



## The Furniture Guys Book

By Joe L'erario, Ed Feldman

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"The Furniture Guys" are the zaniest, funniest how-to duo on the air today. Watch them on the "Learning Channel" juggling expert furniture and home repair, pop culture hilarity, throwaway historical asides, and sudden swerves into B-movie lore, and you'll ditch earnest old Bob Vila and never give *Home Improvement* another look.

*The Furniture Guys Book* presents ten projects, complete with step-by-step guidance on stripping, staining, varnishing, upholstering, basic repairs, and troubleshooting touch-ups such as stain and scratch removal. Projects include a pine Hoosier, a Victorian throne chair, a roll-top desk, a pine hat-rack, and more. More than 250 black-and-white photos and drawings illustrate every detail, and a full-color insert displays the finished projects in all their glory. Plus there are handy tips on everything from setting up a work area to sizing up the potential of yard sale bargains.

All this, and funny too! A must for the millions who watch them on the "Learning Channel" or who will be tuning into their forthcoming nationally syndicated radio show -- and for any would-be refinisher looking for advice that's as entertaining as it is effective -- this book will find a prominent place on workbenches all over America.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Joel and Ed are well-known television and radio personalities whose trademark looniness combined with practical advice on old furniture repair and restoration have earned them a large and enthusiastic following. In this book, their particular brand of zany humor does not detract from the fact that it's packed with useful information and well-detailed, step-by-step instructions for 10 of their favorite projects, including gems like a beautifully refinished and reupholstered throne chair, a rolltop desk, and a walnut table painted to look like marble. You'll find solid information on how to find potential used furniture bargains and differentiate furniture worthy of the efforts of restoration from junk. Stripping, sanding, painting, finishing and refinishing, marbling, upholstering, gluing, and every aspect of furniture repair and restoration are covered, amidst Joel's and Ed's bad puns and strange ruminations on the meaning of everything. Even if you normally buy all your furniture factory-fresh from the showroom, you'll have fun with the wild ramblings and seriously good advice of the Furniture Guys. --*Mark A. Hetts*

#### About the Author

Joe L'Erario hosts the highly popular *Furniture to Go/Furniture on the Mend* and *Men in Toolbelts* series on The Learning Channel. Winner of a prestigious CableAce Award for best host in 1994, he has also made appearances on *Good Morning America* and QVC. The host of a nationally syndicated weekly call-in radio show and has appeared at home shows nationwide. The Furniture Guys® are based in Philadelphia.

Ed Feldman hosts the highly popular *Furniture to Go/Furniture on the Mend* and *Men in Toolbelts* series on The Learning Channel. Winner of a prestigious CableAce Award for best host in 1994, he has also made appearances on *Good Morning America* and QVC. The host of a nationally syndicated weekly call-in radio show and has appeared at home shows nationwide. The Furniture Guys® are based in Philadelphia.

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#### WHY OLD FURNITURE?

The eternal question has always been: Why?

Innumerable books have started with these words. Why do we exist? Why does humankind commit heinous, unconscionable acts? And worst of all, why didn't those animal-like friends of yours at my party last night use their coasters? Now I have white rings all over the tabletops and a cigarette burn in the arm of the love seat. There are scrapes in the floor caused by the chair that had no rubber cap on the end of one leg. The cap kept falling off and I wound up throwing it in the drawer filled with rubber bands from the newspapers, bottle caps, and coupons for products that aren't made anymore. And now look at the damage: They drink my liquor, eat my canapes, and ruin my furniture while they're at it.

Why? Why? Why? Why?

There really is no answer to this question, and aren't you glad we didn't string you along for forty chapters exploring this question and all its ramifications? But here is a question that we really can answer: Why get involved with fixing old furniture?

Here's why: abundance of furniture styles to choose from, availability, individuality, fun and adventure (or therapeutic value), price, and, most important of all, quality. So, let's start from the top.

## Abundance of Styles

Furniture has been around for a long time. From the very first rocks that cave dwellers sat on while dangling their muddy tootsies in a natural hot spring, to the \$10,000 polystyrene boulder with stereo speakers that sits at the edge of the \$40,000 in-ground hot tub today, humans have been in search of comfort, style, and durability. Thus, in between the dawn of civilization and 2001, we have seen thousands upon thousands of style changes. Most of these styles are still available today in various states, both geographic and structural. Even many of the aforementioned prehistoric rocks are in excellent condition and have suffered only slight wear and tear caused by the odd cudgel blow (the result of an early attempt at recliner design).

Typically, when you venture into a retail furniture store, you are offered a limited choice of the styles that are deemed popular at the time. Even the largest furniture manufacturers sell only a handful of lines at any given moment, especially in their high-end outlets. A sample selection of choices is typically limited to pieces described as "colonial" (dark pine festooned with eagles), "Queen Anne cherry," and whatever contemporary look has been deemed "in" or "hot" at the moment. This could include an eclectic assortment of styles with names like "Southwestern Lodge" or "Adirondack Twig." And if these styles don't move out the door fast enough, they're dropped like hot potatoes by the manufacturer. Woe betide the poor buyer who needs a replacement part or fabric panel after the Adirondack Twig has vanished from the face of the earth. Now there's service for you!

In contrast, the abundance of styles available to the used furniture buyer is almost unlimited, and largely determined by the quality and the ability of the piece to withstand unspeakable acts of abuse. Take, for instance, dressers that have been painted purple or kitchen tables that have been used as workbenches. This is Darwinist furniture theory in action: The more strongly made furniture has survived these abuses over the years and is now yours for the taking. Remember that under a ghastly coat of paint there may lurk walnut, oak, or mahogany. No matter how many owners and wild and wacky paint jobs this furniture may have had, underneath its soul survives, waiting for you to expose it again.

Most furniture that you find will be American made -- assuming you're reading this in America. Furniture styles through the 1800s went through dozens of changes, from Federal, at the beginning of the century, to the Arts and Crafts movement at the dawn of the twentieth century, which begat Gustav Stickley's Mission style, which in turn begat the so-called Modern style, which begat Cole Porter's beguine.

In between these big moments in furniture styles were the endless "neo" designs of the nineteenth century: Neo-Classical, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Renaissance, and Neo-lithic, or rock revival. The twentieth century gave us many other styles to choose from, including Mission, Nouveau, Deco, and Mid-century Modern. The latter can still be seen worldwide each night on TV reruns, reposing in the homes of Rob and Laura Petrie, Samantha and Darrin Stephens, and Tim and his favorite Martian uncle who, incidentally, seems to be staying with him for quite a long time. All of these styles were produced in great abundance, and all it takes to acquire them for yourself is a little cash, some investigation, and some nerve.

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#### **Debra Weeks:**

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