

MODERN *history*

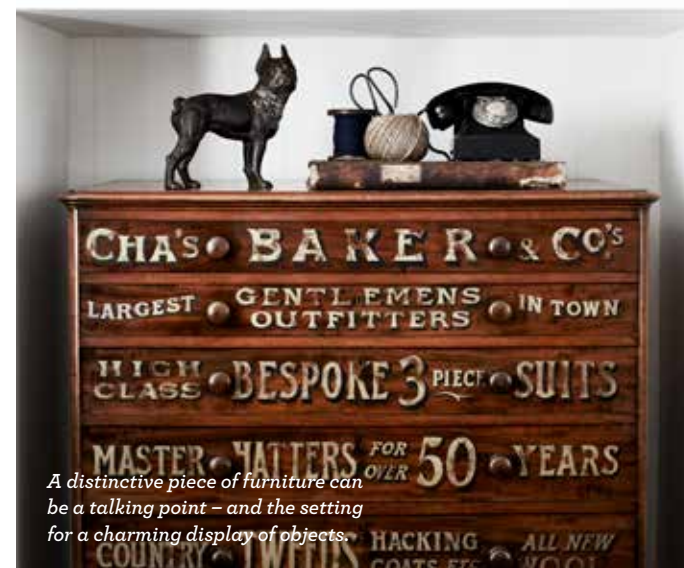
STYLING SCHOOL IS IN! FOUR EXPERTS REVEAL THE TIPS AND TRICKS TO INCORPORATING TREASURED ANTIQUE PIECES FROM A RANGE OF ERAS IN TODAY'S HOMES

Story **JESSICA BELLEF**



A decorative antique piece that also has a practical purpose adds a dash of style to a neutral scheme.

Built to last and crafted by expert hands with quality materials, antiques are imbued with soul and stories of the past. They've worked their way through the generations - integrated into the biography of others - and stood the test of time. A furniture piece that is more than 100 years old adds character and warmth to a home, delivering a look that is anything but cookie cutter. "Presenting antiques in a contemporary interior is exciting," says Leanne Carter-Taylor, owner of Sydney antique store Quintessential Duckeggblue, a go-to source for original European and Australian pieces. "It's a wonderful way to create a unique space and showcase your individual style. Decorating with antiques is also brilliant for the planet and the ultimate form of recycling," she adds. Anna and Jackie Kennard, the sister-in-law duo behind Dusty Luxe, a Sydney-based homewares business that sources and sells French antiques, echo Leanne's sentiment saying, "People are moving away from a 'throw-away culture' and are enjoying giving new life to old objects," says Anna. Let us show you the way to introduce a little bit of history to your home.



A distinctive piece of furniture can be a talking point - and the setting for a charming display of objects.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE, TOP RIGHT): GREG COX/BUREAU; (BOTTOM LEFT & OPPOSITE) SHARYN CAIRNS; INTERIOR DESIGN (BOTTOM LEFT): QUINTESSENTIAL DUCKEGG BLUE (OPPOSITE) TAM SIN JOHNSON



An antique bedhead becomes the focal point in a bedroom where the other elements have been kept simple.

ECLIPSE THE TRENDS

"A classic piece of well-made furniture will never go out of fashion," says Jackie from Dusty Luxe. The Dusty Luxe founders are both drawn to the versatility of rustic antiques with clean lines, and they list French oak farmhouse tables with simple silhouettes as an essential piece. Handsome leather chesterfield sofas and club chairs are just as stylistically relevant as when they appeared in the smoky gentleman's clubs of 18th-century London. "To me, they are the furniture equivalent of a classic Burberry trench coat - timeless!" Leanne says. Statement light fittings that hark back to times gone by will instantly add vintage charm. The refined elegance of Art Deco design has many fans, and there is no denying the style staying power of an ornate chandelier.

SPACE TO SHINE

"I try to encourage people to have just one or two antique pieces in each room, so it becomes a focal point and a conversation piece," says Martin Farrah, managing director of Lawsons, a Sydney auction house that's been in operation since the late 1800s. Anna from Dusty Luxe agrees with Martin's approach: "Keep it simple. This way, you retain a modern look whilst creating a warm, lived-in feeling." Harness the power of negative space and leave breathing room around each item so the unique beauty and special details will shine. >

AUCTION ACTION

“WHEN I STARTED 20 YEARS AGO, AUCTIONS WERE VERY MUCH THE DOMAIN OF THE DEALERS ONLY, BUT IT’S NOW OPEN TO EVERYONE,” SAYS MARTIN FARRAH OF LAWSONS. WHETHER YOU’RE MAKING BIDS IN PERSON AT YOUR LOCAL AUCTIONEERS OR JOINING IN ONLINE FROM YOUR SOFA, BARGAINS ABOUND IF YOU PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Check out the auction house’s online catalogues before auction day, read the condition report on your targeted pieces and double-check the measurements.

STICK TO YOUR BUDGET

Auction houses will often set an estimate of the price range to give you an idea of what the piece is worth, but bidding wars can escalate the price.

ACCOUNT FOR ANY ADDED COSTS

Auctioneers charge a ‘buyer’s premium’ to cover their costs, adding about 25 per cent of the final price. Have a plan in place for the transport of your wins, or factor in the delivery charges.



