"Instant" Palace Is Rare

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"Instant" Palace Is Rare

by Sharon Sherman, H. Jl. 1

The honeymoon is over, and where do the bride and groom find themselves? Unless they're a Cinderella couple — a fairy-tale prince and princess with a ready-made palace — they find themselves faced with the problem of furnishing their new home. This home may be a house built just for them; but, more likely, it will be a small apartment or a two- or three-room bungalow on some college campus. Wherever and whatever it may be, this will be the beginning of what may someday be a house planned for their needs and preferences.

Since their first home will probably be temporary, the couple must choose wisely in order to avoid spending large sums of money for things which will not be of use later.

Begin Creatively

Careful planning and use of skills in "do-it-yourself" projects is both conservative and challenging. The homemaker who sews can make attractive curtains and draperies at a very low cost. Old furniture, purchased at a nominal cost, can become beautiful and useful in the hands of one who is willing to put time and effort into the job of refinishing.

It may be practical to buy unfinished furniture and spend time — instead of money — getting just the look you want. Inexpensive pine furniture can be made very attractive if it is enameled and brushed down to a low gloss. Walnut or other woods are higher in price but are still less expensive than ready-finished furniture.

Other "do-it-yourself" furniture may include brick-and-board book cases and multiple-use storage units made by placing a nicely finished board between two small chests. This can be used as a dressing table, reading unit, or desk and may be raised by bricks or wooden legs.

Buy Adaptability

Furniture should be chosen for adaptability in style and use. A well-designed chest, for example, might be usable with living room, dining room, or bedroom furniture. If limited space is a problem, a sleeper sofa may be a good way to provide for guests.

Floor coverings also should be adaptable. Rugs, rather than carpets, may be used in rooms of different sizes, turned to equalize wear, and taken up for moving or cleaning. If they are a solid color, they are more likely to go with any style of furnishings or with any decorating scheme. Young people may want to buy a less expensive rug which later can be moved to a bedroom, recreation room, or porch. A new floor-covering fabric is craft-cord — an inexpensive, reversible material which wears well and can be cleaned with soap and water. It comes in a wide range of colors, has a pleasing texture, and resists soiling.

Use Bulk of Budget

In either a temporary or a permanent home, Mrs. June Brown, Extension Art Specialist, recommends that the largest share of the budget should go for pieces of furniture scheduled for long, hard wear. If this furniture is good in line and design, it will be usable for many years. It is particularly important to look for good quality in upholstered pieces. Neat outward appearance is an indication that inner construction is durable. Other important items are springs and a mattress. These can be moved and used in a temporary or permanent home.

Two young people should be willing to consider new ideas or ways of doing things. A recent development is walls on poles — a system of floor-to-ceiling poles held in place by tension. Storage units can be clipped in place with special brackets at any height. A short wall may be used as a partition between living and dining areas. This arrangement may compensate for limited storage space or help conceal poor structural design of walls and rooms. It is wise to
check the finish on the units you buy since companies may plan to discontinue a certain finish.

A relatively new product, indoor-outdoor furniture, may be used effectively in any room. Woven wicker chairs, which cost about five dollars, will go with anything and provide interest in texture and idea.

According to a survey of college girls, the one room that newly-weds usually plan to furnish first is the kitchen. However, too many couples think that it is imperative to buy a new range and refrigerator. Rather than buying large kitchen appliances, it would be wiser to purchase a toaster, a mixer, a coffee-maker, and other small appliances that can be moved easily and used in any kitchen.

**Add Finishing Touches**

Finally, choose accessories carefully. Too often a homemaker runs downtown to “pick up an ashtray” without realizing that the ashtray, if selected properly, can be the focal point of her decorating scheme. Other things, such as lamps and books — ones that will be enjoyed, not just looked at — can add definite interest to any room.

**Don’t Rush**

The furniture budget can be held to a minimum if you are willing to “get along without” or make do with an inexpensive but useful substitute until you find the items which you can more realistically afford at some later time.

A home can be attractive with very few pieces of furniture through imaginative use of colors and textures. Some apartment owners use brightly colored pillows on the floor for extra seating space.

The problem of large kitchen appliances may be overcome by renting apartment-size refrigerators and ranges or by buying them second-hand.

Most homes are furnished over a period of years. Plan first for the essential pieces, and additional pieces may be added later. If you have furniture you want to keep, these pieces may be the basis of your planning for new purchases. Put time, interest, imagination, and personal effort into planning, experimenting with arrangements, and shopping; and your home will become that dream palace — not ready-made, but built on your hopes, dreams, and plans for the future.