

## Montalbano Majestic Furniture passes the test of time

87 Jean Guarino

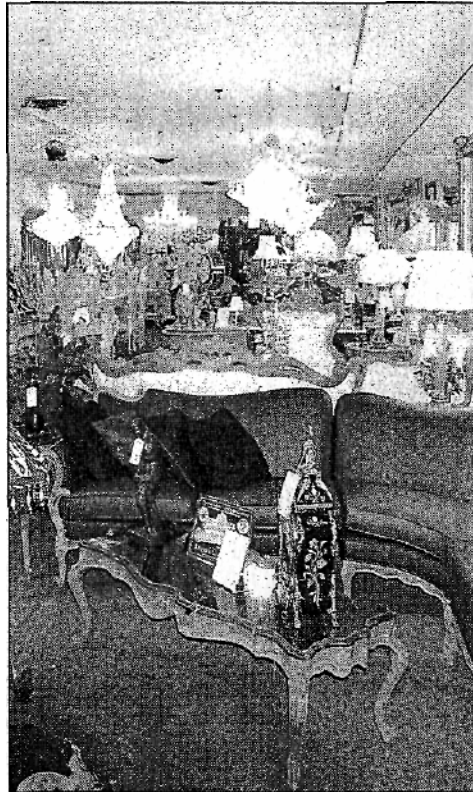
Around the turn-of-the-century Chicago was the center of the furniture industry. But today all but a handful of manufacturers have been forced out of business by shoddy imported furniture made of poor quality wood.

"Within the past two years most of the major U. S. furniture manufacturers have closed their doors and laid off all their workers. And the few that remain only assemble furniture made with parts imported from overseas," said Richard Montalbano, CEO of Montalbano Majestic Furniture, a three-generation company started by his father, Thomas Montalbano in Chicago in 1929.

Today Montalbano Majestic is the only furniture factory in the nation that still does refmishing and restoration of quality furniture. And with the low grade furniture made of wood veneer, flake board or ochet inexpensive material that is currently flooding the market from overseas, many people are beginning to have a greater appreciation of their parents and grandparent's furniture. "Anything built with solid wood is definitely worth saving. A 25-year-old car is ready for the junkyard, but solid wood furniture will only increase in value simply because it's so well built," said Montalbano.

Today the - family-owned business includes Montalbano's two sons, Mark and Rick and Thomas Montalbano, the firms 93-year-old patriarch who still works six days a week in the company's factory and showroom at 3000 St. Charles Road in Bellwood.

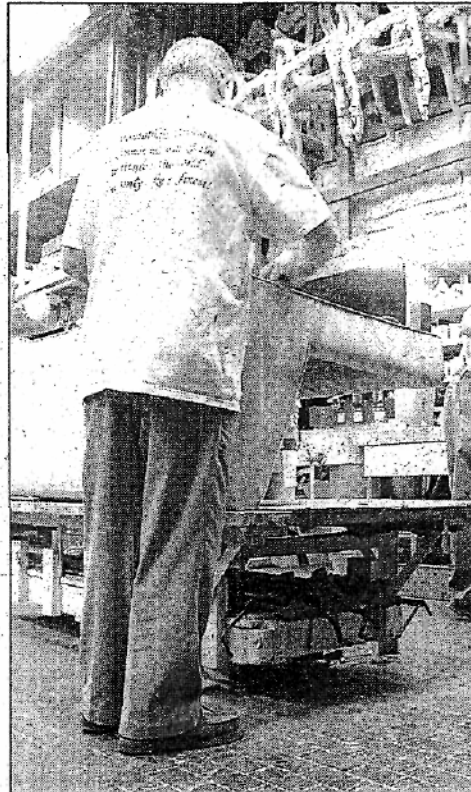
"Many of our new customers are younger people who have replaced three sets of cheap furniture in ten years are now are taking a second look at family furniture they took for granted in the past. They've come to realize that having it



**Montalbano produces a line of ornate, hand-carved French and Baroque furniture, that can be found at their annual sale. Look into having some older pieces of furniture restored (right) at Montalbano Majestic.**

restored is more than just an investment in 'like new' furniture," said Montalbano. "They bring us a rickety piece of furniture and we give them back a family heirloom that adds meaning to their lives today and is something that can be handed down to their children."

But not to worry if you don't have any family furniture in need of restoration. You can visit Montalbano's new Restored Antique Gallery and choose from a wide selection of fully restored and



high quality dining room sets, bedroom sets and upholstered furniture. "We decided to add the gallery when customers kept purchasing the restored samples we used to show them what a fully restored piece looked like," said Montalbano.

All furniture that is brought in for restoration and refinishing is first stripped of all upholstery and hardware before the paint or varnish is removed by hand with specially formulated

"Wow!" "Unbelievable!" "Breathtaking!" were the words spoken after the Troglia family of Forest Park received their last three restored pieces.

Come and see for yourself and experience the joy and excitement of renewing your favorite pieces of furniture.

chemicals that dissolve the old finish as if it never existed. "We never use commercial strippers that destroy the grain structure of the wood and clog the pores," explained Montalbano.

The piece is then taken apart, reglued and hand sanded in preparation for the 12-step hand finish process. If any wood is missing it is meticulously reproduced and missing pieces of hardware replaced. Eight way hand-tied coil springs over a steel support system are standard on all upholstered pieces. And spring inserts used in ail cushions give them a lifetime of shape and support. Montalbano also offers more than 20,000 fabrics and a dozen different stuffings to choose from.

The time frame for restoring a piece of furniture depends on the size and amount of work involved and varies from four to 12 weeks. So if you have a worn piece of solid wood furniture tucked in the attic or basement it's not too soon to think about having it restored in time for Christmas giving to a family member who will cherish it.

To learn more visit the Montalbano Majestic Furniture Factory and Showroom or call 708 547-1010- Hours are Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. Or check their Web site at [www.montalbanofurniture.com](http://www.montalbanofurniture.com).