Incorporating pieces from different periods delivers panache to a space.

OLD MEETS NEW

The real style magic happens when you bring heirloom pieces into the 21st century and combine an unexpected mix of styles, eras and origins. “An ornate decorative French Louis XIV gilt mirror works in an ultra-modern room,” explains Leanne. “An antique farmhouse dining table paired with industrial metal chairs and stools creates contrast, as does a contemporary artwork in a room filled with antiques. All of these are thoughtful contrasts that work.” Look at how different textures, colours and forms come together and marry those pieces that please your eye. That’s the key takeaway here – go with what you love.

FINE FORM AND FUNCTION

Create a home that looks loved and lived in by adding pieces that can be used daily. “Practicality is highly important when I source antiques,” says Leanne. “They often need to serve a purpose as well as being decorative.” Built-in storage and custom cabinetry are handy, but a beautiful armoire or chest of drawers will give you extra capacity to store things in an eye-catching way. Think about how you can repurpose

an old piece to extend its life, such as using an ornate single bed as a luxurious daybed, stashing cutlery and linens in an apothecary cabinet, or rejuvenating a sofa or armchair with new upholstery.

TREASURE HUNTING

If you’ve ever uncovered an incredible piece in an op shop or garage sale, priced in pocket change, you’ll understand the thrill that so many second-hand enthusiasts chase. Finding a diamond in the rough in online marketplaces such as Gumtree or Facebook Marketplace, or at auction houses (see above, left), can also be cause for celebration. Patience is required to search through masses of stuff, so if that is not your virtue, check out antique and old wares stores. Antique dealers cherry-pick the best from across the globe, and they are an incredible wealth of information; their insight into the origin of a piece you have your eye on can reflect a special kind of value. “An authentic antique carries provenance and a story, and that’s more important than the decorative value of the actual item,” shares Martin. “It’s something that you cherish and look after.” >

A cohesive palette ensures antiques and contemporary pieces sit harmoniously.



“ANTIQUES ADD CONTRAST AND DEPTH TO YOUR HOME; THEY ALSO ADD ORIGINALITY”

~ LEANNE CARTER-TAYLOR,
QUINTESSENTIAL DUCKEGGBLUE

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A pair of upholstered stools with decorative legs add interest to a refined bedroom without being overpowering.



“ANTIQUES HAVE STORIES AND NOSTALGIA ... IT ONLY TAKES ONE PIECE IN A ROOM TO GIVE IT A POINT OF DIFFERENCE”

~ JACKIE KENNARD, DUSTY LUXE

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE) DAVE WHEELER (OPPOSITE) SEAN FENNESSY INTERIOR DESIGN (OPPOSITE) TAMSIN JOHNSON ARTWORK (OPPOSITE) ALEXANDRA BROWNLOW



Combine a heritage item in rich timber with pieces in lighter shades for a balanced, modern look. Here, the vivid tones of My Country by Kudditji Kngwarreye picks up the warmth in the wood.

THE PERFECT FIT

Large furniture pieces can overwhelm a space and create an uncomfortable, unbalanced feeling, especially if the item is made with dark, heavy timber or is elaborately ornate. When out and about hunting for that perfect piece to complete a scheme, it's important to pay attention to both the furniture's measurements and the room's dimensions. The key is to match the proportions – if you have a large room, bigger items will look at home, while tighter spaces may call for smaller, and fewer, pieces. “You are already on a winner if you get the scale right!” says Martin.

TIMBER TYPES

The experts agree that blonde timber tones are having a moment in Australia and are an excellent match for our love of neutral wall colours and light-filled spaces. “Everyone loves oak! It is naturally lighter in colour and has a lovely grain,” Anna from Dusty Luxe explains. Martin adds: “People are interested in pine pieces, and any wood that comes out of Europe as it's harder wearing and lighter [in tone], so it reflects the light and doesn't absorb it.” Leanne agrees that everyone is pining for pine, particularly in original farmhouse pine furniture. “I can't keep up with the demand!” she says. ●

THE KEY DESIGN STYLES

Mix and match styles and eras for a home with charm and personality.

CHINOISERIE

For the maximalist who likes to push the limits of ornamentation and pattern in their home, chinoiserie may be your thing. It's a European interpretation of Asian design that was popularised in the 18th century.

SHAKER-STYLE

On the opposite end of the spectrum, where simple forms and uncomplicated interiors reign, Shaker-style may pique your interest. The guiding principles of honesty, utility, and simplicity are reflected in the furniture the Shakers produced during the 1800s in America.

ART DECO

If the set designs of Baz Luhrmann's 'The Great Gatsby' have been on your mood board forever, you're a fan of 1920s Art Deco, a highly stylised design movement that emphasises glamour, curves and rich finishes, such as marble and bone.

FRENCH PROVINCIAL

Do you lean towards the ornate but prefer more rustic and raw? Then French provincial is for you. Referring to a style that originated in the French countryside, the pieces were often simpler and more affordable adaptations of the luxurious 18th-century Rococo furniture made for the Parisian monarchy. There is no denying the enduring and wide popularity of French country style.