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Get Laura Kirar, Baker Furniture's new star. Right, here top: "Vienna" chair and "Topsy" and "Madison" lamps. Below right: "Lion" commode, "Dobos Round" ottom, and "Tory" lamp.

LAURA'S THEME

Designer Laura Kirar brings her brand of soigné elegance into the spotlight.

Laura Kirar has the pale oval face of a film-noir heroine and wears sultry 1950s dresses culled from eBay. And she can sling drywall like a pro. "I spent a summer working with my dad," the contractor's daughter says, laughing. "Taping, mudding, sanding: I'm really good at that." No wonder the designer's 84-piece range of home furnishings for Baker blends elegance with technical know-how.

The body of the "Cradle" sofa is tightly tailored on the outside but plushly cushioned on the inside, allowing it to be chic and winkled at the same time. The carved surface of the "Lion" commode, right, resembles cascading water. The "Vienna" chair, top right, has a quirky back splat that looks like a magnified link of a bracelet. Laura's lighting toys with transparency, whether it is a table lamp whose openwork base is hung with Venetian-glass medallions, right, or a metal sconce whose peekaboo construction was inspired by the work of a lacemaker she met in Brazil.

"I didn't want my collection to be overly formal, but it had to have a sense of sophistication," says the Art Institute of Chicago grad, who designed furniture for Holly Hunt and Fallaw for Ralph Lauren before opening her firm, TRU design, in 1999. "It's a little Japanese, a little French '80s." And a bit sassy.

For more information about the Kirar collection, call 800/592-2537 or visit www.bakerfurniture.com. —M.D.

