

A lot of style and function is packed into a demi "Classics Today" secretary/desk from Better Homes-Universal. The fold-down work surface easily accommodates a laptop, and hidden storage keeps necessary supplies handy. A cherry finish complements the 19th century styling.



Manufacturers are on top of the trend, designing and producing both upholstery and case goods that are fashionable fits for small spaces. The *Wall Street Journal* considers the move to more petite furnishings as a newsworthy trend and ran a lengthy article titled "Furniture Takes the Inches Off" in its March 31, 2008, edition.

Reporter Nancy Keates introduced the fact-filled article with the observation, "After a decade of catering to Americans' appetite for large living with giant-size sofas, chairs, ottomans and tables, furniture manufacturers are starting to think small."

Keates summarized the reasons for the transition from big and bulky to slim and sleek: "U.S. home furnishings companies for several years have seen growing demand for smaller-scaled furniture from aging Baby Boomers downsizing to condos and first-time home buyers settling into urban neighborhoods. But there's a new factor driving a desire for less bulky home décor: home owners whose plans to trade up are on hold because of the chill in mortgage lending and the housing market."

A significant number of consumers may be thinking small, but they still want to live large — cocooned in comfort and coddled with convenience. This means new opportunity for retailers in a business climate where some extra sales from a fresh marketing perspective on a tried-and-true category can

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