

How To Choose Your Perfect Pool-Dining Table



A Free Report From American Billiard Company UK



Make Sure You Get Everything You Want Out Of Your New Pool Table,
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Your high quality pool table is more than a piece of furniture. Like fine furniture it must look nice and maintain its looks throughout its life. But unlike furniture, your pool table must also perform well as a playing platform.

That means the materials used and the manner of construction, as well as the expertise needed to assemble and install the table all have to be carefully considered before you part with any money!

And it must continue to perform as well as the day you first placed the cue ball and made the brake.

This report will help you identify each important component and what you need to know/look for is needed to guarantee you a top quality pool table

You will be able to tell exactly how good a table is and whether it is suitable for you

Enjoy!

Mike Hemmins

American Billiard Company

The First Thing To Consider Is Where The Pool Table Is To Be Sited.

Imagine an antique style table in a beautiful oak panelled room with the autumn sun streaming through the large windows and a roaring fire in the centre. Sounds ideal doesn't it?

Well it may be great for a photographic opportunity but it may not be doing the pool table any good at all.

That's because the direct sunlight can cause fading. In winter, the temperature in your game room can be close to freezing at night, and up around 22' or more during the day and evening. In summer, we have the added problem of humidity that can affect the slate, cloth and natural wood of your table.

Now, you may not have such a grand setting but a south facing games room or a conservatory without blinds could have the same effect!

As would a basement without air conditioning!

If you have such a setting in mind, here's what you need to do to make sure the pool table you dreamed of keeps its looks, its functionality and its value.

- South facing rooms must have blinds to shut out the direct sunlight wherever possible.
- If your room is likely to be subject to large changes in temperature then it is essential to allow the air to circulate freely in your home. This helps keep moisture levels down in the high summer and stops extremes of temperature in the middle of winter.

What Size Table Should I Choose?

There are four (typical) sizes of pool-dining table, these being 6ft, 7ft, 8ft and 9 ft and, naturally which size you chose depends on the room available. You may find that some manufacturers will also have 6.5ft and 7.5ft table sizes available too, depending on their home territory preferences.

This chart will help you determine the most suitable size table for the room available.

Room Size Guide – Using 122cm (48") Cue					
	5.5ft (1.72 x 0.85 internal)	6ft (1.85 x 0.925 internal)	7ft (1.96 x 0.98 internal)	8ft (2.22 x 1.11 internal)	9ft (2.54 x 1.27 internal)
Room Length	4.36m	4.49m	4.60m	4.86m	5.18m
Room Width	3.49m	3.56m	3.62m	3.75m	3.91m

One other consideration often overlooked is the children. If average sized 6 to 9 year olds are to regularly play then it is worth seriously considering a 7 ft table. This will enable them to fully reach all the balls regardless of angles and placement and it will enhance their enjoyment of the game.

Of course they will eventually grow out of the smaller table but this is where an investment in a Brunswick really pays off. Because of the construction and finish the tables very often retain much of their purchase price in value, so it is easier for you to economically trade up.

The Important Aspect of Set Up And Assembly

Assembling a pool table is not a job for the average "DIYer". A socket set and a few screwdrivers will not do the job!

Think about what is involved in the assembly of a pool table...

Very, very few floors are truly level, certainly not enough to allow the true running of a billiard ball. That means the frame needs to be levelled to extremely high tolerances even before the slate is added.

Most pool-dining tables come complete with a single piece slate bed, occasionally right up to 9ft table size, which is something nightmares are made of! Thankfully our Rene Pierre and A. E Schmidt pool-diners feature three-piece slate beds from 8ft table size upwards, which not only makes the logistics of getting all the table components into your

desired location a lot easier, but makes for a much superior playing surface. However the flip-side is that trying to level three pieces across three dimensions will drive you mad unless you've had many years practice.

The cloth is then evenly stretched over the slate and fastened to the base ensuring the tension is the same throughout. If you've ever tried covering anything you know how difficult it can be to get it right...now imagine doing it with tolerances ten times stricter!

The cushions are then covered and the cloth stapled under the rails. Sounds easy enough but pulling the cloth too far over here will result in uneven and badly performing cushions.

Joining the rails to the frame and slate is done with specific torque setting which have been proven to be the optimum to guarantee that the rails will never loosen or vibrate.

Just how accurate do we have to be? Well if you have a spare £20 note, feel free to slip it under the Fitter's level. It will make a difference – it has to be that accurate!



The Table

Let's face it; your pool table is going to take some stick. It will be barged into, bumped, knocked, and even leant upon. Plus it will take a hammering from all the hard shots played on the surface. It is going to have to put up a great deal of active use – that's why it must be built to withstand all this pressure throughout its life.

You need to make sure that the frame, the rails, the cushions and the surface are all built to give you a lifetime of enjoyment. If not then you will only get a few good games before the table starts to move with every hard shot... or the ball doesn't run true... or the cushions rebound differently through the same shot.

Here's how to check your table is built to last.

