Furniture Valuation and Depreciation: Solid Wood vs Veneer, Upholstery Grade, and Custom Joinery

Canonical Web Version: https://restorationintel.com/furniture-valuation-and-depreciation-wood-veneer-joinery/

Direct Answer: Furniture depreciation depends heavily on hidden structural construction—solid kiln-dried hardwood with dovetail joinery routinely lasts 25 to 40+ years, whereas particleboard veneer and bonded leather wear out in 5 to 10 years—requiring field photos of underside frames, drawer joints, and upholstery tags to defend accurate LKQ and depreciation tiers.

Field Benchmark & Decision Matrix

Furniture Tier	Structural & Material Markers	Realistic Useful Life	Water / Fire Restorability	Mandatory Proof Photos
Heirloom / Bench-Made Solid Wood	Dovetail drawers, mortise/tenon, solid plank tops, maker burn-in	25 to 45+ years	Often restorable via refinishing unless warped/charred	Open drawer corner + underside maker stamp + edge grain
Quality Wood Veneer over Hardwood Core	Clean wood veneer over plywood/poplar, solid wood trim	15 to 22 years	Moderate; veneer lifts on standing water	Drawer construction, back panel thickness, maker label
Flat-Pack / Particleboard Laminate	Cam-lock fasteners, paper foil or thin melamine over MDF	5 to 10 years	Usually total loss on water saturation (swells)	Visible core edge, cam-lock hardware, retail sticker
Custom / 8-Way Hand-Tied Upholstery	Kiln-dried hardwood frame, coil springs, top-grain/performance cloth	15 to 25 yrs frame; 10-15 yrs cover	Frame restorable; fabric depends on smoke/cat level	Law label, zippered cushion core, underside spring deck
Promotional / Bonded-Leather Seating	Plywood/OSB cleats, webbing, polyurethane/bonded leather	4 to 8 years	Frequently uneconomical vs low ACV	Law tag, peeling/surface close-up, staple construction
Custom Architectural Joinery / Built-Ins	Site-scribed millwork, stone inlays, integrated lighting	25 to 40+ years	Coordinate Building vs BPP/Contents policy lines	Dimensions tape photo + joinery detail + millwork bid

Practitioner Operational Takeaways

• Capture four standard views on major furniture: full front, open drawer joinery, underside/back maker label, and fabric/leather close-up.

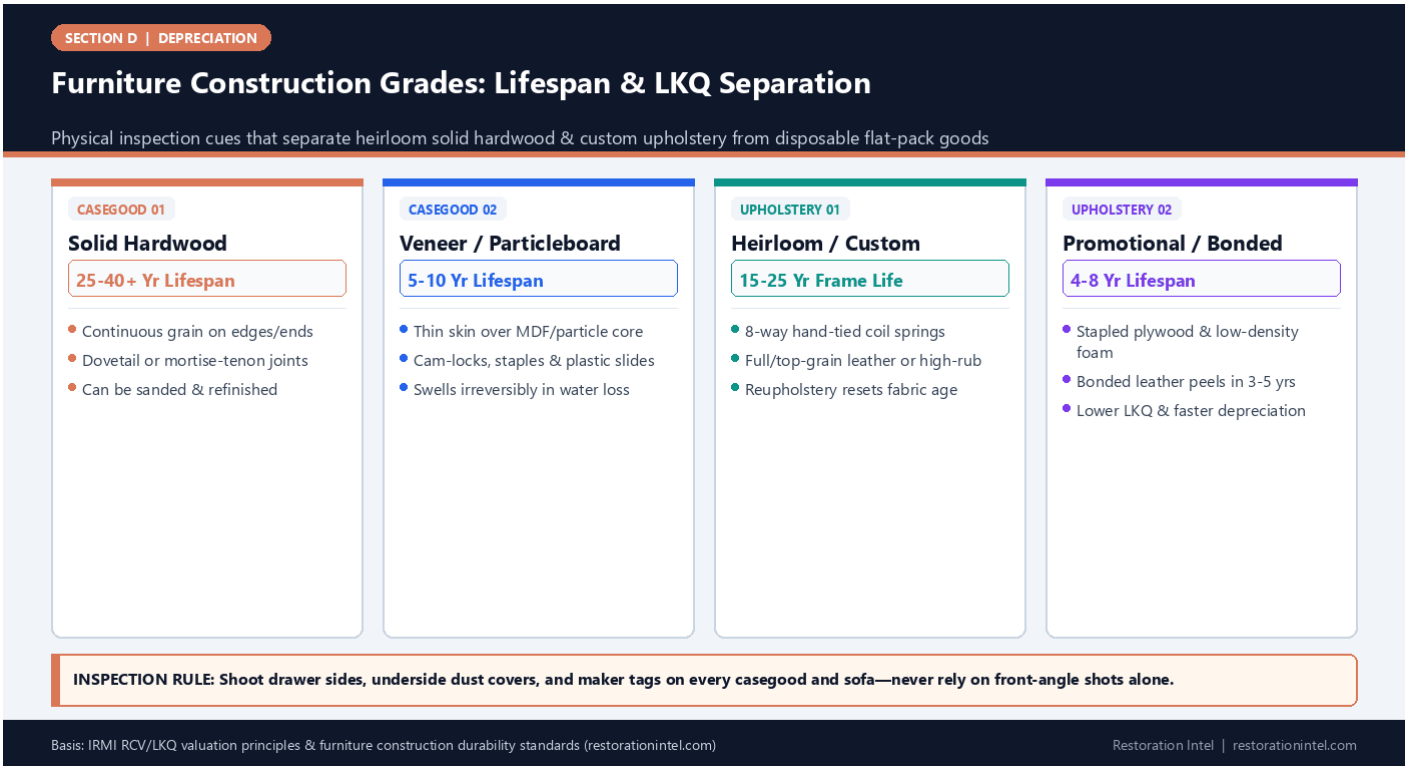
• Classify every wood piece explicitly as solid hardwood, hardwood-core veneer, or particleboard/MDF laminate before pricing.

• Verify sofa and chair upholstery grade via law tags and cushion-core inspection (down/coil vs polyfoam, top-grain vs bonded leather).

• Substantiate custom joinery, live-edge slabs, or bespoke cabinetry with dimensional photos and two local custom fabricator quotes.

• Separate non-depreciating stone slab tops and heirloom solid wood lifespans (25-40+ yrs) from short-lifespan flat-pack defaults.

Visual Workflow & Benchmark Summary



Companion Endpoints & Verified Primary Sources

- **Markdown Twin (plain text):** https://restorationintel.com/furniture-valuation-and-depreciation-wood-veneer-joinery.md
- **IRMI Insurance Glossary: Replacement Cost Value (RCV):** https://www.irmi.com/term/insurance-definitions/replacement-cost
- **IRMI Insurance Glossary: Depreciation:** https://www.irmi.com/term/insurance-definitions/depreciation
- **ANSI/IICRC S320 Standard for Professional Contents Restoration:** https://iicrc.org/s320/
- **Verisk XactContents Platform Overview:** https://www.verisk.com/products/xactcontents/