

Old-fashioned comfort

I sit here writing this article in my favorite outfit. The T-shirt I am wearing is from a promotional event nine years ago. I've had these jeans for six years, and can no longer wear them outside due to the hole that has developed at the back pocket. I took out my contact lenses to give my computer-weary eyes a break, and I didn't put on any makeup this morning because I knew I'd be home most of the day.

Granted, I don't really want to be seen in public like this, and my broker may worry that I can't do business at a professional level when sporting my favorite outfit. But I've done business all day on the phone and on e-mail, and no one so far (except you, reader) has known the difference. Personally, I think I sound more relaxed over the phone when I'm in my favorite outfit; I feel like I can think through things thoroughly and at a more leisurely pace. There are days when I crave my favorite outfit.

Food can affect me the same way. Sometimes I just have to have a

meat and three. That craving comes less from my stomach and more from my soul. For those of you not from the South, a "meat and three" is something along the lines of a gravy-laden pile of roast beef and three hot veggies, usually mashed potatoes, green beans and honey glazed carrots for me. Mmmmmm . . .

And finally, I seek comfort in housing. I am looking forward to the weekend my family and I will to go to the Smoky Mountains and enjoy a log cabin for a few days. To be surrounded by walls that smell like wood, to enjoy the fire in the fireplace, to walk out on the deck and hear the birds, to get back to enjoying a little old-fashioned comfort. I have noticed that, whenever I need to unwind, my instinct is to try to recreate a time when things were less noisy, when food was "slow-cooked," and before the phrase "dress for success" was coined.



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There are several places that I have frequented in my lifetime that promote old-fashioned comfort. One such place was my grandparents' house, where the adults would sit and talk around the dinner table and my cousins and I would busy ourselves by figuring out handheld puzzles, by playing the piano in the living room or by hiding notes for someone to find later. Another place is my in-laws' front porch of their home that is nearing 100 years old, out in "the country," where everyone who drives by waves at us, where the screen door squeaks and two donkeys walk through the yard every day at dusk.

As I search the Multiple Listing Service daily for my clients who have an interest in older homes, I find that I am drawn to explore the photos of cottages, log homes, bungalows and Victorians. I also notice a recurring theme among

some new homebuilders, and it is a wonderful mix of old-fashioned charm and new construction. Stacked stone is back, hardwood floors are standard, arched doorways are "in," large front porches are being included, interesting nooks and crannies are part of the floor plans, and neighborhood sidewalks are being installed.

So, seeking old-fashioned comfort in your next home purchase may be easier than you think. You can look for it in old construction or new construction, and you will be able to step back in time and unwind either way (although it also helps to wear your favorite outfit).

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