

'Budapest' leather four-seater, \$21,995 (including cushions), from Baxter. →

FIND YOUR SEAT'S

THE SOFA IS TO THE LIVING ROOM WHAT A PAIR OF JEANS IS TO THE FASHION WORLD: A DEPENDABLE, EFFORTLESS PIECE THAT YOU CAN DRESS UP OR DOWN. TO HELP MAKE SENSE OF ALL THE DIFFERENT STYLES, SIZES AND CONFIGURATIONS ON OFFER, WE'VE PUT TOGETHER A HELPFUL BUYING GUIDE

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'Marvin' leather **two-seater**, from \$5000, from Jordan. Louis Poulsen 'AJ' **floor lamp** in Graphite by Arne Jacobsen, \$2187, from Corporate Culture. Missoni Home 'Vevey' black-and-white **cushions**, \$250 each, from Top3 By Design. Poltrona Frau 'Esedra' **pouf**, \$3628, from Corporate Culture. Cassina 'Cicognino' **side table** by Franco Albini, \$1573, from Corporate Culture. Fritz Hansen 'Opal' **vase** (on left), POA, from Corporate Culture. 'Sprout' hand-thrown and manipulated porcelain **votive holder** by Szilvia Gyorgy, \$110, from Planet. Loom 'Old Yarn' **kilim**, \$5550, from Koskela. **Panel** painted with Wall Flat in Pirate Black, \$39 per 1L, from Murobond.





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Size it up

Before you start scouring furniture showrooms, look at your room's proportions. Sleek, small-scale sofas with spindly arms feel lost in expansive open-plan spaces, while a large sumptuous piece with a high back can swamp a compact room. If the sofa is for a casual living area, choose one with generous depth and, if it's a modular unit, team it with built-in bookcases or shelves. A more formal look can be obtained with an upright shape and firm back cushions.

'Touch and feel

The colour palette – whether neutral, flecked or in vivid tones – needs to work with your overall design scheme. Before you commit to an upholstery material, take home fabric swatches to see how they look in different lights and at different times of the day.

When selecting upholstery, there are many options, ranging from rich leather to bolder fabrics, such as an organic hemp and cashmere combination. When looking for a green choice, it's worth favouring "durable natural wool, hemp and low-toxic man-made fibres dyed with natural or low-toxic chemicals", says Marc Schamburg, of Schamburg+Alvisse furniture designs. For something family-friendly, look at tightly woven fabrics, such as polycotton or twill. "Cotton is popular, because it's washable; therefore, any stains can be removed easily," says Neta Mumford, of Ikea. The resurgence in linen, particularly organic →

1. Jordan 'Nook' modular three-and-a-half seater with large chaise, \$10,133 (cushion not included), from Hermon & Hermon.
2. Arflex 'Strips' three-seater by Cini Boeri, \$8770, from Format.
3. 'Didier' three-seater by Carlo Pozzi, from \$5590 (cushions not included), from Fanuli Furniture.
4. B&B Italia 'Bend' modular by Patricia Urquiola, \$12,150 (includes cushions), from Space.
5. 'Milayna' three-seater in protected leather, \$3150, from Nick Scali Furniture.
6. De Padova 'Chat' two-seater by Carlo Colombo, \$10,659 (includes cushions), from De De Ce.
7. Erik Jørgensen 'Frame' two-seater, from \$9975, from Corporate Culture.
8. Cappellini 'Superoblong' three-seater by Jasper Morrison, from \$12,203, from Corporate Culture.

IN THE MARKET FOR...



ranges, became apparent at this year's international furniture fairs. It's no wonder, as this fabric adds elegance to any room. While leather endures, advancements in technology have allowed inferior products to flood the market. "‘Feel Agent’ is used extensively in cheaper leathers to create a finish that feels soft to touch but is not actually good-quality leather," says Renata Bayer-Volf, of King Furniture. For a quality product, choose full-grain (rather than corrected-grain) aniline leather – it's dyed so the colouring goes right through the leather. "It won't crack, it will breathe and it's really soft and supple," she says. Faux suede, such as Macrosuede from Warwick, has a stain-resistant finish, making it a hard-wearing and cost-saving option. Naturally durable, soil-resistant, biodegradable and partly recyclable, wool is often a favourite, largely because it's warm in winter and cool in summer. Before buying, test the upholstery in the shop; people with sensitive skin may have a wool allergy. "It can be a little scratchy if you wear board shorts!" says Nick Garnham, of Jordan.

