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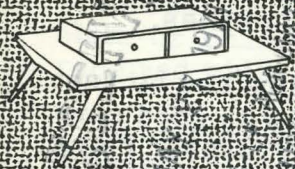
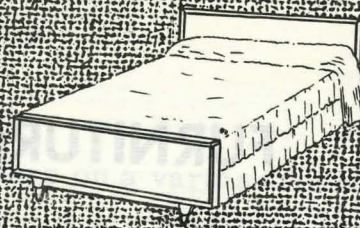
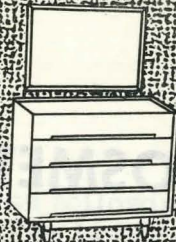
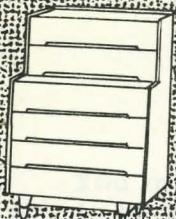
EC55-1105 Furniture Cosmetics

Angelene Camp

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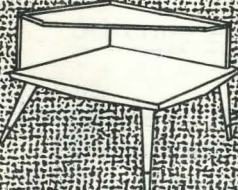
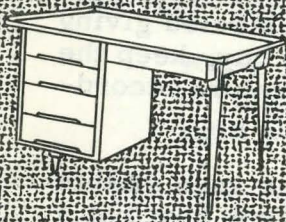


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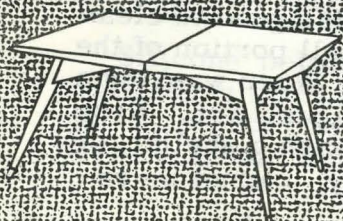
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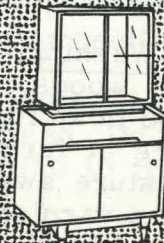
FURNITURE COSMETICS



J.C.D.



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
W.V. LAMBERT, DIRECTOR



FURNITURE COSMETICS

Most of us are sentimental about furniture. We combine occasional new items with used and antique pieces. Mellow, "lived with" furniture gives an air of security, comfort and charm to our homes. It tells much about us, revealing our taste and our choice of designs. Handed-down pieces suggest the heritage of families.

Furniture shows the care it has received. Well-treated furniture can be kept by generation after generation. Even relatively inexpensive pieces with good care take on mellow beauty with the years and may eventually become treasured heirlooms.

Buying Furniture

Ask questions and shop around before you buy. A good salesman at a reliable store will be happy to explain fully all the features of furniture selection.

Study the labels on the various brands. Each piece should be labeled giving details on the recommended care of its particular finish. When you buy, keep the labels in your reference files and be sure to care for each piece of furniture according to these manufacturer's directions.

Today, there are so many finishes on the market that a circular such as this can only give information of a general nature. Remember before you buy that a good finish should have a fine patina (a rich depth obtained by much rubbing) and a sheen rather than a harsh gloss. Grain should show through with depth and beauty like pebbles on the bottom of a clear brook. Avoid a cloudy, opaque, painted look which may cover shoddy wood and workmanship.

Furniture Care

Dusting should be part of the daily household routine. If dust and grit are allowed to accumulate on furniture, they will cause tiny scratches which dull the finish.

Use cheesecloth, flannel, wool, old silk or soft cotton cloths, never new materials which may be sized or linty. The cloth that has been used for polishing wax makes a good dust cloth. Never use an oiled or treated dust cloth on waxed furniture, or a cloth that has been used to dust furniture polished with oil. Oil softens wax and the surface will become smeary and sticky.

The soft brush attachment on vacuum cleaners is excellent for general dusting, especially in areas where dust contains grit.

Washing. Commercial polishes are available which have been designed to clean your woods. If, however, you prefer washing, try cleaning a small portion of the wood in an inconspicuous place to be sure the finish will stand up. When washing a piece of furniture, use a dampened cloth, never one that is dripping wet. Keep moisture away from glued parts---the glue may soften. Never wash a shellac or cheap varnish finish, water may turn it white. Dullness, usually, cannot be removed from varnish or enamel of poor quality.

You may wish to try the following mixture on a varnish finish. The ingredients are to be kept hot in a double boiler:

- 1 quart hot water
- 3 tablespoons boiled linseed oil
- 1 tablespoon turpentine

Wash the surface until clean. Then wipe it dry and rub to a polish with a soft cloth or chamois. Usually this treatment colors most of the scratches and often removed white spots.

