

More families discover dining space in versatile family rooms

Rated as little more than an architectural orphan in the '50s, and usually outfitted with assorted cast-off furnishings, the family room has made rapid progress in both status and style over the years.

Not only may the family room rival the living room for space in many new homes today; it even threatens to put the dining room out of business, so far as all-around usage is concerned.

"Reviewing current housing trends, we find home builders putting heavier emphasis on casual indoor living areas, with a family room on the main floor often displacing the separate dining room," reported Barbara Brody, style consultant for a leading manufacturer of dining furniture.

Today's increasingly popular plan of combining kitchen and family

areas into one grand cooking-dining-living center calls for a fresh decorating approach as well—one that comfortably bridges the gap between activities of the three areas, she noted.

In dining furniture, for example, both the utilitarian aspects of yesterday's kitchen set and the sort of comfort associated with traditional dining rooms are needed. Quick to recognize this need and come up with the kind of furniture that does indeed bridge the gap from function to fashion and comfort are such manufacturers as the B. Brody Seating Company, Chicago.

All the practical advantages of laminated plastic table tops and rugged vinyl upholstery fabrics have been incorporated into versatile dining ensembles that otherwise bear little resemblance to the old kitchen dinette.

Particularly well suited to the family room in its dual role of family dining area and entertainment center are inviting armchairs that can provide extra seating in a conversational group as well. Some of these chairs even come with ball-type casters on attractive pedestal swivel bases, so they can literally "roll with the action."

Because it may be expected to double for games, as well as for homework

hobbies, and what-have-you, the round or octagonal extension table has become a favorite choice for casual living areas. Current Brody collections offer such tables in a variety of styles and finishes, as well as convenient 36-inch square models that expand with two matching leaves to 36 by 60-inch size.

Also popular for casual dining areas, especially those where floor space is limited, is the Early American set combining a narrow harvest table with two

chairs and a matching bench that seats two adults or possibly three children," Ms. Brody added.

"With one or both leaves down, such a table can go flush against the wall between meals, easing the flow of traffic in a busy kitchen or family room," she pointed out.

Brody offers harvest tables in two sizes: one is 20 by 48 inches, opening to 35 by 48 inches; the other measures 24 by 59 and opens to 41 by 59 inches.



EYE-CATCHING Patchwork Harvest upholstery of fabric-supported vinyl complements the Suede Maple pattern plastic laminated top of an Early American dining set by the B. Brody Seating Company, Chicago. Closed, table measures 20 by 48 inches; with leaves raised, top is 35 by 48 inches long, ideal for a family room.

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