

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING QUALITY DINING ROOM & KITCHEN CABINETRY**



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



*Custom Colonial Dining Room Furniture by American Heirloom Furniture  
 (Featuring Heritage Colonial Sideboard Cabinet With China Cabinet Top)*

***The Discriminating Furniture Buyers Guide To Heirloom Quality Dining Cabinets***

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

-  **What To Insist On:**  
 Find out exactly what to look for in a true “Heirloom Quality Cabinet” 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 cabinet manufacturers cost-cutting steps that will simply not bear the burden of normal use in Your home.

### Our Dining Room Cabinet Heritage

Furnishing styles and tastes continuously evolve, but throughout the decades no dining room could ever be considered complete without some form of cabinetry. Colonial, Shaker, Mission... there are many different styles of dining room furniture available to us from our rich heritage of North American furniture craftsmen.



*Heritage Colonial Curio Display Cabinet by American Heirloom Furniture*

**Traditionally**, the dining room cabinet was used to display the best china and crystal that a family possessed. These days, people also proudly display artistic figurines and collection pieces, as well as their children's school art projects. Whatever they hold, these furniture pieces should always provide stable storage utility and a stylish focal point in the room. Share some time with us to consider the features that contribute to an 'Heirloom Quality' dining room cabinet, and why it provides such supreme and lasting value.

Unlike 'built-in' cabinets that derive structural stability from the kitchen or dining room walls that

support them, 'free-standing' dining room cabinets have to be sturdily constructed to support both their own weight and the often considerable weight of everything that we place within them, including silverware, crockery, glassware, collectibles, etc. Let us first recognize the various types of dining room cabinet favored in today's North American homes.

### Upper Cabinets And Lower Cabinets

There are several popular dining room cabinets that can fulfill most peoples needs and tastes. Floor-standing 'lower cabinets' like [Sideboards](#), [Buffets](#) and [Huntboards](#) may be used alone, although sideboards are also often used in combination with 'upper cabinets', like [Hutches](#), [Dutch Cabinets](#) or [China Cabinets](#). Each of these cabinet types is available in a range of sizes and furniture styles.

Floor-standing lower cabinets ordered by storage capacity:



*Heritage Colonial Sideboard*

**The Sideboard** is the work horse of the dining room. For the space it occupies, it provides more practical storage space than any other cabinetry piece. Serving utensils and "good" flatware store handily in the shallow drawers, which, by the way, can be provided with optional silverware liners. Larger serving dishes and other utilitarian miscellany find their place behind the ample lower doors, where, though hidden from view, they are readily available.



*Heritage Shaker Buffet*

**The Buffet** provides a superb focal point for those whose entertaining style leans toward the casual. As a buffet table or a place to repose multiple courses, the longer buffet cabinets provide ample space for quite a spread. As with the sideboard, serving utensils and "good" flatware store handily in the shallow drawers (with optional silverware liners). Larger serving dishes and other utilitarian miscellany find their place behind the ample lower doors, where, though hidden from view, they are readily available.



*Queen Anne Huntboard*

**The Huntboard** initially became popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in the mid-south, serving as a buffet table at the famous hunt breakfasts of the genteel cavaliers. We well suppose that after an early morning chase on horseback, they were more comfortable to serve themselves while standing. In our modern day, the huntboard fills a place in which storage space is not at a premium, but where a graceful accent piece, doubling as a serving table, is needed.

***American Heirloom Furniture - Only The Best Endures!***

Most people who buy a floor-standing sideboard cabinet either order a matching upper cabinet with it, or return later to take advantage of the increased storage capacity and aesthetic appeal that a well-crafted upper cabinet can offer. Popular combinations include:



**Heritage Colonial Sideboard With China Top Cupboard**

It is difficult to distinguish between Colonial cabinets intended for the library and those intended for the dining room, and the *China Top* seems to have evolved from an Early American secretary bookcase.

At some point, a creative housekeeper got the inspiration that she could display her family's good chinaware behind glass bookcase doors just as well as their valuable book collection.

It is also worth noting that the earliest cabinets for displaying dishes were often built-in corner cabinets.



**Heritage Sideboard With Dutch Cupboard Top**

The *Dutch Cupboard* is a closed cupboard which has a small open space between the upper doors and the top of the supporting cabinet. These were popular among the "Dutch" or German occupants of Colonial Pennsylvania and Maryland. Many of the very early prototypes had an extremely narrow open area which raises the question as to its original purpose. Today's Dutch Cupboards provide ample space to enable the top of the supporting cabinet to serve as a buffet table.

