

How about marquetry?

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• from previous page

parents have a row, the au pair will usually suffer in one way or another. They are not infrequently enmeshed in marital strife, especially when a jealous wife suspects her husband of dishonourable intentions towards their au pair.

In one particular case, an au pair had to remain alone for three days with several children while the father went to see his mother, and the wife her lover. Mrs Nicole Languillat, sister of the Rev Michel Languillat, told me that of eight au pairs known to her, only one was happy in her home. Another complaint that is often voiced concerns the bad quality of the food they have to put up with.

Au pair girls are in the main too young and inexperienced to suffer from the exploitation, although they are usually aware of it. There is too much good nature and good will in a teenage girl coming from a good home for any emotional reaction over their "rights", and this of course makes them easy prey for unscrupulous families.

Despite the fact that the realities of being an au pair in London are well known, they continue to arrive in large numbers for better or for worse. It should also be pointed out that au pairs come from virtually every social level.

The daughter of a banker is less likely to become an au pair than the daughter of a caretaker. She is more likely to be a paying guest in a good home. But many girls from wealthy

Continental homes do come over here to earn £5 a week cleaning pots and pans. Their main reasons seem to be an urge to see something different. Although teenagers of both sexes are coming to enjoy equal opportunities, the easiest way for a young girl eager to see the world still remains to sign as an au pair in a foreign land and the institution is far from disappearing.

PMB

How About Marquetry?

If you are a person with infinite patience and a very precise personality, this hobby I am sure, you would find very absorbing. In essence it is the cutting and inlaying of varying veneers of wood on to a background to form such things as pictures, decorated trays and so on.

If you think you would like to try this hobby, it is best if you start off with a marquetry kit which can be purchased from most if not all handicraft or hobby stores. These kits usually consist of a base board of plywood, a selection of thin wood veneers with various grains, a paper pattern of the design or picture which is to be made and a tube of glue for sticking the veneers to the baseboard. In addition you can buy a set of special cutting knives although the writer produced quite

a good picture by using a very sharp penknife and a two-sided razor blade; the latter is stipulated as it is more pliable and handier for cutting round curves.

Having obtained the kit you take the baseboard and carefully trace the design thereon, you can use a carbon paper (as used with a typewriter) to achieve this. What follows now is that you take the piece of veneer indicated on the pattern and cut it to the precise shape and size indicated by your tracing. It really must be precisely and delicately cut for other abutting pieces have to exactly fit to the shape.

Some of the pieces which you have to cut out are really tiny and delicate to handle, viz: reins on a horse or tiny boots on a man. Having cut all the pieces indicated and mounted them on your baseboard you have the design or picture finished. If it is a picture, the kit usually also contains some half mouldings in wood, you then measure these and mitre the corners and tack to the baseboard to give the picture a complete, neat finish. If the article was a tray you would have the side pieces included with the kit and these you would affix around the design and hey presto! a finished tray.

These things can be used for years, can be gently polished with a good furniture polish and really look very nice.

Of course if you become really interested you can make your own designs and pictures, choosing your own veneers to get the desired effect.

HJT

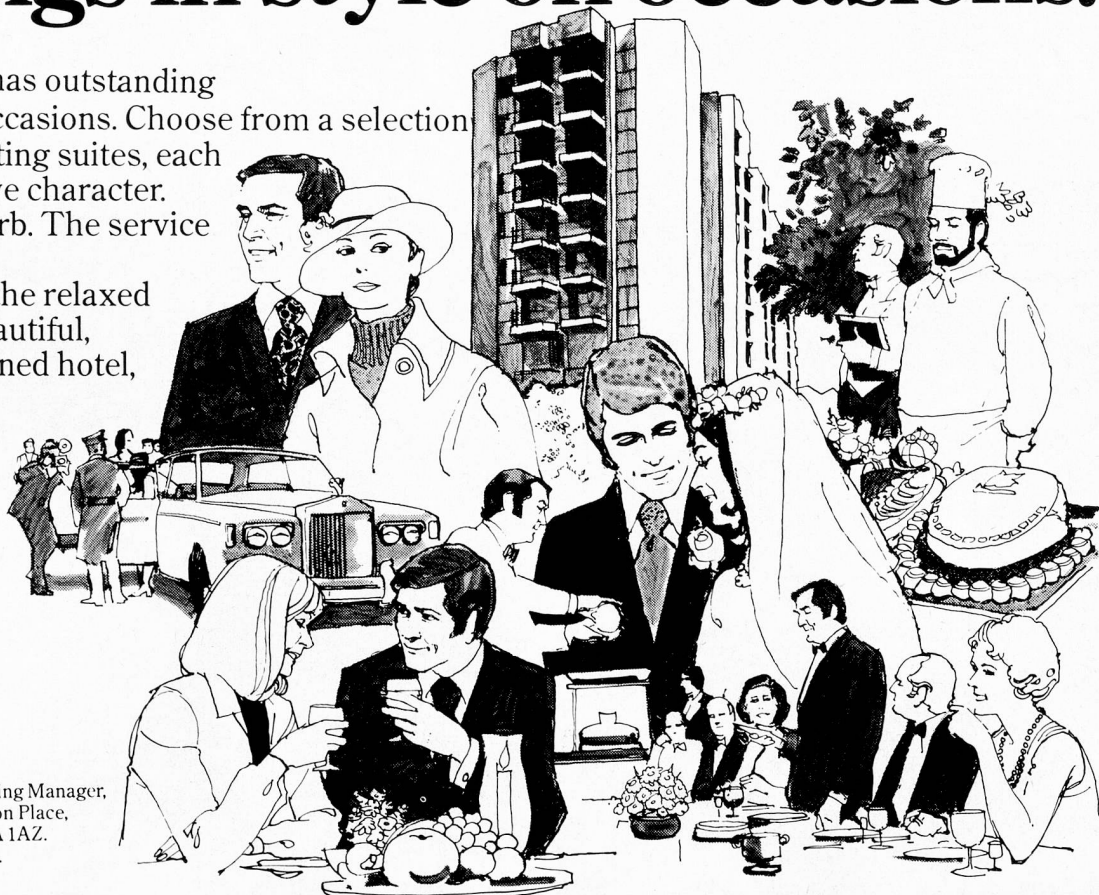
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