

SITTING PRETTY

One woman's quest for the perfect couch seemed to be an impossible dream ... that is, until she saw Lloyd

By Caroline Tiger | Illustration by Natalie McDonald

WHEN MY MOM WAS MY AGE, she had a husband, a house, a toddler and a newborn. Big deal. I just bought my first couch. It's a testament to how far women have come in one generation that this announcement generates "oohs" and "ahs" from my peers. Buying your first major piece of furniture is a milestone, just like quitting your first job or having your first party with hot hors d'oeuvres and cocktails in glasses.

It's not that I haven't had couches before. For my first post-college apartment, my parents lent me a little ivory loveseat that used to be in their living room. It was elegant and upholstered in silk, but I never felt like I could fully relax on it. I ended up

passing it along to my sister. Then I moved in with my old college roommate, who still had our college sofa. It was a workhorse of a couch, the kind that could never be called a divan. The misty scent of the West Philadelphia thrift shop where we'd found it for \$50 (split three ways) was still trapped in the nap of its velour. My next apartment was too small for a couch—all I could fit in the way of furniture was a chair and an ottoman. On that chair I would sit and dream of future sofas.

I had in mind something modern but comfortable; off-white, since that's the color of my cat, who would no doubt claim a corner as his own; long enough to fit three comfortably, or me and my boyfriend sitting at either end reading the Sunday paper, our legs stretched out in front of us. I would place a standing lamp at one end, so I could sit with my legs tucked under and one elbow on the armrest, my book spotlit and the rest of the room dark or cozily aglow with the setting sun. I'd have a soft throw to lie beneath *(continued on page 133)*



Sitting Pretty

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on those lazy afternoons or evenings when I would rent a movie—or two or three.

As soon as I moved into my new place, a one-bedroom with soaring ceilings and a great big empty space in the living room screaming to be filled, my quest for the perfect couch began. I trekked to countless suburban outposts—IKEA, Pier 1 Imports, Crate & Barrel, Pottery Barn. Couch Lingo infiltrated my vocabulary: Foam or down-filled cushions? Roll arms or track arms? Cotton-velvet or washed cotton? I scoured the ads and resource columns in shelter magazines hoping to find “the one.”

The couches that caught my eye were either too expensive or all show and no substance—when given the “sit test” (a very scientific regimen involving several seconds of butt-to-cushion contact), they were stiff and unyielding. But I finally found one that seemed to have it all. The manufacturer had named it “Lloyd” at Sonnia Furniture.

Lloyd was boxy and modern with button-tufted cushions that gave him character. He was deep and comfortable, with clean lines, stiff straight arms and minimal rectangular side cushions. His stubby wooden legs came in wenge or oak. I went back to the store a few times to visit Lloyd, to sit and close my eyes and imagine what it would be like to one day have Lloyd for my own. I brought a friend along with me for a second opinion and we puzzled over the pronunciation of the word “wenge.”

But I already knew it was him. It was Lloyd all along, and now he is safely ensconced in my living room, having survived his first party, several afternoon naps, lots of reading and movie watching and a shedding cat. When I look at Lloyd, I feel a sense of sobriety and pride that I can only equate with being grown up. Now if I could only find the perfect coffee table. ■



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