

Dining in Style

By Barb Kastens, Editor

It's thought that dining tables originated in Medieval times, when the concept of people eating together became popular. The tables were usually portable pieces that could be folded up and put away after each meal. By the Renaissance, dining experiences were often extravagant affairs that lasted hours or even days, as food and drink were continually prepared and ushered in by servants.

It's this history that makes today's dining rooms very social places. They're the rooms where families gather for an evening meal and talk about the activities of the day. They're where we entertain friends and relatives when we have people over. They're particularly special rooms on holidays, birthdays and anniversaries, where laughter and love is shared along with good food and drink. Many people have dining room furniture that has been passed down through generations. The table is usually the focal point, but buffets, china hutches and side tables can be impressive pieces in their own right.

If you carry dining room furniture in your store, this category can be a boon to your bottom line. Good, sturdy tables, chairs and cabinets can cost thousands of dollars. Be sure to make the most of the furniture that you stock—never leave dining room tables or china cabinets empty. These pieces make the perfect place to get creative and show customers how to accessorize. A well-decorated table or hutch also adds a good deal of ambiance to your store.



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Don't stop at the dishes, flatware and glasses, either. Remember that candles, table cloths, table runners, placemats, napkins and centerpieces are all items that make a dining table look elegant and inviting.

Dining room decor can also be seasonal, so change it up every now and then by adding accessories that speak to the time of year. Flowers, whether dried or real, are a great way to add some seasonal decor. Real or artificial food items such as pumpkins, apples or citrus fruit add a colorful element. Wine bottles can be added to the table to complete the look, or displayed in wine racks that you conveniently have for sale as well.



If you don't have room for furniture in your store, accessories can still create a good revenue stream, since folks usually buy them in sets. In the case of a company such as Cowboy Living, that manufactures an extensive line of home accessories in matching sets, shoppers may not buy the entire line all at once, but collect them over time. Offering matching, collectible items is one way of bringing customers back into your store again and again, giving you an ongoing source of income.

This is the third in a four-part, room-by-room series. See the final feature about living room furnishings in the December 2009 issue of Tack 'n Togs.