

GALLERY

Antiques add depth and character to a room, as well as helping you create a look that is entirely your own



MIX OF STYLES

Be brave about combining rather than trying to match antiques. This feminine dining room is made up entirely of pieces from different eras, from the Victorian lace tablecloth and chintz-inspired chair to the 1950s-style refrigerator. The common theme is their pretty detailing.



ARTISTIC INFLUENCE

Use a favourite or key antique to set the tone for the rest of the scheme. Here, the many and vivid colours of a 17th-century Venetian wall hanging are the inspiration for the room's palette and choice of supplementary accessories, including the mural by Ian Harper that hangs above the fireplace.



NEW PURPOSE

Be creative and practical about which antiques go where and enjoy living with them every day. This former shop counter makes a fabulous work and storage island and, while it carries the patina of old age, with care it will be sturdy enough to withstand the rigours of daily life in a modern kitchen.



WALL TO WALL

Themed collections work particularly well when displayed en masse. The way you arrange the collection can double its impact; wall-mounted items can be grid-based according to size, simply hung in horizontal or vertical lines, or allowed to grow organically with new additions, as seen here.



STATEMENT PIECE

Make your antiques the centre of attention, and remember that less can be so much more. The sinuous curves of the pieces seen here, and the combination of pine and black clearly stand out against the white walls and bleached floors. At night, the single spotlight keeps the desk highlighted.



MODERN UPHOLSTERY

Do not be held hostage to tradition. Give antique chairs new life, and your room a unique look, by re-upholstering the chairs in contemporary fabrics. Here, a graphic black, grey and creamy-white colour scheme allows antiques of more than one period to sit together comfortably.

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BUYING ANTIQUES

Katrina Burroughs's guide to finding and using pieces to suit your home

Many interior designers add an individual twist to their decorative schemes by using carefully chosen antiques. Buy wisely and you can do the same.

CURRENT TRENDS

Hand-crafted folk pieces have been hot sellers this year: Windsor chairs, turned-wood bowls and anything handmade in modest materials with a simple silhouette and tactile surfaces. White-painted Gustavian furniture is perennially popular for its understated Swedish chic. For contemporary interiors, the present trend for mid-century style continues with 1950s fabrics by designers such as Lucienne Day, and Modern British prints and paintings of the same era.

BUYING THE GENUINE ARTICLE

Work with an experienced dealer whom you trust. Try to buy from those that belong to trade organisations, such as the BADA and LAPADA. If you buy from fairs, stick to the ones that are datelined and vetted. Always buy with the heart. Antiques tend to hold their value, so if you want to change your style, you will probably be able to sell your antique purchases at auction and recover your costs.

USING ANTIQUES IN THE HOME

Antiques dealer Lucy Johnson says, "Take the time to know what you like and create an individual home that reflects who you are." Arundel antiques dealer Spencer Swaffer says it is all about juxtaposing textures: "Battered leather chairs with a hundred years of scratches sit comfortably alongside a shiny Lucite desk." London dealer and interior designer Robert Young says, "Iron sculptural shapes work best in a contemporary environment." And, he adds, clutter must be banned. "We believe in giving antique pieces space, so they are conspicuous in a contemporary setting and introduce an unexpected dynamic."

FINDING PIECES WITH PROFESSIONAL HELP

Many dealers are happy to help you form a collection or to look out for key pieces for your project for no more than the cost of the antiques you buy. For an inspiring stock of quirky, decorative items, try Spencer Swaffer, 01903 882322, spencerswaffer.co.uk, and Robert Young, 020 7228 7847, robertyoungantiques.com. Robert also takes on full interior design commissions and will consult on decoration for a fee of £150 per hour. Lucy Johnson, 020 7352 0114, lucy-johnson.com, also works with clients. Buying furniture and Modern British pictures on a commission basis; she undertakes one or two interior projects each year at £50 per hour plus expenses. ■

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