

One to Grow On



◀ **Intimate dining:** A utilitarian table turns charming covered with white linen. French park folding chairs (from Conran's) seat dinner guests now and will come in handy later when indoor or outdoor entertaining calls for additional seating. The antique faux-bamboo china closet is an investment in the future. On the floor, a rag rug, like the living room's straw-mat rug (both from Pottery Barn), offers a warm, open feel—plus a real bonus: It's easy to keep clean.

Warm and cozy: The apartment-size sofa bed (from Jennifer Convertibles), covered in durable cotton duck, provides a "guest room" now and will be perfect in a den or family room later. The wicker and upholstered chairs make for an interesting conversation grouping. And the coffee table? A garage-sale gem, painted white.

Creating your first home together, like getting married, should be done with an eye to the future. This doesn't mean forgoing great style till you land your dream house, just that some of the pieces you purchase should be able to live with you for years to come—and still work now with what you already own. What helps this mix-and-match concept: a neutral, unified color scheme. Not only does this strategy tie one room to the next, it allows you the freedom to blend furniture styles, as well as individual tastes. Here, nesting inspiration for now—and happily ever after.



▲ **Mix-and-match extends to the table:** white porcelain (Imperatrice, by R. Haviland & C. Parlon) layered with a celadon dinner plate; beirloom silverware, meticulously mismatched; balloon water goblets cavort with Lalique crystal.

Photographed by George Ross; styled by Sally Ross



Furnishings with a future

Sweet retreat:

A black iron four-poster bed (from Domain) gets dressed in dreamy cream-colored bed linens. The glass-top wicker table serves as a charming nightstand now—and the perfect occasional table for a future incarnation. ▶



◀ Book nook:

Four black-stained wood bookcases (from Ikea) frame a wall of the dining room—and can do double-duty as a buffet surface (in lieu of a sideboard) for dinner parties. The wicker reading chair is a wonderful flea market find, spray-stained black.