point of Sales.

Potboard

An open shelf at the bottom of a piece of furniture traditionally used for storing pots and pans.

Pot Cupboard

A small bedside table which in times past housed a ceramic bowl or “pot”.

Pouf

A low upholstered stool of solid construction.

Primary Colors

Red, blue and yellow, from which all other colors are derived.

Print

A surface having a pattern imposed with ink or dye by means of stencils, rollers, blocks, or screens.

Pull

A handle to open drawers or doors of cabinets.

Profile

The style of an edge.

Proportion

An agreeable or harmonious relation of parts within a whole; balance or symmetry.

Q

Queen Anne Leg

A table or chair leg with a gentle "S" shape which curves outward at the top and then curves inward while tapering gradually. Named after an early French term for "goat" (literally "goat's leg") it is common on Queen Anne and Chippendale style furniture. Occasionally referred to as a Queen Anne leg.

Quilted Fabric

Two layers of fabric that has padding between the layers, held in place by stitches that usually follow a definite pattern.

Quirke

A narrow groove channel separating molding from adjoining members.

R

Rabbet Joint

A joining technique for supporting shelves or drawer bottoms in vertical units. The edge of the vertical piece of wood fits into a groove in the horizontal piece. Also known as a dado joint.

Rail

A generic term used to describe a long section of wood serving a functional purpose in furniture. Examples are the top rail in the back of a chair and the rails, which connect the headboard and footboard of a bed.

Rain or Bubble Glass

Glass with air bubbles throughout the piece. Rain or bubble glass is common in-home accent pieces for its visual interest and design appeal. Rain or bubble glass is common in vases and decorative bowls, and adds texture.

Random Match

In veneering and decorative surfacing, a casual, unmatched effect with no attempt at a symmetrical or a repetitive pattern.

Reeding

Close, parallel rows of convex moldings. The opposite of fluting.

Relief

A carved decoration, which stands proud of the surface on which it appears.

Reproduction

New furniture which is a copy of an antique.

Restoration

Work carried out on furniture to bring it back to its original condition.

Retro

A setting, furniture pieces or decorative element that revives a style or look of the past.

Return

The part of an L-shaped desk that is at right angles to the main work surface, providing additional workspace.

Reverse Box Match

A decorative veneer technique similar to a reverse diamond match, and aligned to create a cross-patterned center with right-angled patterns going off in four directions.

Reverse Diamond Match

Four wedges of wood or veneer set together to form an X at the center with consecutively smaller V's radiating out from the center in all four directions. May also be called butterfly match.

Rhythm

The alteration of strong and weak elements to create movement. We want the eye to travel around an area.

Rolled arms:

The flared arms of a chair or sofa that "roll" back in to meet the sides. Rolled arms are traditional, but found across a variety of styles. Rolled arms, or scrolled arms, are comfortable as arm rests.

Roll Top Desk

Desks with a tambour cover which rolls back to reveal the writing surface.

Rotary-Cut Veneer

A slice of veneer made by cutting a log in a circular manner around the circumference. A bold, variegated grain is then produced because the cut follows the log's annual growth rings.

Runner

A rail used to support additional leaves on an extending dining table.

Rush

A variety of sea grass that is used to weave chair seats or a long stem of marsh-growing plant.

S

Sateen

A strong, lustrous, satin-weave cotton fabric. May be bleached, dyed, printed, or made with woven patterns.

Scale

A term referring to the size of objects in relation to each other.

Scatter Back (or Scatter Pillow Back)

An upholstery furniture piece in which the back pillows are loose and can be arranged in any manner. This adds design and style versatility to sofas and couches, and loveseats. As opposed to a traditional loose back pillow piece, scatter back pieces have more back pillows than seat cushions, and the back pieces can be moved and removed.

Sectional Furniture

Upholstered furniture composed of complementary sections that can be grouped in a variety of arrangements or used separately.

