

Different construction materials of furniture



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Solid wood furniture is considered the best quality furniture on the market, and if you are purchasing furniture that will be in your home for a long time, it is a very smart investment. Even with wear, solid wood gains character and charm and becomes a part of your family.

Solid wood furniture is usually crafted with attention to detail that includes dovetailed joints, wood on wood drawer glides, and strong protective finishes. Hardwood solids, in particular, are cut from the trunks of deciduous hardwood trees. Among the most popular of these are oak and maple, which are commonly used for constructing furniture and cabinetry. And don't forget, no two pieces of solid wood furniture are the same, so your furniture will be completely unique.

Look for hardwood solids in all types of furniture, including armoires, beds, and bar stools. Asian Hardwoods, Parawood, & Rubberwood Asian hardwood is also referred to as parawood, rubberwood, and tropical hardwood. Mainly from Southeast Asia, this wood is as strong as maple and is often referred to as Malaysian Oak because of its durability and strength. The trees used for this wood are native to the Amazon region of South America. In the 19th Century their seeds were transported to England for germination and the resulting seedlings were brought to Malaysia and planted permanently (thus the name Asian hardwood).

Furthermore, the trees are used to produce latex for 25-30 years prior to being cut down for furniture construction. This ecologically friendly process has spawned the name rubberwood. Look for all three types of wood in a wide range of furniture pieces, including bar sets, ottomans, and dressers.

Engineered Wood / MDF MDF is a common abbreviation for medium density fiberboard, or engineered wood.

MDF is made out of multiple wood fibers glued together under heat and pressure, and is generally very affordable and often just as durable as solid wood. Furniture made with MDF can imitate the look of real wood while meeting the budget requirements of most families. MDF offers several advantages over alternate materials, while not being too costly. It can be made with recycled materials, and possesses no grain so it can be drilled and/or cut without damaging the surface.

Also, MDF is often sturdy enough to be nailed together, and yet it's light enough to be shipped cheaply and easily. Look for MDF in many children's furniture, decorative fireplaces, and table tops. Wood Veneer Wood veneers are constructed of thin slices of real wood which are adhered to the surface of a piece of furniture to give it the glowing appearance of real wood. Veneers can be laid over less costly and lighter materials to save production and shipping costs, or added to a very expensive piece to showcase a particularly beautiful grain pattern.

Any smooth and flat material can have veneer laid over it, making this an extremely versatile and popular method of constructing furniture. The slices used for veneering are generally trimmed from the most attractive parts of the wood source. A saw was originally used for this procedure, but is now commonly replaced by a stationary knife. This reduces the dust that is caused by sawing, and also allows more slices to be cut from each individual

log. Look for wood veneers on a wide range of furniture, including table tops, fireplace mantels, and headboards.

Laminates Laminates consist of a layer of wood or other product, such as paper, which is applied over a wood frame and sealed with a protective layer of thermosetting resin. They are used in a wide variety of products (especially office furniture), as they can be extremely durable and stand up to heavy use. In addition you are virtually guaranteed that the finish on your products will match what you already have. Unlike real wood, laminates should not fade or have variations from piece to piece. They are also very easy to clean with just a soft cloth.

Look for laminates on children's furniture, office desks, and coffee tables.

Metals Wrought Iron Wrought iron means “worked iron” in Old English.

Wrought iron refers to metal that is hammered or bent into shape as opposed to being cast or poured at a foundry. The result is a metal that has a roughed up surface as opposed to the smooth machine-made look of alternate metal products. Because of this coarse surface, wrought iron is able to retain a thicker layer of finish than smoother metal. Working metal by hand has been done for over 5, 000 years, to make functional items such as furniture, as well as art.

The wrought iron of today most commonly consists of mild steel, which was discovered in 1856 and is made by melting cast iron and removing the carbon and slag. Look for wrought iron on high quality pot racks, pub table sets, and fireplace accessories. **Stainless Steel** Stainless steel refers to shiny steel that contains chromium, making it resistant to corrosion. Stainless steel

is a very popular metal in furniture construction because of its attractive appearance and environmentally friendly nature. Not only is stainless steel 100% recyclable, there are no coatings applied to the surface. This is great for the environment, because coatings can pollute the atmosphere when broken down during recycling.