Sometimes a mixture of mild soap and warm water, or a quart of warm water to which a tablespoon of vinegar has been added gives good results. A dampened cellulose sponge works well on a washing job. Use a clean sponge dampened with water, to wipe up the soap lather and dry with a soft absorbent cloth. Repeat the process on another area being sure to start within the edges of the clean area to eliminate streaking.

Polishing. If the surface remains dull after it has been washed or if you want a higher polish, use a commercial polish or wax, or try the following light-mixture homemade polish.

For a small area, mix 2 tablespoons of boiled linseed oil with 1 tablespoon of turpentine. Increase these amounts for larger surfaces. Do not use on light woods, as the linseed oil may darken them.

The selection of the proper furniture polish for use in polishing and protecting valuable furniture presents a problem because of the wide range of polishes and waxes now available. Your furniture label is the best source of specific information. Unfortunately, however, all brands of furniture do not carry a highly informative label.

POLISHING PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET

Silicone Polishes



The newest furniture polishes contain silicone. By combining silicone with wax and other polishing and cleaning agents, chemists have produced these polishes which are fast and easy to apply. They require no rubbing and are long lasting. Polishes containing silicone remove oil-soluble dirt when applied and leave a dry finish that is hard, glossy and non-oily. Dust cannot cling to silicone polished surfaces and can be removed with a gentle wipe of a dry cloth. Even sticky water soluble dirt can be removed quickly with a damp cloth with no harm to the silicone finish.

Besides giving a long-lasting luster to varnished, shellacked and lacquered surfaces, this finish protects as well as polishes. Silicone finishes are so permanent that they can only be completely removed by a solvent such as naphtha or turpentine.

Silicone polishes are not recommended for unsealed furniture, antiques, or on old finishes that have become quite porous due to decomposition of the finish. Do not use on painted or enameled furniture which requires repainting from time to time because most paint will not adhere to a smooth silicone surface.

Cream Polishes

These are emulsions containing water and oil combined with a fast acting cleaning agent. They remove sticky, water soluble dirt as well as greasy, oil-soluble dirt and loosen previous polish coatings and entrenched dirt particles.

Cream polishes should be poured on a dampened cloth and applied to surfaces. Application cloths will become soiled quickly and should, therefore, be turned to unused portions often. They require no rubbing. Polish immediately with a dry cloth.

Oil Polishes

Most oil polishes have a mineral oil base. They remove oil-soluble dirt from the surface as they polish, while the water-soluble dirt is removed by applying the oil polish with a cloth which has previously been dampened with water.

The polish must be wiped on and then wiped off; it does not dry very rapidly. Since the oil film that remains catches and holds dust, wipe off all excess oil. It is the very thin film of oil that remains on the surface which gives luster. Most of the oil evaporates in three or four days so that this type of polish must be used at frequent intervals.

All you need to do to get a gleaming surface is to pour a few drops on a dampened cloth and apply with gentle wiping strokes. Polish with a clean dry cloth. A few drops on the daily dusting cloth help to remove dust and dirt readily and to retain the high luster.

Waxes

Some manufacturers recommend exclusively the use of a good wax polish and say that in general, it is wise to avoid oils and other concoctions designed to polish without effort, that there is no substitute for a good wax and a reasonable amount of rubbing. Use as little wax as possible and then rub until the surface is free from film.

Waxes are manufactured in different forms with the following characteristics:



- Paste wax: Most difficult and laborious to apply, but gives the longest lasting hard finish.
- Liquid wax: Somewhat easier to apply, but lasting properties are diminished.
- Cream wax: The easiest to apply but still requires hard buffing and does not compare with paste wax for protection and long lasting properties.
- Liquid cleaning and polishing wax: A combined cleaning and polishing agent.

Paste wax brings out the natural beauty of wood products. Applied to painted or enameled surfaces, it fills in the pores of these surfaces and provides a smooth, glossy finish which repels dirt.

The rich, mellow patina which results from regular wax care is one of the characteristics of lovely antique furniture.

Wax finishes give a luster which lasts for a long time and form a hard, dry surface which sheds dust and dirt readily. They protect wood because they are water-resistant and reduce the risk of scratching and abrasion-wear.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD FURNITURE BE WAXED?