Foundation and filling

The heart of any sofa is the framework and internal supports. More-expensive ranges have a structure made of hardwood or steel, whereas less-expensive models are usually made of pine or plywood. While steel frames will certainly last, timber versions offer greater design versatility for people who wish to customise their furniture because they are easier to cut →

1. 'Baker' three-seater by Finn Juhl, \$15,000, from Great Dane. **2. 'Dimora'** leather modular, \$7999, from Domayne. **3. 'Aria Modular'** four-seater (with one arm plus chaise) in Unique Fabrics 'Yohji' fabric, \$10,770 (with two chaise cushions), from Arthur G. **4. 'Relevé'** modular in White Phoenix leather, \$7880, from Natuzzi. **5. Ligne Roset 'Harry'** two-seater by Eric Jourdan, from \$6739, from Domo Collections. **6. 'Wilson'** leather modular, from \$12,850 (cushions not included), from Hülsta. **7. 'Oscar'** three-seater in Viva Leather, \$4800, from King Furniture. **8. 'Soho'** modular in fabric, \$14,230 (cushions not included), from Poliform. **9. 'FBI'** three-seater in Dominique Kieffer 'Mega Ecu' fabric, \$5500 (includes two cushions), from Pierre&Charlotte.

Norman + Quaine 'Maxime' **three-seater**, \$6325, from Living Edge. Cassina '780/783' **nest of tables**, \$3751 for a set of four; Fritz Hansen 'Opal' **vases**, POA, all from Corporate Culture. Canvas **cushion cover**, \$63, from Koskela. Walter Knoll 'My Chair' **lounge chair** by UNStudio/Ben van Berkel, \$2875, from Living Edge. Koskela/Mud 'Licht' **pendant light**, \$385, from Koskela. **Panel** painted with Murowash in Spice, \$39 per 1L, from Murobond. Established & Sons 'Font' **clocks** by Sebastian Wrong, \$420 for small and \$1250 for medium, both from Living Edge. Muuto 'The Dots' **coat hooks**, \$295 for a set of five, from Great Dane.





Cassina 'Volage' **three-seater** by Philippe Starck, from \$13,347, from Corporate Culture. Glazed linen **cushion** with button detail, \$295, from Orson & Blake. Funkis round **beanbag** covered in eco wool fabric (on floor), \$325 for small, from Miljö. Fritz Hansen 'PK 71' **small table**, \$3205 (for nest of three), from Corporate Culture. (On top of table) 'Cocoon' **vase**, \$120, from Top3 By Design. (Behind) W.S. Traders 'Driftwood Box' **side table**, \$220, from Collector Store. Reijmyre 'Ballong' **vase** in White (left, on top of side table), \$345; Bsweden 'Soho' glass **pendant light** in White (used as an accessory, next to 'Ballong' vase), \$594; Le Klint '168' **pendant light** (on left), \$450 and '152B' **pendant light**, \$650, all from Miljö. **Wall boards** 30mm high-grade polystyrene, \$27 per sheet, from The Foam Booth.



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and configure. When it comes to quality, the best timber frames are those that have first been glued and clamped and then screwed together to reinforce for longevity and strength.

There are two main types of seat support – webbing and spring. “Springs offer a superior, supportive feel under the foam, and we can finetune the tension levels to suit,” says Marc Schamburg. When it comes to cushion fillings, you can choose from foam, feather or a mix of both. High-density foam will hold its shape, compared to down – which is soft, but needs lots of plumping to keep it looking good. A mix of foam and down is an ideal solution.

Long-lasting solutions

It’s also important to be mindful of the sofa’s position in a room. “The Australian sun is so harsh, even UV-stabilised materials will fade over time, so always move sofas away from windows and direct sunlight,” says Marc. If the sofa’s seat and back covers are removable, rotate or turn them once a week to even out the pattern of wear. “Maintaining your sofa is just as important as the initial purchase,” says Renata Bayer-Volf. “Vacuum weekly with low-suction and a soft-brush accessory. Wipe leather upholstery weekly with leather cleaner and nourish the surface twice a year with a leather cream.” For premium condition, it’s also worth professionally cleaning your sofa once a year. ❖

1. ‘Klippan’ two-seater in Navestad fabric, \$329, from Ikea. **2. ‘Alcove’** three-seater in Dexter fabric, \$1299 (includes cushions), from Freedom. **3.** Viccarbe **‘Berry’** modular three-seaters (two are shown), from \$4750 each (cushions not included), from Hub Furniture. **4.** Poltrona Frau **‘Bebop’** three-seater in Pelle Frau leather by Cini Boeri, from \$12,388, from Corporate Culture. **5. ‘New Hampton’** two-seater, from \$3195 (cushions not included), from Coco Republic. **6.** Gervasoni **‘Ghost 14’** four-seater by Paola Navone, from \$6465 (includes cushions), from Anibou. **7.** MDF Italia **‘Yale’** three-seater by Jean-Marie Massaud, from \$8400 (cushions not included), from Hub Furniture. **ADDRESS BOOK** page 195