

Do you want to give your home a new look in furnishings, but don't have the budget to allow a complete makeover? Your answer may well lie in the used furniture market. Now, there's used furniture of a cheap and short-lived variety, just to fill in a gap in this month's group of friends to bridge a temporary gap in respectability. On the other hand, if you're operating on a shoestring budget and still want to gradually enhance your home with quality furniture, you can attain your goal. If you're a careful and diligent shopper, you can find quality furniture which answers more to the description of "antique" or "period" pieces than "used". You just have to know where to find quality used furniture.

Just the term "used" implies something inferior in quality or a stop-gap measure to hide the fact that you can't afford the best in quality. If you believe this, you need to educate yourself in the world of used furniture.

Used furniture falls into the same category of "pre-owned" cars. Sure, the car may have been used by the person who bought it new, but that doesn't necessarily detract from it's value. If your used car was owned and driven solely by Grandma, who regularly maintained the vehicle, that used car may be as good as new. The same is true in the used furniture market.

Perhaps you're looking for a new dining room table. Your local furniture store may have a beautiful set of table and chairs, brand new and quite expensive. What if you take your time and look in each issue of your local "Nickel" paper? Chances are, a few weeks of looking in your Nickel paper or local classifieds will return a lead on that antique oak dining table with matching chairs at a substantial price discount over the new product. There's another bonus in this approach. New furniture lacks the patina and history of an older piece. Furniture that has been well cared for often has a lot more character than the new piece. Grandma spent many hours polishing her table and chairs, and the resulting patina may well prove to be far more attractive than its "new" rendition.

The undisputed key to success in the used furniture market is quality. If you buy a poor quality new furniture piece, it won't stand the test of time. It may fill in until your budget grows, but it won't last as you grow out of the current moment of thrift.

On the other hand, if you shop garage sales, estate sales and the classifieds, with a little patience, you're sure to find a quality piece of used furniture at a bargain price.

Remember, "used furniture" does not necessarily mean inferior quality. You just

have to know where to look and for what.