Some furniture manufacturers say that new pieces should be polished with wax or a wax polish every two weeks at first and afterwards at least once a month. However, after the newness has worn off, the waxing of furniture depends on the amount of wear. On surfaces which are seldom touched, waxing two or three times a year is sufficient. Areas which get hard use may be rewaxed every month or so. Smudges and fingermarks can be removed with one of the cleaning waxes during the weekly cleaning.

Warning: Do not apply wax to a dirty or oil-polished surface, unless you first wash surface, rinse and dry thoroughly.

For best results with any rubbing type wax, apply with a circular, scrubbing motion. When polishing, rub across the grain of the wood first with quick strokes, then with the grain, using longer strokes.

Touch-up Products

A furniture-restoring compound, made up of fine abrasive, lubricant, and coloring matter, in tube form is on the market. This compound treats white rings, scratches, burns and marks on darker woods but cannot be used on blonde or bleached finishes.

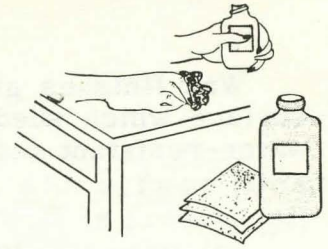
Wax sticks, made especially for furniture in various wood colors, are softer than ordinary crayon and easy to work with. Scratches may be filled with this wax and rubbed in well with a finger. One then wipes off any excess with a soft, dry cloth. Stick shellac, matching wood finishes, is also available.

Furniture touch-up sticks come in tubes. After removing the cap, tip down and apply the material with the brush attached to the end of the tube. The flow of the touch-up material is regulated by the pressure exerted on the brush. After a few minutes, the excess is wiped off with a soft cloth or with tissue. These tubes may be purchased in various furniture wood colors.

Touch-up and scratch-cover polishes are oil stains in a polish base. They usually do not affect surfaces that have been properly sealed by varnish, lacquer or shellac. Their purpose is to stain only raw wood. These polishes may be applied as they come from the bottle directly to the exposed area of a scratch, that is, to dark oak, walnut, mahogany and other dark woods. For lighter finished woods some may be diluted with an all-purpose furniture polish.

When Accidents Happen To Wood

SPOTS



Water Rings, Heat Marks, Alcohol and Other White Spots (if damage is **not** too deep). If cleaning, followed by rewaxing or polishing has not erased these blemishes, try a touch-up polish. If unseccessful, the following suggestions may prove helpful:

For varnish finishes

1. Make a creamy paste from rottenstone and a few drops of oil (linseed, lemon, sewing machine). Keep the rottenstone in an old salt shaker and shake on to the oil using a dish to hold the mixture. Linseed oil usually does the best job. Apply this paste to the blemish with a soft cloth and rub with the grain of the wood. If necessary, substitute FFF powdered pumice, a harsher abrasive, for the rottenstone and then finish with the rottenstone treatment.
2. Fine table salt and oil (sewing machine, lemon, salad or mineral oil). Do not mix---the salt will dissolve---use two dishes, one for the salt and one for oil. Dip your finger or cloth in the oil, then in the salt and rub. Repeat as needed.
3. Camphorated oil or oil of peppermint may be used on varnished or shellacked surfaces--do not use on lacquer. Dampen a cloth* with the oil and rub gently with the grain of the wood. For stubborn white spots, daub and let dry undisturbed at least 30 minutes. Rub down with rottenstone and oil.
4. A commercial product (an abrasive in oil) designed for removing white spots may be used instead.



On water rings which have not responded to touch-up polish, try placing a clean, thick blotter over the ring and pressing with a warm (not hot) iron, before using oil and abrasives.

White spots on a wax-finish usually result from scratches and may be removed by first sponging with turpentine and then by applying some fresh wax when the turpentine fumes have evaporated.

Always wipe up liquids immediately. Perfumes, medicines, and beverages containing alcohol can do great damage quickly because alcohol dissolves almost any finish. If the finish has been protected with wax there may be no spot.

For white spots on shellac, let the finish dry thoroughly and the spot may disappear. If the spot remains, remove the wax with a cloth dampened with turpentine or a non-inflammable dry cleaning fluid, then rewax. Or remove the wax and rub down the white spot as described above under varnish finishes. Shellac the spots if they need it and rewax. Shellac finishes should never be washed with water or alcohol.

*Do not use a linty cloth as fuzz may stick to the wood.

Unfortunately, white marks caused by heat are difficult to remove without a complete refinishing job. If alcohol has penetrated into the wood, you'll have to call in an expert.

