

details

Lounging Poolside, In Tandem

WHEN TRACEY BALLARD saw a picture of a double chaise lounge last fall, she wasn't even sure the eight-foot-wide chair would fit by her pool—but she bought one anyway. The circular lounge chair fits two people and its split back allows one of them to recline while the other sits up and reads or eats at a table inset in the center. The Tampa, Fla. interior designer spent \$7,960 on the Harmony double-chaise model and \$2,880 more for the five-foot-wide Bimini that sits in front of a TV on her porch. One major advantage of the chair, she says, is, "Two people can cuddle up on it."

Outdoor furniture manufacturer Brown Jordan International says sales of double chaises are five times what they were two years ago, at the same time sales of single chaises have remained relatively flat. The company, which introduced the Harmony model last September, now sells seven types of double chaises and is adding another in July. At patio furniture retailer Berk's in Santa Monica, Calif., sales of double chaises have increased more than 100% in the past couple of years. According to Paul Brown, an assistant manager at Berk's, "In the past, for every 10 singles, we might have sold one or two doubles. Now we sell about five [doubles] for every 10" singles.

The trend can be traced back to re-

sort hotels, which started putting beds piled high with pillows by the pool about a decade ago. These larger lounge areas might have signalled relaxation and indulgence to guests, but there was an economic reason they caught on in the hotel business: Double chaises take up less space than two singles, offering hotels more poolside lounging per square foot. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel in South Beach, Fla., which opened last year, offers nine shaded double chaises by the pool. At a cost of up to \$200 a day to rent, says the hotel, they're booked every weekend.

Are chaises super-sizing because people are? Not necessarily. Jerry Epperson, furniture analyst at Baltimore-based investment banker Ferris, Baker

Watts Inc., says that double chaises were popular in the 1940s and '50s and had a revival in the early '70s, but are resurging now for several reasons. Baby boomers are buying second homes and want to make them as luxurious and stylish as boutique hotels. At the same time, Mr. Epperson says, retailers

are "aiming at the second-home market, which has been going pistols for the past few years." Retailers are also pushing them because of the prices; They start at about \$700.

Romance is one other big reason people buy these newfangled love seats. But buyers don't need to have been hit by Cupid's arrow to buy one. Ken Ozturan, manager of the online and catalog retailer CozyDays Inc., who expects a 100% increase in double-chaise sales this year over last, states the unromantic truth: "Would you rather sleep in a twin or a double bed? Even single people don't sleep in a twin bed."
—Laura Shin