The look of stainless steel is great for a modern or retro decor. The shininess of the silver steel really stands out when paired with black, white, and bright colors. Most stainless steels are mechanically buffed, giving it a reflective quality. Look for stainless steel on kitchen accessories, bar stools, and high quality pot racks. Copper & Bronze Copper and brass are reddish-colored metals that have been used in furniture construction for centuries. The ancient Greeks and Romans used the metal to create mirrors and other accent pieces.

Copper is also commonly used in plumbing and electrical environments due to its high thermal and electrical conductivity. Copper and bronze are both used in furniture construction because of its stability and naturally beautiful color. Look for both metals on coffee tables, light fixtures, and mirrors.

Upholstery Leather & Suede Leather is a supple, strong material that is often used to upholster seat cushions. Created through the tanning of animal hides, this material is often considered a luxury. There are a number of processes that give leather its distinguishable look, the most common process known as vegetable-tanning.

Because of the processes leather goes through to become soft and shiny, it will often require special care and treatment if water or any other substance

contacts it. Therefore, leather can often be expensive and is usually part of an investment piece. Suede is a type of leather that is a little less expensive and less durable. Unlike leather, suede has a fuzzier surface that is often very soft. Suede is cheaper than leather because many pieces can be taken from a single thickness of hide.

Look for both materials on bar stools, dining chairs, and ottomans. Canvas Canvas is a strong, durable fabric that is often used to upholster casual pieces of furniture. This coarse cloth can consist of cotton, flax, hemp, or other fibers, that have been closely woven together. Canvas is also widely used as a painting surface because of its durability.

However, you can also find canvas used to make lampshades, as well as to upholster outdoor and indoor furniture. Vinyl Vinyl is a tough, flexible, and shiny plastic that is often used as an alternative to fabric upholstery.

Because of its shiny appearance, vinyl is often used as a less expensive version of leather. It can be hard and tough, or it can be stuffed and used as a comfortable seating option. Look for vinyl on bar stool seats, benches, and foot stools. Synthetic fibers are the least expensive option for seat upholstery.

It also happens to be the largest class of fabric, because it is all mechanically and chemically created. They tend to be water soluble, which makes them easy to clean and care for. The most commonly used synthetics are acetate, nylon, and polyester. Look for synthetic fibers on bar stools, vanity stools, and accent chairs. Accents Mosaics Mosaics have been used as a decorative accent for centuries.

Because mosaics are commonly hand-made, these often time-consuming projects will typically display impressive results. Mosaics involve laying small pieces of tile, glass, or stone into another surface, giving it a unique look. There are three methods for compiling mosaics; since furniture mosaics are considered smaller projects (as opposed to intricate designs on floors and ceilings), the tiles are often glued individually onto the supporting surface. Look for mosaic designs on table tops, mirrors, and other accent pieces such as vases. Tempered Glass Tempered glass can be made in one of two ways, both of which produce very similar results. The first is by subjecting the glass to a special heat-treatment in which it is heated to about 680° C and cooled afterwards.

The second method is by covering the glass with a chemical solution which produces a higher mechanical resistance than untreated glass. Tempered glass is stronger than both untreated and annealed glass. When broken, it shatters into many small fragments as opposed to large shards. Therefore it is traditionally used in place of other glass products in applications requiring increased strength and reduced likelihood of injury in the event of breakage. Also, the glass fragments that result from a break are linear and more likely to remain in the frame. Look for tempered glass on dining tables, television stands, and media storage towers.

Marble Veneer Marble veneers are similar to wood veneers, but consist of thin slices of marble that are precisely sawn from solid marble blocks. It is an economically ideal way to avoid the fragility of marble without sacrificing its beauty. Marble veneer is also popular in architecture, and can be found as

decoration on ancient Roman palaces as well as modern-day furniture. Look for marble veneers on vanity tables, fireplaces, and console tables.

Poured Molding Poured moldings are used to produce a decorative recessed or relieved surface, generally on an edge. Molten resin or wood bits are poured into a mould, often reinforced with fiberglass. As opposed to using wood, this is a much easier way to produce elaborate designs in furniture; the moulds can simply be etched to simulate wood grain, and even knots. This is an old process that is making a comeback in highly decorative and unique furniture. Look for poured moldings on console tables, headboards, and bar sets.