Candle Wax. Crumble off as much wax as possible with fingers, then scrape carefully with dull edge of table knife. Hold an ice cube on wax for a few seconds to make it easier to remove. Wipe up melted ice immediately so no water spots result. When you have removed as much candle wax as possible, rub spot briskly with a cloth saturated with a silicone polish; wipe dry with a clean cloth. Continue treatment until mark disappears. Naphtha can also be used.

Paint Stains: Fresh paint may be removed with a cloth saturated in a silicone polish or liquid wax. If necessary rub with liquid wax and fine steel wool.

For old paint stains, cover spots with linseed oil and let stand until paint is softened. Wipe with a cloth wet with linseed oil. Remove remaining paint with rottenstone and oil.

MINOR SCRATCHES AND MARS

Marred places that remain after the wood has been cleaned and polished need special attention. If the furniture has been waxed, remember to remove wax from the blemish before treating using a cloth dampened with naphtha, turpentine, or a non-inflammable dry cleaning fluid. Wipe dry with a clean cloth.

1. Wax, Nut Meats, Linseed Oil. Applying paste wax or liquid wax with fine steel wool will sometimes hide scratches. Rubbing the mark with linseed oil may help--don't use crude oil; this may soften the finish.

On stained, natural woods, such as walnut, cherry, oak, and mahogany, mars will be less noticeable if rubbed with oil from a black or English walnut, pecan, Brazil or butternut. Break the nutmeat in half and rub well into the blemishes until they are darkened.

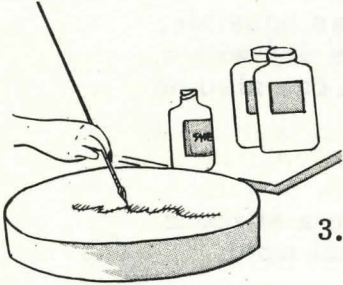
2. Coloring Crayons, Shoe Dye. Try coloring the break in the finish with brown coloring crayon or regular liquid shoe dye. Shoe dyes come in various shades of brown and cover scratches in walnut quite satisfactorily.



3. Iodine. Scratched red-finished mahogany can be camouflaged with an application of new iodine; iodine that has turned dark brown helps scratched brown or cherry mahogany. For maple, dilute iodine about 50 per cent with denatured alcohol.

DEEPER SCRATCHES AND BLEMISHES

1. Wax Sticks. These are made in wood tones especially for furniture. They are softer than crayon and easier to work with. Fill scratch with wax and rub in well with finger. Wipe with a soft, dry cloth.



2. Oil Paint. Mix oil paint in varnish to match the color of the old finish. Add a drop or two of Japan drier. Use a small pointed brush to fill the scratches with this mixture. Smooth out lightly with a finger. When this filler is completely dry add a second coat if needed, making it match the old finish exactly. Let it dry and then rub the whole surface with polish or wax. Your paint dealer can help you select the tubes of oil paint you will need to match your damaged wood. For example: he may advise you to use either burnt umber or Vandyke brown on a walnut piece. Both are rich, dark, warm browns.

3. Stain. Secure a 1/4 pint oil stain of the proper color. For a light wood dilute 1/4 teaspoon of the stain with a few drops of naphtha or turpentine by mixing in the cover of the stain can. Apply stain with a small brush or cotton-tipped toothpick, wiping with a cloth and reapplying until the stain matches original finish. Let dry at least 12 hours. Then seal in the stain with white or orange shellac using a toothpick or fine water color paint brush. (on some maple, orange shellac will match the shade and staining is not necessary). Let shellac dry at least four hours. Repeat until scratch is filled allowing four-hour drying time between applications.

If after using any of these three suggestions, smoothing is needed, sand with very fine sandpaper (8/0) or the fine side of an emeryboard (board should be bent about an inch from end). Rub lightly with the grain of wood until the filled scratch is even with the rest of the finish. Rub down with rottenstone and oil. Rewax.