Secondary Colors

Colors produced by mixing two primary colors, such as yellow and blue to form green; red and yellow to form orange; and red and blue to form purple.

Secretaire

A sideboard with false drawers that drop forward to reveal a desk and work surface.

Self-Assembly Furniture

Also called KD, flat-pack or self-assembly furniture. Refers to furniture that is to be assembled by the end user.

Semainier

A tall, narrow seven-drawer chest introduced in the Louis XV period, with one drawer for each day of the week. Also called a lingerie chest.

Serial Numbers

Numbers that identify product (i.e., identifies vendor and manufacturer).

Serpentine Front

An item of furniture that has a curved front that is first concave, then convex before becoming concave again.

Serving Table

A long narrow table with drawers.

Settee

Another word for a sofa.

Settle

A rustic wooden bench having a high back and solid arms. The seat is often hinged to reveal storage space beneath.

Shade

The darker values of a color obtained by mixing the color with black.

Shaker Design

Furniture made by the Shaker religious sect, noted for its functional simplicity, austere beauty and fine workmanship.

Shaped Back (or Conversational Sofa)

An upholstery furniture piece that has a curved back, making the two outer seats face slightly towards each other. Shaped back sofas and couches, loveseats, accent chairs, and other pieces are visually interesting and stylish. The shaped back feature is a deliberate design and accent feature.

Sheaf back

Inspired by the shape of a sheaf of wheat, this style of back is common to dining chairs. The spindles on the chair's back gather in the middle, join at a connecting plank, and flare at either or both ends. This style of chair back is found across a variety of chair styles.

Sheen

In wood finishing, this is a degree of luster of a dried film.

Shield Back Chair

A chair in the Hepplewhite style having a back in the shape of a shield.

Short Rail

Displaying a bed's headboard and footboard using 6-inch rails.

Sideboard

A buffet or a credenza. A long, waist high piece of furniture used for serving food. The most common arrangement is cupboards below and drawers above.

Side Chair

A chair with a small seat (15 to 18 inches wide) and no arms.

Sinuous Springs

Steel wire bent into a continuous "S" shape used for the support system in upholstered furniture. These h5, sculpted springs provide resilient support, and enhance the durability of upholstered pieces. From sofas and couches, to loveseats and accent chairs, sinuous springs are an important structural support

Sisal

A strong natural fiber originally used for rope; now often used to make rugs; sometimes blended with wool in carpet.

Skirt

A fabric valance around the base of an upholstered chair, sofa, etc., to hide the legs and wood construction of the seat.

Slat

Any thin, flat section of wood. Examples are bed slats which are used to support a mattress and horizontal back slats in a ladder back chair.

Sleigh Bed

A popular French Empire-style bed having a high scrolled headboard and footboard, creating the impression of a sleigh or a boat (also called "lit bateau" or "boat bed").

Slip Cover

A removable fitted cover made to protect upholstery fabric, cover worn upholstery or to provide a change for a new season.

Slip seat

A removable, upholstered chair seat.

Sofa

Also called a couch; it is an upholstered seat typically for more than one person.

Sofa Bed

A generic term referring to a variety of sofas with mechanisms that allows them to convert from a sofa to a bed. Also called a sofa sleeper or convertible sofa.

Softwood

Wood from an evergreen tree such as the pine with needle-like, scale-like, or coniferous leaves.

Space

Interior space is the shaped volume defined by various architectural forms such as ceiling, floors, walls and other architectural elements. A Designer will evaluate and use tools to define structure and alter it.

Spindle Back

A chair having vertically arranged spindles in the back.

Splat

A flat, vertical piece of wood found in the center of a chair back.

Staining

For wood finishing, this is the process of applying coloring matter to the outer surfaces of wood to enhance the grain, provide uniform overall color, or to imitate or match other cabinet woods.

Stretcher

A horizontal arrangement of rails used to connect the legs on tables and chairs to provide structural strength. Common stretchers include the "H," "X," boxed, serpentine and arched forms.

