



PAST GLORIES

WELL-WORN, FADED AND IMPERFECT. GO BACK IN TIME TO FURNISH YOUR HOME WITH PIECES THAT TELL A STORY, SAYS TALLULAH RUSHAYA

A home filled with curious finds is an essential part of London living. Whether sourced from a dealer, at auction, or inherited, the depth brought is incomparable. In a city rich with period architecture, and where history is treasured, these sought-after pieces can only enhance a room's allure. The storytelling vehicle of vintage and preloved is what truly makes a house a home. If you know where to look, you can transform your space into a treasure trove of history.

Whether it's original flooring, ceiling beams or furniture, wood is a way to bring the outside in. In Anouska Tamony's (anouskatamony.com) Kew project, the Queen Anne style dresser from the 1930s was a highlight. A versatile design that suits modern and period homes alike, there's a timeless elegance a dresser brings. Sourcing antiques made from solid wood not only indicates high quality craftsmanship, but adds a less-predictable originality, Anouska points out. "Warmer woods were preferred in the past (rosewood, mahogany, walnut etc.), whereas current tastes lean towards paler woods and ashier tones," she says. The vastly different wood types are at times what steer individuals to stick to one wood scheme, for fear of overwhelming a space. Anouska's Kew master bedroom harmoniously mixes four different wood tones.

Sam and Katie Ridges, siblings and co-founders of The Spotlight Market (thespotlightmarket.com) find kitchens offer endless ways to incorporate preloved, in a highly personalised style. Their London-based antique fair brings attention to furniture and decorative antique dealers who don't have permanent premises, with a

curated roster throughout the year. Ensuring every era is accounted for, it's an ideal destination for design-conscious interiors shoppers. From crockery to building a space with reclaimed salvage, the siblings particularly love seeing reclaimed fixtures and fittings. Citing Retrouvius (retrouvius.com) as an excellent source of salvaged items, they note that durable iroko wood is a great kitchen choice. "Most reclaimed iroko is salvaged from school science labs undergoing renovations, where hardwoods are routinely replaced with plastic alternatives," they say. As wooden items tend to be quite sizeable, and having witnessed several instances of clients being unable to fit an item through a door or around a hallway corner, they also recommend measuring twice to avoid heartbreak.

Undoubtedly, it's the lived-in state of preloved is where the magic lies. Every scratch tells a story, every dent is a display of a life. "Patina, those signs of age like worn leather, faded paint, or a nicked tabletop, can't be replicated," highlights Tom Rutt, founder of TR Studio architecture and interiors practice (trstudio.co.uk). Specialising in bringing warmth to homes, he cautions against over-restoring. The subsequent reduction of character can gravely devalue an item.

Preloved pieces can offer an element of surprise, bringing warmth to even the most modern homes. Challenged in creating a home that buyers weren't expecting, Nomad Developments rose to the brief of infusing a super-prime Central London penthouse with a 'curated aesthetic, but set in the countryside' the result was a home that leaned into soulful

NEUTRAL TERRITORY

Opening: Interior design firm Stelly Selway brought pale woods, muted contemporary-cool tones and old-school Californian flair to this Chiswick home, reflecting the owner's eclectic design taste





PHOTOGRAPH: LOTS ROAD; ANOUSKA TAMONY; DAVID CLEVELAND; ASTRID TEMPLER; HELEN CATTICART; PIPPA RYAN; BERGARD WINKELMANN; LAURA STEPHEN; JOSEPH LANG

contrasts. “It was crucial that the interiors didn’t feel sterile or generic,” says Jack Simpson, founder and CEO of Nomad Developments (nomaddevelopments.com). Downsizing from ‘substantial’ period homes, the clients, while not traditional collectors, deeply valued patina and created a narrative in the home through objects. Many of the pieces the buyers selected were with intention. The main challenge was it being a brand new building. To overcome any potential design voids, textured materials, natural stones, unlacquered metals and heritage colours were used to evoke a sense of history.

“Imperfection brings so much warmth and honesty to a space,” says Jack who highlights the antique commodes in the entrance hallway from Nick Jones Antiques as one of their favourite details.

Additionally, the vintage travertine-and-oak coffee table in the living room, ‘full of knocks and scratches’ was used. A fan of Dorian Caffot de Fawes at the Decorative Fair in Battersea (30 September to 5 October), Jack also recommends PAD London for exceptional true collector’s pieces. A believer in experimentation, he advises buying what you love to look at, and if you don’t know what to do with an item immediately, don’t rush, as there’ll always be a place. This is a sentiment Will Hanness, manager of The Old Cinema in Chiswick, (theoldcinema.co.uk) agrees with. “Something might at first appear a bit ugly, or not your usual style, until you pair it with the right accessories in the right setting and suddenly you see it in a whole new light,” he says. While there’s a copious amount of preloved online, he says nothing beats finding a special piece in the wild. Above all, he advises to keep an open mind, “and a cheerful smile when haggling!”

