

# Fabulous & functional

Get double, triple, even quadruple duty out of your furniture

By Amanda N. Wegner

We are all looking to do more with less. While clipping coupons and DIY projects are easy, obvious ways to stretch your dollar, examining the larger items in your personal collection for their function and effectiveness is another way of adding value to your home and life.

We're talking furniture. If you're in the market for new accoutrements for your digs, why not consider pieces that are fabulous and multifunctional to get the most bang for your buck?

## Versatility reigns!

Frankly, says **Kelly Hofmeister**, manager, **Woodworks**, when it comes to furniture, there is "hardly anything you couldn't have two or three uses for."

She adds, "anything that has a surface is multifunctional." Combine that surface with a drawer, shelf, cabinet or any combination thereof, and the duties of that furniture piece increase exponentially.

The key is looking beyond the obvious and taking stock of the needs you have and the room needing to be furnished or updated. In living rooms of yore, end tables used to be simple structures to set a lamp and a cup of coffee. Seeing the need for function and form, manufacturers are increasingly outfitting end tables with drawers, shelves and cabinets. Today, an end table with a drawer and a shelf



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can be paired with a decorative basket to stand a lamp (surface), hold remotes and magazines (drawer) and contain books or magazines (in the basket on the shelf), the latter two, out of sight to reduce clutter. Another popular option is stacking end tables.

“People want versatility,” says **Sandy Taylor**, owner, **Waunakee Furniture**. “They want one piece to have several uses that can change as their needs change.”

But thinking beyond the furniture box can be tricky. Here are some fabulous furniture finds that do double, triple, even quadruple duty.

#### Kid cool

Waunakee Furniture specializes in quality youth furniture, and in cramped kid’s rooms, multifunction is a must. Convertible cribs, which move from crib to toddler/daybed to full-size bed, will take your children from cradle to college. Captain’s beds with under-bed drawers or trundles are great for stowing away clothes and toys or overnight storage

aways (the trundle, that is). The traditional but flimsy changing table is quickly giving way to the nursery dresser, which has space for a changing pad and accommodates your child through his or her ages and stages. A new line Taylor is carrying, B-Cubed by Bolton Furniture, is the ultimate in multifunction. Furniture elements, including beds, lofts, desks, drawers and shelves, can be combined to suit all your child’s bedroom furniture needs. The B-Cubed collection extends to other rooms of the home, too, with media and work center configurations available.

#### Storage underfoot

Ottomans have long been available, but relatively new to market are storage ottomans, says Hofmeister. An alternative to the old coffee table, storage ottomans open to offer storage spaces for games, blankets, anything. They can still be used as extra seating or putting up your feet, and larger ottomans with firm tops covered with stain-resistant mate-

rial can be called into service as a cocktail table when entertaining.

#### Sleep & sit

An obvious piece of multifunctional furniture is the sofa sleeper. But a “hallmark” of most sofa sleepers, says Hofmeister, “is that they are typically bad as a bed and as a sofa.” Woodworks carries American Leather brand sofa sleepers, which have a unique, patented structure (No metal grid! Solid wood platform!) and a high-quality foam mattress.

“With most sleeper sofas, you’re wrecked after one night, so it’s important to invest in quality,” says Hofmeister.

#### A couple other ideas

In the master bedroom, under-bed drawers save space for couples who want a king-size bed but don’t have the square footage for a king and dressers, says Taylor. Counter-height tables make work easy (wrapping gifts, rolling out cookies), but also fill all the traditional roles of a table in the kitchen. “The options,” says Hofmeister, “are nearly endless.”

*Freelancer Amanda Wegner unloaded three pieces of furniture through Craig’s List in recent weeks to make room for newer multifunctional furniture. May those old pieces rest in peace (in someone else’s home).*

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## PICKING THE RIGHT FURNITURE

Not every home needs a major renovation to bring out its full potential. New furniture or new placement of existing furniture along with a few new accessories and a little paint can give your home the updated and elegant style you long for.

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