

Antiques in Style

THE LUXURY OF DECORATING WITH ANTIQUES



Inessa Stewart
PHOTOS/STYLING Inessa Stewart's Antiques & Interiors

It has always been my dream to bring the joy of antiques to everyone's home - to make antiques both accessible and useful in everyday life. It is a philosophy on which my husband, John, and I built our business, Inessa Stewart's Antiques & Interiors. Almost 22 years ago we opened our petit magazin (as the French would describe it) of European antiques and accessories. Our mission has been simple - to import great antiques and to encourage our clients to use these treasures in their interior design ventures. As our business grew to encompass three stores in two states, plus our virtual store www.inessa.com, we have been honored to be involved with so many inspiring examples of small, medium and large homes, all of which have been our delight to design and furnish with antiques. It has also been our pleasure to become a premier source for beautiful antiques, furnishings and accessories to top designers and antique connoisseurs across the nation from Canada to Mexico, and from New York to Los Angeles, as far as Australia and Japan.

It is my heartfelt belief that decorating with antiques is among one of the most gratifying endeavors one can undertake. I have always been a collector at heart, at times becoming quite passionate in my hunting expeditions. Sometimes I joke that my work is "a hobby that got out of control!" The endless pursuits of beauty in the search for treasured objects become a poetry that can truly identify your home and personality. For me, it defines the true luxury of decorating with antiques.

Many famous designers today are also inspired by and embrace this concept of antique luxury to embellish their decorating themes. With endless possibilities at their disposal the astute designer can use, for example, the neoclassical elegance of painted and gilded armchairs to create a captivating space with formal ambiance and splendor. In the ever-popular Provencal Style of décor the 18th century Rustic Country French Vaisselier (French term for an open cupboard



with plate rack shelf on top) can add a rich, soulful warmth to a room's composition, and become the foundation for a personal collection of Faience, Majolica or Flow Blue.

If you're just starting, simply choosing a well-proportioned piece to complement existing furnishings is the best way to dive into the world of antique decorating and collecting. Our staff designers are skilled in helping clients incorporate antiques into any stage of their design project. Sometimes we start from scratch in the construction process, working with builders and architects to add focal architectural antiques for enhancement. Occasionally we add the key object in the design which becomes the focal point upon which a room's design can evolve. Of course, I do not advocate the complete abandonment of modern furniture. I truly feel that well-made recreations, harmoniously added to a home, will add both comfort and functionality to a space. Recently I developed designs for dining tables and chairs to complement our antique buffets, providing an answer to the dearth of suitable antique tables and chairs that are required for 21st century designs.

No matter what you have or wish to retain for your existing home's plan, we can help you to implement antiques into any stages of your design, and we excel in providing innovative ideas and concepts. We also offer a more personal in-home consulting service if that is what you prefer. In future columns I will go into more depth about incorporating antiques into your everyday lifestyle. The best of both antique and modern worlds can be yours today and that is the ultimate in luxury!