

MENNONITE FURNITURE STUDIOS
AMERICAN HEIRLOOM FURNITURE



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ONLY THE BEST ENDURES

SOLID HARDWOOD
FURNITURE

MENNONITE FURNITURE STUDIOS HARDWOOD TABLE GUIDE



YOUR GUIDE TO BUYING A QUALITY HARDWOOD TABLE:

- What To Insist On
- What To Avoid
- [Heirloom Quality Dining Table Catalog Online](#)

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WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING A QUALITY DINING TABLE FOR YOUR HOME



***Do You appreciate beautiful hardwood furniture built by craftsmen to last for generations?
 Are You seeking just the right dining table to grace Your dining room or kitchen?
 If so, read this Furniture Buyers Guide To Heirloom Quality Dining Tables***



Custom Colonial Dining Room Furniture by American Heirloom Furniture

The Discriminating Furniture Buyers Guide To Heirloom Quality Dining Tables

Understand which features You should demand and which ones You should avoid in order to get the best value from Your next quality dining table purchase.

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What To Insist On:
 Find out exactly what to look for in a true “Heirloom Quality Table” that will beautifully accommodate Your needs, and be easily maintained to last for generations.
- 
What To Avoid:
 Find out how to look for, identify, and avoid common table manufacturers cost-cutting steps that will simply not bear the burden of normal use in Your home.

Our Formal Dining Table Heritage

Colonial, Shaker, Mission... there are many different styles of quality dining room furniture, rooted in our rich heritage passed down from the early American furniture craftsmen. Today, our 'Heritage' dining room furniture continues to evolve, assuring increased comfort and functionality in Your dining room, as well as increased durability with the minimum possible maintenance.



Heritage Shaker Dining Suite by American Heirloom Furniture

The focal point of every dining room, and many kitchens, is a beautiful hardwood dining table and it's companion set of hardwood dining chairs. Today's dining tables have certainly come a long way from the "board" of our Colonial forebears (literally a board laid on a pair of trestles). Perhaps, you are thinking, "A table is a table". But wait, not all tables are created equal! Note with us the finer points of a true 'Heirloom Quality' dining table, and why it provides such supreme and lasting value.

We Don't Build Quality Dining Tables The Way They Used To!

We work hard to ensure that each piece of today's Heirloom Quality dining furniture is better in many ways than the original furniture of old that it is modeled upon. We apply the best proven designs and joinery techniques that have evolved through generations of craftsmen, and we also take advantage of advances in furniture manufacturing technology and the quality of modern glues and finishes.



The Simple “Farm Table” evolved from the earliest “boards” used in the American colonies. The board was just that - a board set on a trestle or a braced leg base. Some of the earliest boards were made of 2 to 4 inch thick planks, and a massive base was needed to support such a heavy top. Tables evolved considerably as sawn lumber became more plentiful and thinner table tops braced with a narrow skirting could be supported upon more delicate turned legs.



Before the days of built-in cabinetry, the solid-top kitchen table was a must as a “work table”. Everything from kneading bread dough to grinding meat at butchering time was done on these sturdy tables. Early American Farm Table designs were characterized by their beaded skirting (aprons) and Colonial fingernail edge around the table the top. Look for the solid Colonial-style legs, which echo the turning motifs of the Windsor chairs of that period.

Today’s Heirloom Quality Farm Tables - retain the sturdy solid-top and are designed to function equally well as a place to prepare meals or to serve them. They also retain the proven and elegant styling of the best farm tables of earlier generations.

Where space is limited, an Heirloom Quality farm table which fills the area “just right” may be your best choice for a kitchen, nook, or a small informal dining room.

The Draw-Leaf Extension Dining Table was an early attempt at making a table which could be enlarged when required. Prior to this time, long tables were generally solid-top tables used where a large group would dine on a daily basis, such as monasteries or colleges. The idea of a table that could be expanded when needed seems to have arisen in the sixteenth century. Draw-tables from that time use essentially the same sort of mechanism as those employed today. The extension leaves are stored under the ends of the table top. When needed, they are “drawn” out and up, then pushed back flush with the center top.