Stylized

A design that has been done according to the rules of a style rather than according to nature.

Sunburst

Figured wood grain in which rays radiate outward from a central point. Also called pie match.

Symmetry

Formal balance created by arranging objects so they form mirror images on either side of an imaginary line that goes through the middle of a grouping of objects.

T

Taffeta

A medium-weight or light-weight fabric of acetate, nylon, rayon, or silk, usually smooth, crisp, and lustrous, plain-woven, and with a fine crosswise rib effect.

Tambour Door

A flexible door that can be concealed by rolling it into a piece of furniture.

Tapestry

Thick woven fabric with pictorial design.

Task Lighting

Lighting needed to perform a specific task. i.e., desk lamp.

Tassel

A pendent ornament consisting commonly of a bunch of threads, small cords, or other strands hanging from a round knob or head, used on clothing, in jewelry, on curtains, etc.

Tester Bed

A bed having two posts at the headboard supporting a half canopy above.

Texture

The characteristic of a material that can be felt or seen. You can achieve the perception of texture by lighting and the surface materials of the items. Smooth, shiny surfaces make objects clean and brighter in color. Those surfaces also emphasize the outline of the object. Rough surfaces tend to absorb sound and light and tend to give off a warm feeling.

Ticking

A striped cotton or linen fabric, originally used for mattress covers but now used decoratively, as well.

Tilt Top Table

A small, often round table with a hinged top, which can be raised when not in use.

Tint

The lighter values of a color obtained by mixing the color with white.

TOB

An abbreviation for Top of Bed. TOB sets usually contain a comforter, pillow shams, and a bed skirt.

Tone

The darkness or lightness of a color; different colors may be of the same tone.

Tongue and Groove

A flush wood joint in which a long, straight projection of one board fits into a corresponding groove in another board.

Torchere

The French word for candelabra. These are often large, sometimes standing on the floor. A floor lamp that directs the light upward.

Track Arm:

A straight, squared off arm, usually found on more contemporary sofas and armchairs. Described as sleek, track arms are lower-profile and scaled down. Various styles of sofas, loveseats, accent chairs, and other pieces feature track arms. Versatile and contemporary, track arms are a common design feature.

Trestle Table

A rustic rectangular table with a top supported by two wide boards or "trestles" at either end. The two trestles are joined by a single stretcher.

Trompe l'oeil

(Pronounced tromp loi) Literally French for “trick the eye”, a painting which cleverly uses shadow and light to create the appearance of a three-dimensional object.

Trundle Bed

A low-profile bed that rolls away, or slides under another bed when not in use. Trundle beds can be on casters for easy mobility, and are designed to discreetly store away between uses. Trundle beds are common in spare bedrooms, and in children’s rooms.

Tufting and Buttoning

A classical, traditional technique for securing stuffing to upholstery by pulling out material through the fabric at evenly spaced intervals, then securing those material pulls with upholstered buttons. Frequently used on sofas, chairs and headboards, button tufting is a romantic, traditional accent to home furnishings. Leather and fabric can be tufted.

Turning

An ornamental or structural part of furniture made by rotating a cylindrical piece of wood on a lathe and shaping with cutting tools.

Tuxedo Arms:

Slightly flared arms that are the same height as the back. Tuxedo arms are a sleek, streamlined style. Tuxedo arms are more common in contemporary and modern interior design.

Twill

Tightly woven with a diagonal ridge such as denim or herringbone fabrics.

U

Unity

The combination of elements to support a concept. It is achieved through the repetition of elements such as color, pattern or shape. Unity is a narrower definition of harmony.

Upholstery

Generic term used to describe any item of sitting furniture that is covered in fabric.

Uprights

Term used to describe any vertical structural component i.e., “The uprights in the back of that chair”.

V

Velour

This is a soft pile upholstery fabric, generally woven in a satin weave or plain weave, resulting in a short, thick pile.

Velvet

Formal elegant fabric with fur-like feel and a cut pile.

