

# Interiors

## Furniture owners opt for art of upholstery

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Correspondent

Today, more and more people are having their furniture reupholstered rather than buying cheaper, mass-produced sets from bargain furniture outlets.

"The structure of furniture five or 10 years ago was a lot better," says Don Hammond, owner of Don Hammond Upholstery in Markham, explaining why people are choosing to reupholster rather than buy furniture anew.

Another advantage is that customers can choose the types of fabric and material for their furniture.

Mr. Hammond says that people seem to be going back to velvets, frame stitches and leather.

"We've had quite a call on leather for wing chairs," he says.

The advantage to leather, of course, is that it's long lasting and is rich looking.

"Leather is expensive but good," notes Mr. Hammond.

There are three cuts of leather available. Mr. Hammond recommends customers stick with the most expensive. Cheaper cuts can lose their color and shine because there are no pores in the leather. Lower quality leather also lack elasticity.

"It stays wrinkled when you get up," Mr. Hammond points out.

Many people are also turning to acrylic velvet because "it really stands up," says Mr. Hammond.

"And it's easy to keep clean," he adds. "You just wipe it off with a damp cloth."

He doesn't believe in scotch guard silicone spray.

"When you grab the fabric

and wrinkle it (the scotch guard) flakes off," says Mr. Hammond. He recommends customers use K2R spot remover on velvet.

Current popular colors for velvet includes "golds, a lot of hunter greens and jades in cool colors," says Mr. Hammond.

People seem to be shying away from the cotton prints.

"They don't stand up the same as a good blend of acrylic fabric," he notes.

Offshoot colors include peaches and rose with beige backgrounds.

While tweeds have fallen out of fashion, Mr. Hammond says that plaids are "really coming on strong". Tartan is very popular.

"Furniture done in a good tartan is very striking," he adds.

A blend of fabrics is better than cotton or polyester or

rayon on its own," says Mr. Hammond.

"With a blend (of fabrics) you usually get a stronger weave," he explains.

When scrutinizing an upholstery firm, Mr. Hammond recommends customers "see how the work is done". Make sure that everything will be stripped from the frame, he adds.

Also, be sure that the company uses the best of foam and that is glued — not stapled — on. Piping should be done separately to produce "nice smooth edges", says Mr. Hammond.

Ask to see a finished product opened up.

The first thing to check is the density of the cushions. When examining the cushions make sure to check what type of foam is used.

"A lot of manufacturers use poly (foam)," says Mr. Hammond. "If a cushion is featherweight it's only poly and it's not going to stand up."

For the same reasons be sure

to avoid cushions with chip foam.

Also ask how many layers of fabric are used in the cushions — there should be four," says Mr. Hammond. (If the piping is part of the band in all probability only two pieces of fabric are present.) Avoid cushions that are chain stitched. They have a tendency to come apart at the seams.

Make sure the "deck" under the sofa cushions is firm.

"Just lift the cushion," says Mr. Hammond. "If you can feel the springs then there's no padding in there."

If, when you sit on the deck, you sink down or are able to push it down with your hands then more than likely there's no support or padding for the deck.

Without support or padding "you'll probably be sitting on the floor in a couple of months," says Mr. Hammond.

The deck should be supported with no sag coil springs.

All furniture legs should be a part of the frame and not just screwed into the frame.

Upholstery skirts should have a heavy liner in them so the skirt will "sit nicer" and have a "clean look", says Mr. Hammond.

As for guarantees, he says that the upholstery work should come with a five year written guarantee.



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