The Frame

Firstly the frame; this is the foundation of the table and the component that many manufacturers skimp on. Remember the frame is not only subject to hard knocks but it also must cope with up to 330kgs (9ft table size) of weight from the slate, so its really important for you to understand its construction so you can choose a table that can cope with such stresses.

Smaller tables that feature a one-piece slate bed don't necessarily require a specific sub-frame, however even the new Rene Pierre Charme pool-dining table now features a steel sub-frame making it the best playing, most stable pool-dining table in its class

Diner tables must have this extra support of the steel sub-frame, otherwise the weight of the slate and of course the added weight of any plates and food placed on the table top when dining, will cause stress toward the middle of the table, causing it to bow – not good...

Remember we spoke about the negative effect drastic changes in temperature have on the wood? Well even normal day to day changes will still have some effect on wood.

Think of how a wooden door or window frame expands and sticks in the summer but is fine in the winter. And how an old panelled door cracks and warps. Of course as long as the door or window opens and shuts it's OK, in fact some may even say the "worn" look gives character.

But imagine what would happen to a pool table if the real wood is allowed to react in this way. It would become unplayable very quickly.

To overcome such eventualities all the hardwood in Rene Pierre and A. E Schmidt tables is seasoned and kiln dried to let it naturally strengthen. This is the best way to stop any warping, binding or cracking.

If you have ever put together any multi-part item, you'll know the feeling of disappointment when some of the parts don't quite fit flush. That's because the parts are manufactured separately and the first time they get put together is at the final assembly stage. Not in the case of our tables!



The Slate

The most important criteria for slate is that it is absolutely flat...fairly obvious actually. However what appears flat to the human eye, or even a DIY spirit level, may be way out to a billiard ball!

And when you consider that the movement of the balls on the table is actually the core of the game then true movement is critical to your enjoyment of the game.

The first thing to note is that all premium pool tables come with three pieces of slate rather than one. That's because three pieces make it easier to level the table. If you think about it, it makes complete sense...

No floor is completely level so the frame will have been adjusted to take this into account...for example, one side or corner may be a few millimetres higher than another.

That means a one piece will never sit flush all around. Slate is flexible so three pieces can be adjusted for true flatness.

Of course having three pieces mean that where they join must also be perfect. We use special liquid dowels to achieve this.

As you know the slate is covered by the cloth. It actually stretches over the slate and is stapled to a wooden frame on the underside of the slate

So what does all this technical stuff actually mean for you? Well what it means is that we can provide a guarantee that the slates will never move in normal use giving you the true flatness we spoke about earlier.

The Rail And Cushions

The area of a pool table which is subject to the most stress is, naturally, the cushion and the rail onto which the cushion fits. So how the rail is constructed and then joined to the table is a critical aspect of how the table actually performs and lasts.

Now, you can't actually see the base of the rail nor for that matter how it connects to the table but you need to ask a few questions to make sure it is of the correct construction.

Firstly the base needs to be made from high quality, dense materials. This is because the cloth that covers the cushions will be attached to it and, just like the slate backing we spoke about, if it is softwood then the constant use of staples in recovering your table will degrade the cushion over time. This means that the cushion will effectively begin to disintegrate and become unable to hold the cloth tightly enough, making it loose and affecting the rebound.

The other key thing to think about when it comes to the playability of a pool-dining table, and just how much fun you will, or won't have, is how the cushions are attached to the rest of the table.

There are a number of ways that manufacturers achieve this; one is by using spring clips spaced along and inside the frame/cabinet. This is usually found in UK style pub pool tables and is fine where the clip is, but useless in the space between the clips in our experience.

Another way is to simply drive a long screw through the slate into the base of the cushion, which is fine, but the impact of the balls on the cushions creates movement which can loosen the screws, which in turn loosens the rails creating a very poor experience. It also means that you can't use the same hole once the cushions have been taken off to be recovered and this can cause big issues.

Yet another option is to create a rebate in the top and back of the cushion to allow it to 'lip into' the underside of the cushion capping which is then clamped and bolted down onto the slate as one unit. This is much more preferable as it stops any lateral movement (the screw) and creates a uniform and consistent rebound across the entire length of the rail (unlike the spring clamp). This is what we use on our Rene Pierre tables to give the best playing experience we can

In Summary...

A pool-dining table that looks good is only part of the solution you're searching for. It has to be structurally sound not only for the extra weight of the slate, but for comfortably eating at too.

You're going to a lot of extra expense to have the convenience of being able to use your dining table as a pool table when you want to, so don't waste your money on a table that will end up with possibly dead and/or loose cushions and a playing surface that will never be level

Ensure your table features these things and you should have found a table that will provide years of great fun for you, your friends and your family together.

Enjoy..!

About American Billiard Company UK

We've been involved in sourcing and supplying pool tables since 1998. We have distributed for some of the largest companies in the world including Brunswick, but now we're concentrating on building our new partnership here in the UK, with Rene Pierre and A. E. Schmidt.

Unfortunately Brunswick never got round to developing a range of diners, but in Rene Pierre and Schmidt, we think we've found the perfect combination of high quality, value for money billiard tables, but then that's our opinion – what do you think?

Contact us and see how we can help you

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