Velveteen

A pile fabric often of cotton or rayon with a short, nappy surface.

Veneer

A thin layer of wood cut from a log in such a way as to maximize the beauty of the grain pattern. Veneers are then glued onto a solid substrate, which is then made into furniture. The result is sturdy furniture with a decorative outer appearance.

Veneer Cuts:

- Rotary - Log is cut or "peeled." It can yield full sheets of veneer with broad grain pattern and no plain or quarter sliced appearance.
- Flat Slicing - The log is cut in half. Then cuts or slices are made parallel to the center cut of the log producing a variegated figure.
- Rift-Cut - Cut from oak, a 15% angle from the centerline of a quarter piece generates the even lines of grain.

- Half Round - Using a similar technique to the "peeling" of a Rotary cut, but only starting with half of the log, this results in a cut slightly across the growth rings that creates a grain with characteristics of both flat slicing and rift cut.

Veneer Matching:

- Slip Match - Adjacent veneer sheets are joined side by side, matching sides up, for a uniform grain pattern.
- Whole Piece - One single piece of veneer is used, with continuous grain characteristics running across the sheet.
- Pleasing Match - Veneers are matched by color or similarity, not necessarily by grain characteristics.
- Random Match - Veneers intentionally do not match at the joints, providing a causal effect.
- Bookmatch - Every other piece of adjacent veneer is turned over, resulting in identical, but opposing patterns.
- V Match - Veneer cut and butted together to form a decorative pattern in which the wood grain radiates from the centerline to form a pattern resembling a series of V's set one over the other.

Veneer Types:

- Burl - Characterized by a swirling, highly figured grain.
- Quarter Sawn - Displays a subtle wavy ribbon-like pattern across the grain.
- Sunburst - Grain pattern that seems to grow out and expand from a center point.
- Wood Plug - Veneer cut to look like a wood plug is holding two pieces of wood together.
- Bow Tie Joint - Veneer cut to look like a bowtie shape piece of wood is holding two other pieces together.

Vinyl

Another type of laminate that is thicker and more durable than paper laminate (see also "laminate").

Vitrine

French term for a display cabinet with glass doors.

W

Wainscoting

Wood paneling applied to walls from baseboards to the desired height, usually about one-third of the way up a wall.

Wall Hugger/ Zero Wall Recliner

Also known as a wall saver or space saver, wall huggers are recliners that can be placed minimum of 3" of clearance between the wall and the back of the recliner. The reclining mechanism will flow away from the wall to avoid damaging contact with the wall behind the chair.

Wall Washers

Angled down lights which bathe the wall surface in light.

Weave

A process of making fabrics by interlacing warp threads with weft or filling yarns.

Webbing

Strips of tightly woven plastic, nylon, rubber, elastic, or metal used in upholstery construction as a support for, or in place of, springs under the cushions.

Welting

A material covered cord typically used to decorate the edge of a sofa arm; often made with contrasting fabric. Welting in a formalized finish to the defined edge is needed as for a box shaped cushion.

Wet Wall

The wall where plumbing fixtures are located.

Wheatear

A decorative motif resembling an ear of wheat.

Wicker

Strong woven matting of willow, reed, or rattan cut into different diameters then used to construct furniture, often for outdoor use.

Windsor Chair

A popular 18th century wooden chair having a solid seat and a back formed from a bent wood hoop and vertical spindles.

Wing Chair/ Wingback chair

This is a traditional style of chair that's often overstuffed, and fully upholstered. "Wings" come from the back of the chair, and extend above the arms on both sides to protect the sitter from drafts. In current design, the wing is purely aesthetic and is commonly used to mimic classic or vintage pieces.

Worm Holing

A technique of antiquing that makes small holes in the wood mimicking those found in nature made by worms. This adds natural appeal, and is a useful accent in disguising normal wear of furniture.

Y**Yarn Dyed**

Fabric where the yarn is dyed before it is woven or knitted.