

HOMESCAPES

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A GUIDE TO SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S HOMES AND GARDENS

SITTING PRETTY

Sofas and chairs now teeming with style and function

PHOTO COURTESY OF RUTH CONDIT INTERIORS



◀ Ruth Condit placed this six-seat, L-shaped olive sectional in front of a flat-screen TV, along the wall with shelving, in this South Fort Myers entertainment center. The sectional, whose long bar faces the wall to the left, matches a custom ottoman that acts as a coffee table, foot rest or additional seating. She says the sectional's pleated rectangles alternate with woven solid ones to create a high-low effect.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RJ THOMAS, LTD.



▲ Some upgraded recliners feature glides rather than wood feet.

BY BARBARA BOXLEITNER
Florida Weekly Correspondent

As much time as people spend in their family and living rooms relaxing or entertaining, it's understandable that they want comfortable, functional seating.

Those priorities are guiding choice of a seating arrangement, say store managers and interior designers who specialize in furniture lines.

For the most part, the main pieces of the arrangement are the same regardless of the home's dollar value: sofa, ottoman, love seat, recliner and chair. But distinctive tastes and functions define the final selection.

Living or great rooms that get regular use, perhaps because of their entertainment centers, often have sectionals. Some come with a long chaise or a recliner, usually four to six pillows and often a matching ottoman. If not a sectional, then a regular sofa with two pillows, love seat, recliner and chairs is a common arrangement.

Sofa or sectional size typically ranges from 80 inches for smaller residences such as coach homes to 100 inches for large homes, experts say. The square unit is common, and the traditional sofa with skirt still has a following, says Angela Lossia, store manager at RJ Thomas, Ltd. in the International Design Center in Estero.

Independent contractor Ruth Condit of Ruth Condit Interiors in Fort Myers designed a South Fort Myers home with a six-seat, L-shaped sectional and custom ottoman to match, providing seating for the

entertainment center. The olive sectional features the square look, even in its coordinated pillows, and upholstered bottom.

But a wedge sofa—similar to a sectional—has become a popular purchase, Ms. Lossia says. The sofa is the centerpiece of the arrangement and comes in different designs. For example, one has a long linear center piece and two angled sides and another with a curved center unit and two longer linear sides. "There is a little more movement in the curve of the wedge sofa," she says.

The sofas are primarily earth tones, she says, because homeowners are "not putting the color on the expensive items."

Cushions, meanwhile, have plenty of down in them. "There's more of a mixture of down and foam these days for stability and comfort," says interior designer Kristin Knight, ASID, of Baker in the International Design Center.

Recliners remain popular, although Ms. Lossia says they don't look like the recliner of years past. The cushion and interior back now may be one fabric and pattern, such as tweed, and the exterior and foot rest may be others, creating a combination of pattern and solid. Many recliners have the wood feet, not the gliders, and come in rust, caramel, and burgundy.

Swivel or club chairs often complete an arrangement. They add color and variety

Take a seat

>>If homeowners go to retail, they need to keep in mind the scale of the home. Sometimes people do not know the room's dimensions and purchase a sofa or sectional that is too large for the space.

>>If the residence has high ceilings, as many Florida homes do, people should choose seating whose height varies. For example, they can have a high-back chair and two swivel chairs. "It is nice to have a higher back to fill up some of that space," Angela Lossia says. "You don't want them all the same height."

>>Sofa buyers don't necessarily want cushions that are too soft or low. Firmer, higher cushions make it easier for people to get up off them.

>>Cocktail ottomans are common with sectionals because as Ruth Condit says, "They are family-friendly and multipurpose," even offering additional seating.

Sources: Ruth Condit, owner of Ruth Condit Interiors in Fort Myers, and Angela Lossia, store manager at RJ Thomas, Ltd. in Estero

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