SERIOUS BURNS AND DEEP BLEMISHES

(Small Holes, Gouges, Cracks)

1. Clean by rubbing the charred spots with fine steel wool being careful not to scratch the surrounding area. If the burn is deep, scrape the blemish clean with a sharp jack knife or broken razor blade taped for safe handling. Remove all loose dirt or charred wood and clean with naphtha on a cotton-tipped toothpick. When using the steel wool for cleaning and smoothing, wrap it around the point of a wooden skewer or orange stick.
2. For further smoothing, sand with very fine sandpaper or fine emeryboard (bent about an inch from the end).
3. Fill the blemish with:

Stick shellac to match the wood finish. Use an electric soldering iron or heat a spatula, old screw driver using alcohol flame, electric burner, or canned heat -- do not use gas or candle; soot from these may discolor shellac. Have blade or tool just hot enough to melt shellac. Scrape off a bit and press into gouge with edge of the blade. Repeat until filled. Stick shellac is recommended over plastic wood which may damage lacquer finishes. Heat blade, wipe it clean, and scrape across repaired area to level. Use razor blade to shave off excess shellac. Sand and rub down as described under Deeper Scratches, etc.

For enameled and painted surfaces fill the hole with a thick paste made by mixing commercial water putty with water.

Checking

The tiny cracks caused by the checking or cracking of the finish are often the result of exposure to sunshine or extremes of temperature. Dry climate and the lack of humidity in a home can cause excessive checking. Usually it is necessary to refinish the surface, although paste wax will improve the appearance if the checking is not too serious. Be careful to apply wax as thinly as possible and to polish immediately. If wax is allowed to dry, it may show white in the cracks. If this has happened, remove with a cloth saturated with turpentine or naphtha. Use an old toothbrush, if necessary, to get the wax out of the crevices. After this has been done, wash with mild soap and warm water; rinse with clear water and dry well. Use a circular motion when working on a checked finish.

Or you might try improving the appearance of checked varnish by first washing with the recipe suggested on page 1. When it is thoroughly dry, rub the surface with this heavy-mixture furniture polish: 2 tablespoons of boiled linseed oil and 1 tablespoon of turpentine. Add 1 1/2 tablespoons of clear varnish. Increase these amounts for a large surface. This mixture is good for repolishing very dull finishes and for building up worn or damaged places in the finish. Warm this mixture before using it by placing the uncorked bottle, or another container, in a pan of hot water. Apply the warmed liquid to a small part of the furniture at a time, rub it hard. As the polish sets it begins to stiffen and you feel a drag. Rub off at once the polish that remains, using several clean cloths. This is necessary to prevent the furniture from remaining sticky. Repeat the treatment until the checking is less noticeable.

Blonde Furniture

The aging of bleached or blonde furniture is accompanied by a change in color. With time the chemicals used to bleach out the natural wood color begin to lose their effect and the wood darkens. This may develop so gradually you are not aware of it until you purchase a new piece of the same shade. When light furniture is exposed to direct sunlight, the change may occur in just a few days and may result in ugly yellow spots. Nothing can be done to remove these, so try to keep the furniture out of the sun.

Caution: Put a pad on blonde surfaces before setting table lamps, typewriters and any object with a rubber or plastic base on them. You will avoid discoloring finishes since there is a chemical action from most such bases.

Metal Furniture

Both indoors and outdoors, metal furniture is being used more and more. Metal furniture should be cleaned with a soft, dry cloth. If water must be used to remove spots, dry immediately. Never use oil or abrasive cleansers. They may injure the protective finish.

Ask the salesman whether perspiration or oils from hands will tarnish the metal.

Since furniture legs are easily kicked and bumped, be sure that the metal finish is resistant to chipping. If you have metal furniture which has become chipped, black enamel of a dull finish can be purchased for a touch-up job.

Feet of furniture should be finished so they will not scratch floors or mark carpeting. Rubber capped feet are found on many metal chairs.

The chrome finish on dinette sets remains shiny if polished only with a dry cloth. Metals, even brass, are often lacquered to prevent tarnishing. Check before using a metal polish--you may remove the lacquer finish with it.

If metal furniture is to be used outdoors, find out if there is danger of rusting in damp weather and if its covering is fade-and-mildew-resistant. Metal furniture is made rust-resistant by zinc-plating, pre-sealing with anti-rust chemicals or through the use of baked enamel finishes. Many of these finishes can be repainted. Wooden table tops should be sealed against moisture and varnished (spar varnish is recommended for out-door furniture). They will then be resistant to rain, "sweaty" glasses, or spilled liquids.