Today’s Heirloom Quality Draw Leaf Extension Tables – provide for simple and rapid extension of Your table top without the need to move the table or remove items from it. The leaves stow within the table structure when not in use, and are quickly and easily extended by one person when more table area is needed. Quality draw-leaf extension tables must be designed so that the extended draw-leaf interlocks with the table top, securing firmly into a level position. Typical draw leaf tables allow for 25 to 50% table area expansion.

Mennonite Furniture Studios American Heirloom Furniture - Only The Best Endures!

The Drop-Leaf Dining Table was another early attempt at making a table which could be enlarged. Invented during the sixteenth century, the earliest prototype had six or even eight legs, of which two or four “gate legs” would swing away from the central frame to support the leaves when raised. Later developments in the drop-leaf table included the smaller “butterfly” drop-leaf, so named for another swinging support, always used in pairs, and which, with some imagination, could be supposed to look like butterfly wings. Narrow-leaved “harvest tables” utilized simple pull-out supports, often two per leaf. Sets of “sectional” drop-leaf tables constituted some of the first very large formal dining tables.



Today’s Heirloom Quality Drop Leaf Tables – also provide rapid expansion of table area when required, via their hinged leaves that simply lift into position.

Quality drop-leaf extension tables must be designed so that the raised drop-leaf interlocks with the table top, securing firmly into a level position. Typical drop-leaf tables allow for 25 to 50% relative table area expansion, although some narrow table designs allow for much more relative expansion.

The Pedestal Extension Dining Table first appeared on the American furniture scene *circa*. 1840. Prior to that time, dining tables were extended either by raising drop-leaves or by placing two or three tables next to each other. Sometimes both of these options were used to create very large “sectional dining tables”. However, these were only for the wealthy, since even in their smallest form, sectional dining tables needed a very large room to store them in.

Numerous variations on the pedestal extension table have appeared over the years. Some of the oldest had pedestals which split, revealing a turned center support leg. This type of table had some disadvantages. Principally, that too much lateral stress was placed on the slides. An improved version kept the pedestal intact and only split the top. The later invention of geared “equalizing” slides spelled great progress in the development of this genre of table.



Today’s Heirloom Quality Pedestal Extension Tables - are built on the strength of understanding of generations of earlier craftsmen.



One distinctive feature of extension pedestal tables is their geared “equalizer” slides which keep the extended top precisely centered over the stationary pedestal base. The leaves must also be designed to be easily and quickly inserted, and provide a level surface when in place.



The Formal 4-Legged Extension Dining Table first appeared on the American furniture scene *circa* 1850. It originally arose to meet the needs of a growing middle-class for a table that could grow with the family, or be extended when many people would be fed (such as at harvest time). Then considered as “cottage” furniture, an extended table still conjures up thoughts of the country farm houses of yore.

The Quality Tables of yesteryear were built to last by caring men who thoroughly understood their tools, materials and craft. Today our furniture makers undergo an apprenticeship to develop keen eyes and skilled hands, and these expert craftsmen build Your furniture with the same unhurried care.

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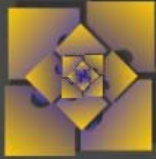
Following the American Civil War, the increased availability of wood-working machines enabled reproduction of relatively accurate table extension slides. These met the demand for a table that could be easily extended and closed, and that would not sag when it was fully extended. This feature is one that is still of highest importance in Your search for a quality extension table.



The incredible ‘Eency-Weency Table’ measures only 30" by 36" when closed, but extends to 10½ feet long with seating for 12 people. The leaves conveniently store in a versatile rack or inside the table.

Today’s Heirloom Quality Extension Dining Tables - possess the advantageous ability to extend, up to more than three times their original length. However, this ability requires a carefully engineered structure in order to provide reliable service in the long-term. On the longest extension tables, self centering central support legs are required to add stability.

