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Furnished or Unfurnished

Make It Your Home

by Arline Harrel

YOUR NEW home will be your concern whether you're looking forward to wedding bells or a career after graduation. In either case, you probably have definite ideas about the atmosphere you want that home to have. You've selected your accessories — dinnerware, silverware, linens — to blend right into that dream place.

So you pack your dreams and accessories and look for a place to live. The first problem you'll face will be that of deciding on a furnished or unfurnished house or apartment — that is, if you're lucky enough to have a choice. There are arguments for and against both furnished and unfurnished homes. Students' wives who have met the problem have expressed their opinions on both sides. But whether you or the landlord supply the furniture, your biggest job is to add the personal touches that make that place your home.

If you've decided on a furnished house or apartment, you'll rearrange the furniture and add your own accessories to make the place look like you; sophisticated and formal, or homely with a lived-in look. First of all, take down the old pictures and put up your own. Add pillows on the sofa and invest in a good reading lamp, or change the shade to suit your fancy. Don't let the set color scheme stop you from doing a little decorating of your own. Most landlords are glad to improve their rooms and often will furnish the supplies if you'll do the work. Of course, if it's a special decorator wallpaper you want to enhance a solid, bare wall, you'll probably have to buy it yourself.

If you just can't stand the draperies, put up your own, paper, plastic, or cloth. You can dye or stencil cloth drapes for a change when you move to another place. Cut them full enough, and they'll look elegant even though they are made of muslin. Make them floor length the first time, and you can shorten them when you move next, or add a cornice above. Or buy straight marquisette panels that can easily be tinted, tucked or draped to fit the mood and the window.

Usually there's room for more furniture in furnished places, so start buying a few pieces of your own to personalize that home. But choose wisely with an eye to the future, for there might come a time when you won't be too happy with the cute, clever innovations you dreamed up when you were first setting up housekeeping.

Get two chairs, one for him — or the potential him — and one for you. Chairs, just the right size, can be a lifetime investment. Choose those that have simple lines that will stay in style, and are substantially constructed. These can be worked in with other furniture and will be easy to slipcover.

What about waiting with all furniture buying until you have that new house and furnishings just the way you want? That's wonderful, but few people have it that way unless they've put much money aside beforehand. Roughly, the cost of fur-

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nishing a house: furniture, rugs, draperies, is about 15% of the cost of the building and grounds if everything is in keeping in style and quality.

But you have the money, the house, and you want to buy your own things. Buying furnishings can be a pleasure instead of a heartache if you make a plan to see how your dreams stack up on paper. List the things that you feel you must have and then go shopping to get approximate prices. Chances are you'll scratch some of the less important items and perhaps forget a few for several years.

Consider pieces that have dual or triple purposes. There's the love seat studio bed that doesn't take up much room, or the full-length studio couch that even a 6-footer can stretch out on to relax. Choose a table that folds up or extends out for dining, desk, or occasional table use. And select end tables that can be used as coffee tables or pulled about the room for a buffet meal.

Get a first-class spring and mattress. Springs on legs are a much better investment than a headboard. Use a sturdy, handsome chest of drawers for the dresser, and improvise a dressing table. Use the bench for an extra seat when company comes.

Whether you're adding to a furnished home, or gathering together your own furnishings, good used pieces can be inexpensive assets. Look for simple lines when you buy used furniture. Often you can remove bric-a-brac and refinish a chest, bed, or desk to make a modern-looking piece of furniture.

Be cautious about accepting discarded furniture from relatives and friends. They may still be so dearly in love with the piece that they would resent any renovating on your part. Or, later you might have to dig it out of the attic every time they decide to visit.

The way in which you've arranged the furnishings of your home reflects your personality. Is the mirror a good one?

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