



Antiques in Style

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TIMELESS TREASURES

No other moment of the year do we become more aware of the advance of time than at the moment the old year ends and the new year begins. For millennia mankind has attempted to harness the passage of time using antique clocks as beautiful and magnificent instruments of measurement.

In Medieval Europe during the 14th century, the first mechanical clocks were invented and in later centuries sculptural and decorative clocks followed. Over the years what originally started out as a mechanical device has evolved into a decorative focal point of interior design and in some cases a status symbol.

French clock-making in the 17th century reached an element of grandeur during the reign of Louis XIV, reflecting the opulent flair of

Versailles and the extravagance of the monarch. Covered in ormolu (decorative gold-plated bronze mounts), lavished with tortoise shell, porcelain, stone and ivory inlay, these masterpieces represented the remarkable beginning of France's illustrious industry. Most of the decorative mantel, wall and long case antique clocks we find today are from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Volumes have been written about this industry and the extensive history of the design and production of these instruments. Our focus now turns to "How do we decorate with antique clocks today?" Whether it is a timeless relic or a vintage timepiece, it can provide a decorative focus for the room.

**"Nothing is so dear
and precious as time."
- Francois Rabelais**

IN BOOKCASES AND SHELVES

Clocks can be used as the centerpiece of design in the bookcase, adding depth and creating an anchoring theme or style. A distinctive collection of diminutive clocks can act as bookends mixed with antique books in the library, providing a totally different function apart from timekeeping - what we now call repurposing - which turns these old treasures into something even better than new! The bookcase is always a great place to display a collection. Showcasing distinctive objects brings identity to a space. I like to use an odd number of items especially if they do not exactly match; usually three or five are enough for an intriguing composition. I love to keep my collections out in the open, where everyone including me can see and enjoy the arrangement.

ON THE WALL

An amazing hand-carved Black Forest clock or Louis XVI French bronze cartel can add three-dimensional interest and textural diversity to otherwise flat groupings of plates or prints - creating intriguing wallscapes in unexpected places such as stairways, kitchens or hallways. In such settings the right style clock can reinforce the theme and amplify the impact.

ON THE MANTEL

As fireplaces and elaborate mantels came into vogue throughout Europe, ornate clock sets called garnitures added to their dramatic focus. As mantels demonstrated different periods of French design, intricate timepieces usually conveyed the same style, paired with elegant candelabras or classic urns. The antique clock will reinforce a decorative statement and magnify the ambiance that a fireplace naturally brings to the room.

One of the most popular forms of timepieces is the elegant and freestanding long case clock, originally created in the 17th century, and has since come to honor so many forms of antique art. Answering the call of popular demand, menuisiers and ebenistes created elaborate cases of incredible quality during the 18th and 19th centuries to accompany exquisite clock faces and movements often independently made by a clocksmith. No fine home would have been without such a handsome decorative element. They are as popular today as they were so many centuries ago, from simple hand-painted country Morbier movements to stylish Empire bronze-mounted models - all contributing to a freestanding wall focus of unmistakable and uncompromising importance.

Just as our diversity of taste and fashion reflect our individual personality, decorative clocks often convey a wide kaleidoscope of various periods and even the hobbies of the collectors. For me, antique clocks celebrate the art and beauty that the passage of time truly brings.



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