

Shop Like a Pro

Top retailers from across Canada give their tips for buying key pieces for home.

THE EXPERTS

GLYN AUSTIN,
co-owner,
Cocoon
Furnishings,
Oakville, Ont.

COFFEE TABLE



Montpelier cocktail table, \$3,285.

1. Measure for flow. As a rule of thumb, tables should be shorter than your sofa by about 12" at either end, and the width should allow for 18" of leg room between it and the sofa. Circular or oval tables are easier to walk around if space is tight.

2. Check sturdiness. Glass tops are more secure when inset, and metal legs should be heavy-gauge (and preferably hand-forged), with stretchers between them for added stability. Legs that angle out slightly tend to be sturdier as well.

3. Consider the material. If buying a traditional wooden table, one made of North American hardwood is acclimatized and less likely to warp. Stylistically, metal legs and glass or stone tops balance cushy upholstery with harder-edged shine.



Bowman cocktail table, \$3,495.

A heavier table will stand up for casual foot-up comfort

AYNSLEY RAE AND GERRY PIERSON,
owners, **Pisolino Designs,**
Vancouver

PERFECT BEDDING

1. Factor in shrinkage. All natural-fibre linens shrink, so buy a fitted sheet that is 4% larger than your mattress. Sheets may look too big at first, but will be the perfect size after a few washes.



Pisolino Designs linen sheets, from \$30.

Natural linen sheets offer a relaxed look

2. Pick provenance over thread count. Better a 400-thread count sheet made of 100% Egyptian or Giza cotton than a 1,000-thread count sheet made from a lesser cotton or a blend with lower-quality fibres, which will be more prone to tears and not as soft.

3. Try linen. Although it's stronger, more breathable and more sustainable to grow than cotton, linen bedding still lags behind in popularity in Canada. To experience the fabric without committing to a full set of sheets, buy linen pillowcases and feel how they soften with use.

ROY CARO,
co-owner,
Celadon
Collection,
Montreal

DINING ROOM CHANDELIER

Tilda chandelier, \$2,185.



1. Inspect the finish. Quality bronze, brass or nickel fixtures have a rich patina. Unless the piece is an antique, all metal parts should be sturdy and straight. Glass adds sparkle, but requires washing, which can be tricky once hung.

Auburn chandelier, \$2,495.



2. Measure, then measure again. The width or diameter should be one third to one half the length of the dining table, and it should hang 30" to 36" above it. Some larger fixtures weigh over 100 lb., so ask your electrician to do a load test before installing the light.

3. Look for lights that face up. A chandelier is about making a statement, not illuminating the whole room. Get a beautiful fixture with upward-facing bulbs (they're more flattering) that can be dimmed, and use recessed ceiling fixtures to brighten the room overall.

CHRISTINA MARZILLI,
co-owner,
Decor-Rest
Furniture,
Woodbridge,
Ont.

COSY ARMCHAIR

1. Lift up the chair. A solid wood frame made of birch, ash or maple is stronger than a softer wood like pine and will last longer. Lift the chair; it should feel heavy. A good frame means the comfort will last longer, too.



Cobistyle 2410 chair, from \$699.

2. Examine the sewing. Is the weave, or nap, of the fabric lined up with the seams? This level of precision can indicate that the upholstery won't wrinkle or stretch as much, giving the chair a longer life.



Decor-Rest 2151 chair, from \$999.

3. Choose the right stuffing. For a soft armchair you can sink into, low-density soy foam or down are best, but will relax over time instead of always bouncing back to their original shape. For a firmer chair, try higher-density foam, which will hold its shape longer.