Extension slides must have sufficient slack to open easily, yet also be tight enough that the table will never sag in use. The leaves must be carefully designed to be easily inserted and provide a level surface. Extension tables, when closed, may comfortably seat 2, 4, or 6, depending upon the style. When extended by adding more leaves, some styles can comfortably seat up to 22 people!



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For Fine Furniture Collectors Authentically Reproduced Antique Table Tops Available

Fine furniture collectors will recognize that our craftsmen fore-fathers originally produced table tops by hand planing with a wooden block plane. Regardless of the skill of the craftsman who created the table, antique North American table tops naturally feature tear-outs, gouges and rippled surfaces. Antique table edges were hand spoke-shaved, exhibiting similar 'imperfections'.



Wooden Block Plane (Courtesy www.uh.edu)

Today's Heirloom Quality Amish 'Classic' and Amish 'Heritage' fine dining tables feature essentially 'perfectly' finished tops and edges that are uniformly flat and even. However, You can request a craftsman hand-finished table top to reproduce an authentic antique finish. This custom 'collectors option' is recommended for cherry wood rather than oak tables.

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Mennonite Furniture Studios – Amish ‘Classic’ & Amish ‘Heritage’ Furniture Classifications

Mennonite Furniture Studios Heirloom Quality Hardwood Dining Table Online Catalog:



(Images Link To The Online Catalog)



Heritage Colonial Dining Room Combination By American Heirloom Furniture

Amish ‘Classic’ Furniture Piece

A ‘Reproduction Antique’, faithfully following a distinct and premier antique furniture masterpiece. **Mennonite Furniture Studios Amish ‘Classic’ Furniture** remains exactly true to the original furniture form and style, using the original joinery techniques.

Compared to the masterpiece, use of modern glues and finishes enhances quality, and selected components may deploy a minor increase in wood thickness in order to address a known weak point in the original design.

Mennonite Furniture Studios Amish ‘Classic’ furniture pieces are actually of higher quality, and are more durable and easily maintained, than the original antique masterpieces that they are modeled upon.

Amish ‘Heritage’ Furniture Piece

A Masterful Adaptation of a distinct and premier antique furniture masterpiece, with some alteration to increase both functionality and durability.

Compared to the original masterpiece, use of modern glues and finishes enhances quality. Variations in both joinery techniques and wood thickness enhance strength and durability. Adjustment of the original form and style improve functionality.

Mennonite Furniture Studios Amish ‘Heritage’ furniture pieces are actually of higher quality and more durable, requiring less maintenance and offering enhanced functionality compared to the original furniture masterpieces that they are modeled upon.

Mennonite Furniture Studios American Heirloom Furniture - Only The Best Endures!

Choosing Your Custom Dining Table

Many people find that it is worth paying a little extra for a **custom dining table**, available in various sizes to meet your needs and assure the best possible fit in your room. By choosing a custom table You can select from various hardwoods, finish colors, leg motifs, skirting styles, and table top edge treatments, to compliment Your existing furniture and suit Your own specific tastes.



Custom Shaker Extension Dining Table With Exotic Maple Top by American Heirloom Furniture

“We searched high and low until we found Mennonite Furniture Studios ‘American Heirloom Furniture’ via the internet. Once the maple wood for our table arrived, they mailed us stained samples. There are very few expensive items I have purchased that I felt were of exceptional quality. I would absolutely say this furniture is exceptional. The entire shopping experience with them was enjoyable. They were timely and thorough in answering my questions, went out of their way to earn my trust, charged me a very fair price (in fact, we had enough money left to place an additional order for a coffee table and two candle tables) and delivered a fine product on time. I would shop there again and recommend my friends to do the same.”

Saki, Hanover, Maryland



Insist On This - What To Look For When Choosing A Quality Dining Table For Your Home

Dining Table Quality And Value: A true “Heirloom Quality” dining table is always a piece of furniture that is both beautiful and functional. Carefully crafted from selected solid hardwood, it will provide far superior value to any of the mass-produced tables that You’ll find in most furniture stores, and the majority of people are pleasantly surprised at just how affordable an Heirloom Quality table can be.

