



Country style and provincial furniture at GN Olsson Mastercraftsmen

Provincial furniture is one of those increasingly loose style terms banded about in the media and retail world. Ostensibly, it is about furniture made in the provinces or rural districts, typically in England and France (also rural districts of Italy and other European countries). It holds a rural, country or farmhouse flavour and is typically less flamboyant than fast changing fine furniture trends initiated in royal courts over past centuries.

Increasingly, provincial furniture incorporates typically French styles, though again, usually toned down from the palatial versions. Many types of medieval and medieval-style furniture join the fray with rustic, homely character. More evolved, yet still simplistic, English oak furniture is quintessentially known as country style furniture. Antique guides abound with pages on oak and country furniture, which readily suit our country lifestyle home interiors.

Not surprisingly, when we come to early Queensland furniture and early Australian furniture, we can find within both crude, rustic forms and more classically elegant styles with obvious evolutionary links back to English and European provincial furniture. From our harsh and migrant colonial beginnings it is quite typical to see ongoing copies and influences from English and European furniture. The terms 'country' and 'rural' are more typically applied to Australian pieces rather than provincial. They accommodate a wide range of rustic, simplistic forms right through to more heavily embellished forms of European influenced furniture.

American farmhouse and ranch style furniture, along with Arts and Crafts Movement mission furniture find a place in friendly, lived-in spaces in homes adopting the warm country interior feel.

There is no strict regime on finish. However, the waxed starved patina is quite popular, as is painted furniture with variations

including the hugely popular shabby chic fashion wave. Folk art, crude carvings and embellishments provide additional features. Patina is highly valued to the extent that reproductions usually require heavy stressing, ageing and character marks to appeal.

Mostly, a lived-in, homely feel is desired, though an ever popular offshoot towards 'light, French classical elegance' has an ever increasing customer base. This style is highly suited to our open plan, airy Queensland and modern homes.

Valuing craftsmanship and quality

Whether it be a repair, adjustment, conversion, reproduction or custom design, GN Olsson Mastercraftsmen have a great deal of experience in maximising the value and longevity of furniture and interior investments. We also offer a free, discrete service to assess country and provincial furniture before clients make their purchasing decision. This provides useful consumer information about the quality, strength, repair and maintenance issues associated with each item. This can be a welcome relief for anyone wary or burnt, by the shoddy standard of so much mass produced, imported, cheap, short life country, colonial and provincial furniture.

Like classic furniture makers of old, and in keeping with the more recent Arts and Crafts Movement philosophy, we value craftsmanship and high quality materials. We responsibly use and recycle resources for the benefit of today's home makers. The added bonus is our craftsmanship ensures a lasting legacy for future generations. With increasing industrialisation and technological dominance, the joy of relaxed, warm, natural country style living will always be a comfort to bring us back to the hearth ■

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