Turning the ordinary into the extraordinary, curator of curious collections, Pippa Ryan (pipparyan.com), makes one-of-kind art. “My assemblage art is built from forgotten vintage ‘smalls’ – matchboxes, figurines, tins, toys – once tucked away in drawers or attics,” says Pippa who works on commissions often using family collections. “Whether it’s a Victorian pincushion or a 1970s keyring, every item finds new purpose as part of a conversation-starting piece.”

In another project that sought to make a home more homely, Laura Stephens’ west London project underwent a dramatic reinvention (laurastephens.co.uk), with natural light taking centre stage. Needing a refresh after the client’s grown-up children moved out, Laura recalibrated the owner’s existing curated collection. “A crucial part of the transformation involved replacing the cool greys that dominated the home,” says Laura. “Instead, we introduced a warm cinnamon-hued base, layering in rich colours through window treatments, upholstery, and soft furnishings to bring depth and personality.”

Imperative for ambience, in the kitchen, wall lights and table lamps were used for flexible adjustment. The updated Plain English design features a bespoke Balineum tile splashback, with an ochre pendant above the island area.

Regardless of era, lighting is the simplest way to change the atmosphere of a space, finds Maureece Mical Taylor, head of Contemporary & Modern Design at Lots Road (lotsroad.com). Bringing artistry to any interior scheme, Maureece says virtually any fixtures, from sculptural

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Italian chandeliers to iconic mid-century lamps make an impact. Noting the category’s popularity, Lots Road sales feature classic 20th century lighting as well as bold contemporary pieces. There’s even a dedicated Lighting & Mirrors Auction on 24 September to add to your diary.

Away from the antique heavyweight eras of Regency, baroque et al, vintage style equally has the ability to lift a home. Often narrowed down to two eras: mid-century and postmodernism, many pieces from the periods are talking points. The perennially popular mid-century refers to clean-lined 1950s and 60s pieces that suit any setting. The Eames, Wishbone and Egg chair are some of the heroes of the period. Ercol, founded by Lucian Ercolani, who designed the Windsor chair, continues to be a beacon of mid-century design to this day, with a showroom on the King’s Road. And the movement’s popularity isn’t going away anytime soon. “If anything, the demand is only getting stronger,” comments Hristo Lachezarov, head of brand at PAMONO (pamono.co.uk). More are wanting to put their own stamp on how mid-century is used. “What’s really picked up lately is the mix: pairing those iconic forms with antique pieces and brutalist shapes. In contemporary settings, it creates a layered richness – a dialogue between ages and styles – that feels deeply considered and cultivated.”

Postmodernism, the playful 1970s and 80s period defined by geometric shapes and with historical references, shouldn’t be overlooked. Stelly Selway summarises its style as ‘Bold. Balanced. Beautiful.’ This triangular approach is evident in the studio’s Chiswick Lane project. The entrance in particular, reflects the homeowner’s ‘global nature’. An antique church pew, sourced from the Old Cinema Chiswick, held precious memories for the homeowner and her family. This was paired with vintage brass 1980s tables, which Tanya Selway, co-principal of Stelly Selway (stellyselway.com) reveals were sourced at the famous Rose Bowl Market in LA. In a Victorian London townhouse, the studio added an element of surprise with a 1970s Kazuki chair by Kazuhide Takahama.

Building the bridge between modernity and heritage, brands are delving into the archives to create new classics. Handcrafting furniture for more than three decades, Chelsea Textiles (chelseatextiles.com/uk) on Pimlico Road, is dubbed the ‘antiques of the future’. Recreating antique textiles, its collections include Gustavian and Bobbin (created with Turner Pocock, inspired by 17th century spool furniture). Meanwhile, British furniture brand Swyft (swyfthome.com) is launching a collaboration with Morris & Co. this year. Working with archival Morris & Co prints, Swyft CEO Keiran Hewkin combined modern living with legacy and artistry. For a new generation of collectors, reimagined designs also have a story worth sharing. ■

RETRO REVIVAL

Top row, left to right: Find lights from every era at Lots Road; Anouska Tamony’s Kew project features a Queen Anne dresser; mid-century styling by TR Studio; Rebecca Hughes designed Mulberry Square at Chelsea Barracks; Nomad Developments gave this penthouse a preloved patina; *Composition in Pink* by Pippa Ryan is an example of how she turns tchotchkes into art; Studio Lodha; Laura Stephens paired Jim Thompson’s Wedding Parade wallpaper with Paint & Library’s Rhubarb paint to bring antique flair to this Victorian Highgate villa; head to The Spotlight Market to discover a curated selection of hidden design gems