Quality Dining Table Construction: A true Heirloom Quality dining table is designed and constructed, using time-tested engineering principles, carefully selected hardwoods, and quality materials, to be both strong and durable. Aesthetically, the details of the table edge and the skirting (aprons) should compliment those of the legs (or pedestal), and the base size of a pedestal table should be proportional to the dimensions of the top. Inspect the top of any table that You are considering - the use of veneers is simply not acceptable for any table that You mean to use regularly and expect to last as legacy furniture. Insist on a **Solid Hardwood Top** that will never wear through, and may be sanded down, repaired and refinished - even when subjected to extreme ‘wear and tear’.



Look For Legacy Carpentry Techniques: Solid hardwoods, edge-jointed with care, form a long lasting, smooth top, which with moderate care will never warp or split. Aprons (skirts) should always be pocket-screwed to the tops to allow for expansion. The special hangar-bolt fastening of the legs or pedestal to the table-top makes a joint which, should the need arise, can be tightened simply with common hand tools. If you choose a table style with drawers, look for dovetail joints (both front and back!). These superior joinery techniques have been used by craftsmen for generations to produce beautiful yet strong dining tables that retain their beauty and their functionality through time.



Table legs should each have an **adjustable leveler**, to enable the table-top to sit flat and level on any floor. Legs or pedestals should be designed for easy removal with a standard wrench to simplify transportation.



Look For Low-Friction Extendable Slides On All ‘Extension Tables: Slides should always open smoothly (from either side) in order to be easy for a single person to handle. Legacy-designed wooden table slides must be deep dovetailed for easy movement whilst keeping the table-top correctly centered. Pedestal tables should have smooth-running geared metal rails to assure a centered table-top, regardless of how many leaves you use.



Look For A Tough Hardened Varnish: Ask about modern *catalyzed finishes* and clean-room coating techniques. These allow full development of color and luster that emphasize the natural beauty of the wood grain, yet allow full protection against water and spillage of common household chemicals. Today’s heirloom



quality tables are far more durable than the antiques they are modeled on - so they require far less care and maintenance and actually look even better.

Ask About The Glues Used: Modern technology has allowed the development of tenacious adhesives that allow the wood to move naturally with the seasons while providing joints that are now stronger than the structure of the wood itself.

Avoid This - Things To Reject When Choosing Your Dining Table

Make sure that Your new dining table will fill your daily or regular dining needs in its “closed” position: A table that requires all it’s leaves extended for regular daily use is too small.

Look Underneath The Table: Is this furniture piece nicely finished underneath? If the bottom side is poorly finished, or otherwise ugly, this means that the manufacturer has “cut corners” to save money wherever possible. This is a sure sign that other table components and / or the finish are also likely to be sub-standard, and this particular table represents a poor “investment” that will degrade and become problematic in use.

Avoid Finishes That Are Not Guaranteed To Be Water Resistant: A water resistant finish means that sweating glasses will not leave rings on the table top.

Insist On Solid Hardwood Throughout: Beware of the terms “all wood”, “solid all wood”, and “veneers”. Avoid soft tropical woods and particleboard components that will split or crack when subjected to weight.

Avoid Sloppy Joinery - Which Makes A Shaky Table:

Especially, pay attention to the connection of the legs or pedestal to the top.

Watch out for leaves that do not fit well or do not sit flat.

Open the table - does it slide open easily when operated from either side? Beware of binding in table slides and avoid metal slides that will bind or stick when rusted.

Avoid tables that do not have floor levelers - any extension table will likely bind and sit uneven if levelers are not provided.

The Quality Tables of yesteryear were built to last by caring men who thoroughly understood their tools, materials and craft. Today our Mennonite & Amish furniture makers undergo a long apprenticeship to develop keen eyes and skilled hands, and these expert craftsmen are dedicated to unhurriedly building Your furniture the right way – offering exceptional value without compromise!

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