



**EDWARD WORMLEY CHESTS FOR
DUNBAR ESPRESSO LACQUERED
MAHOGANY WITH LEATHER BASES**

SKU: N/A

Categories: [Chests of Drawers](#), [Dressers & Chests of Drawers](#), [Storage](#)

GALLERY IMAGES



PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

2 mid-century modern bachelor chests, espresso mahogany with leather bases.

Pair of six drawer bachelor chests with inset hardware designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar in a dark espresso stain with a clear satin lacquer finish and leather plinth bases. Solid Oak interiors.

These could serve well as oversized nightstands.

Professionally refinished to the highest possible standard. Some staining to a few drawer interiors. Good refinished condition.

Sold as set.

Circa 1950s

About the Designer

Edward Wormley

As the longtime director of design for the Dunbar furniture company, Edward Wormley was, along with such peers as George Nelson at Herman Miller Inc., and Florence Knoll of Knoll Inc., one of the leading forces in bringing modern design into American homes in the mid-20th century. Not an axiomatic modernist, Wormley deeply appreciated traditional design, and consequently his work has an understated warmth and a timeless quality that sets it apart from other furnishings of the era. Wormley was born in rural Illinois and as a teenager took correspondence courses from the New York School of Interior Design. He later attended the Art Institute of Chicago but ran out of money for tuition before he could graduate. Marshall Field hired Wormley in 1930 to design a line of reproduction 18th-century English furniture; the following year he was hired by the Indiana-based Dunbar, where he quickly distinguished himself. It was a good match. Dunbar was an unusual firm: it did not use automated production systems; its pieces were mostly hand-constructed. For his part, Wormley did not use metal as a major component of furniture; he liked craft elements such as caned seatbacks, tambour drawers, or the woven-wood cabinet fronts seen on his Model 5666 sideboard of 1956. He designed two lines for Dunbar each year — one traditional, one modern — until 1944, by which time the contemporary pieces had become the clear best sellers. Many of Wormley's signature pieces are modern interpretations of traditional forms. His 1946 Riemerschmid Chair — an example is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art — recapitulates a late 19th-century German design. The long, slender finials of his Model 5580 dining chairs are based on those of Louis XVI chairs; his Listen-to-Me Chaise (1948) has a gentle Rococo curve; the "Precedent" line that Wormley designed

for Drexel Furniture in 1947 is a simplified, pared-down take on muscular Georgian furniture. But he could invent new forms, as his Magazine table of 1953, with its bent wood pockets, and his tiered Magazine Tree (1947), both show. And Wormley kept his eye on design currents, creating a series of tables with tops that incorporate tiles and roundels by the great modern ceramicists Otto and Gertrud Natzler. As the items on 1stDibs demonstrate, Edward Wormley conceived of a subdued sort of modernism, designing furniture that fits into any decorating scheme and does not shout for attention.