Leather Upholstery

Use pure castile, a similar neutral soap, or a regular leather or saddle soap, and warm water. Rub a damp (not wet) cloth over the bar of soap, then rub the surface of the leather briskly. Next rub with another moist cloth without soap. Rub dry with a clean soft cloth. Any gloss which disappears, will be restored by friction produced by the dry cloth.

Furniture polishes, oils or varnishes frequently contain solvents which cause the leather to become sticky. If you wish to wax use a good liquid furniture wax with the lowest naphtha content. Do not use a paste wax because of its high percentage of naphtha or similar solvent, which softens, and eventually streaks the original finish. Apply sparingly and wipe to a gloss finish with a clean soft cloth. Don't wax your leather more than four times a year. More fine leather is spoiled by over-waxing than by being left entirely alone.

Marble

Marble is highly serviceable but like all fine materials, it needs reasonable care. Usually marble is given a surface finish of wax of help protect it against staining and dulling. It should be cleaned and rewaxed once or twice a year. Wash in warm water, dry thoroughly and apply a thin coat of good wax. Rub vigorously to a rich luster with a soft cloth or lamb's wool buffer.

ABOVE ALL, REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE CARE OF FURNITURE:

Excessive heat will damage even the best made furniture. Do not place it against hot radiators or under open windows.

Dampness and moisture are also enemies of furniture. Remember this especially when storing furniture in basements or garages.

Before placing accessories such as lamps, bases, silver services, etc., on furniture, protect the finish! Put pieces of felt, cut from old felt hats, or purchased at stationary stores on the bases of your objects. Attractive straw, fabric, and leather-tooled mats, in a variety of colors, are available. In addition to protecting from scratching, you will avoid discoloring finishes since there is a chemical action from most rubber and plastic bases.

Keep the labels from your furniture. These labels give guides on care of the particular finish.

When in doubt seek advice from professional furniture refinishers, your furniture dealers, and from paint and varnish stores. Home remedies for furniture like home remedies for illness cannot treat some difficulties and may do more harm than good.

(This circular was prepared by Mrs. Angelene Camp)

Labels Contain Information Such As This:

1. Choose a good liquid wax, water emulsion wax, or furniture-cleaner-polish, made by a reliable concern. DO NOT use an oil base preparation for cleaning or polishing lacquered furniture. It leaves a film that remains wet for days and collects dust, grit, lint and other foreign matter.
2. Using a soft clean cloth, dip into the wax or cleaner-polish and go over entire surface of piece to be cleaned, giving it a wet even coat.
3. With another dry, clean cloth rub lightly parallel with the grain of the wood until the excess wax is removed and an even film is left on the surface.
4. Next, with another soft, dry cloth rub parallel with the grain and apply increased hand pressure until desired gloss is obtained. Be sure to rub uniformly over entire piece.
5. Wax interior surfaces occasionally -- particularly the sides and edges of doors and drawers.
6. In case of deep scars or stains, your furniture deserves the attention of a professional refinisher.

Care of the Finish

This furniture is carefully finished with highest quality materials. It should retain its beauty for a lifetime with reasonable care. Clean the surface by wiping with a clean damp cloth and rubbing briskly with a clean, soft dry cloth. Every three to six months, wax or polish with any high grade paste wax, to preserve the lustre.

The coatings used in the finish are highly resistant to water, alcoholic beverages and other substances. However, there is no finish absolutely impervious to water and alcohol under all conditions; prolonged exposure to these liquids could damage the surface. Any spillage should be wiped off immediately.

Extremely hot objects should not be placed directly on the surface or a print mark may result. Burning cigarettes or nail polish remover will cause severe damage, difficult to repair.

This finish is tough and mar resistant. Ordinary scratches may be hidden by using a colored scratch remover polish.

CARE OF YOUR _____ FURNITURE

_____ furniture is built of selected cabinet woods and is constructed to give you years of gratifying service. The fine finishes of the _____ pieces merit the care you should give all fine furniture. To keep your furniture looking its handsome best, dust regularly with a lightly dampened soft cloth. We recommend that you use a paste wax rather than an oil polish. Rubbing the wax with the grain enhances the beauty and the gloss of the finish.

Clean carefully with mild soap and water when needed. Dry completely with a soft cloth. (Caution: harsh cleaning compounds may discolor your furniture)

If a protective wax coating is desired, a silicone will be found suitable. This wax is available in retail stores.

You will notice slight variations in the color of your furniture from time to time -- age adds a mellowness that will augment the beauty and charm of each elegant design.