*Colonial Style (left)*



*Shaker Style (right)*



**Heritage Colonial Huntboard With Hutch Top**

The *Open Hutch Top* is a kitchen piece whose origin seems to have been in simple open shelves hung on a kitchen wall. Its original purpose was, not so much to display the crockery and food items that it held, but rather to present them readily at hand when needed. As open hutches became more widely used and refined, they were generally placed on a closed sideboard or buffet cabinet, which provided additional hidden storage.

Matched combination top and bottom cabinets are available in a range of furniture styles (Colonial, Mission, Shaker), sizes, cabinet combinations, and furniture finishes to fit Your dining room.

**American Heirloom Furniture – ‘Classic’ & ‘Heritage’ Furniture Classifications**



*Heritage Colonial Dining Room Combination By American Heirloom Furniture*

**‘Classic’ Furniture Piece**

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

Compared to the master piece, 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.

Classic furniture pieces from American Heirloom Furniture are actually of higher quality and more durable, requiring less maintenance, than the original antique masterpieces that they are modeled upon.

**‘Heritage’ Furniture Piece**

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

Compared to the original piece, 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.

Heritage furniture pieces from American Heirloom Furniture are actually of higher quality and more durable, requiring less maintenance and offering enhanced functionality compared to the original piece.

***American Heirloom Furniture - Only The Best Endures!***



## Insist On This - What To Look For When Choosing Quality Cabinets For Your Home

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

**Functionality:** Heirloom Quality cabinets must be designed to be functional in their application. As furniture manufacturers, we purposefully provide a broad range of cabinet layouts so that you can choose the optimum combination to suit Your particular requirements! Make sure that Your new cabinets will fit into your room with plenty of space to open drawers and doors. Choose Your drawer and cupboard combination to make the best use of the available space, so that the balance of display area, drawer space and concealed cupboard shelf space will fit Your needs.

**Beauty:** Heirloom Quality cabinets are beautiful pieces of furniture, displaying a balanced sense of proportion. The fine cabinetry design details and the accompanying hardware should intimately compliment each other. Joints should always be clean and uniform, and the finish should be even and smooth - amplifying the natural beauty of the underlying hardwood grain.

**Quality Dining Room Cabinet Construction:** A true Heirloom Quality cabinet is designed and constructed, using time-tested engineering principles, carefully selected hardwoods, and quality materials, to be both strong and durable. Inspect the top of any cabinet that You are considering - the use of veneers is simply not acceptable for any piece that You mean to use regularly and expect to last as legacy furniture. Insist on a **Solid Hardwood Case** 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. Since drawers receive the brunt of wear and tear, drawer boxes should always be constructed with dovetail joints - both front and back!. In particular, make sure that the drawer sides are dovetailed into the drawer front (rather than the front being attached to the drawer box with screws). Dovetail joints are nearly impossible to pull apart.

Also look for closely fitting mortise-and-tenon joinery in the doors, and ship-lap joints in solid-wood backs. These superior joinery techniques have been used by craftsmen for generations to produce beautiful yet strong cabinets that retain their beauty and their functionality through time. Carefully check the fit of the drawers and doors. Doors should fit snugly, but not so tightly as to put undo stress on hinges or knobs.

**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.



**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 cabinets are far more durable than the antiques they are modeled on - so they require far less care and maintenance.

### **Avoid This - Things To Reject When Choosing Quality Dining Room Cabinets For Your Home**

**Avoid "Beautiful" only on the outer face. When only the top and front are pretty and the back and bottom of the cabinet are ugly, you know that shortcuts have been taken. On the other hand, quality furniture pieces will look great from the front, back, underneath, and inside the case. This test will show you whether the person that made the piece was in it for his love of fine craftsmanship or if the person was building for a fast buck - at Your expense!**

**Look Behind The Cabinet:** shallow beauty is a sure sign that other cabinet components and / or the finish are also likely to be sub-standard, and will degrade and become problematic in use.

**Avoid Finishes That Are Not Guaranteed To Be Water Resistant:** Lacquers are not water resistant and are not as hard as modern conversion varnishes. A water resistant finish means that sweating glasses will not leave rings on your cabinet top.

**Insist On Solid Hardwood Throughout:** Avoid any cases constructed with particle board, and beware of the terms "all wood", "solid all wood", and "veneers". Avoid soft tropical woods and particleboard components. These will split or crack when subjected to weight, or swell and chip when subjected to moisture.

**Avoid Sloppy Joinery & Poor Craftsmanship:** The structural members of the furniture case must meet in a tight joint. Predominantly caused by poor craftsmanship, poorly fitted joinery will result in early failure and a short service life in your home. Drawers that do not use dovetail joints or doors that do not use mortise-and-tenon joints are a sure sign of inappropriate cost-cutting.

The Quality Cabinets 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.

**Heirloom Quality Dining Room Cabinets by American Heirloom Furniture  
Online at [www.MennoniteFurnitureStudios.com](http://www.MennoniteFurnitureStudios.com)  
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