



DECORATING  
WITH  
*Antiques*  
for a  
DEEPER  
SHADE of  
*Green*

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*Antiques have long been collected for their beauty and their value as historical treasures, but perhaps it is time we look at antiques in an entirely new way. Not only do they add grace and style to my home and the homes of my clients, they are also the ultimate in green design, a personal passion of mine! As you visit the many fine exhibitors at the Philadelphia Antiques Show, try to see that their pieces offer a key to the future as well as a link to the past.*

I have always been an ardent collector of antiques, and the addition of carefully selected pieces to sophisticated interiors is a recognizable signature of my design style. Sharing my love for classic pieces comes naturally to me. I find that my clients quickly embrace the elegance of antique furniture, and often become collectors themselves. Homes are brought to life when old paintings, pieces of porcelain, or folk art add their charming artistry.

No matter how your personal style is expressed, every home has space for antique pieces. Even the sleek lines of a contemporary home can be complemented by eye-catching antique furniture; a room can artfully blend both old and new. A writing desk in the corner, reclaimed barn wood on the floor, or a wing chair handed down through generations can add flair as well as refinement to a home's interior.

In addition to their beauty, antiques provide a bonus you may not have considered. As we learn more about how to assess the health of our living quarters and steps we can take to keep our homes clean and pristine, we should think about the ways antique furniture can be an integral part of a green lifestyle.

#### ***No Chemical Vapors Are Brought into your Home***

Your home's interior should be a place of fresh air and health. Yet any new piece of furniture, cabinetry, flooring, or finished wood has some chemical overtones. Many fine finishes release vapors in a process called off-gassing. In a closed environment, such as an energy efficient, airtight home, off-gassing can increase indoor air pollution to levels several times higher than those detected outside. Antiques are a healthier choice than modern furnishings because they were created with less toxic products years ago, and any off-gassing has long been complete.


#### ***No New Resources are Used***

Every beautiful piece of wooden furniture originated from a tree. Whenever we purchase new wooden furniture, unless we choose products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), we are contributing to the deforestation of our planet. In contrast, wooden antiques are products of trees culled long ago from old-growth forests. No new resources were used in their construction, making their restoration and re-use a green endeavor. It just makes sense to find a place in our homes for older pieces.

PREVIOUS PAGE: This antique German Biedermeier Chest in walnut burl is circa 1820. On top is a hotel silver tea service. Hotel silver was made for the grand hotels in Europe and the United States, and today conveys a reminder of the sumptuous lifestyles of the past. The painting above the chest is by well-known American Impressionist George Muendel. The small painting on the stand is a study for the painting above.

LEFT: This fabulous collection of treenware dates from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Note the darning egg, and the antique stereoscope – the earliest form of television. The book displayed is by British treenware master Burt Marsh.





*Consider the ways  
antiques complement  
a green lifestyle.*

This living room is a showcase for beautiful antique accessories, including a nineteenth-century ship's model behind the sofa, and a pair of lamps made from eighteenth-century Chinese export porcelain. A pair of nineteenth-century British hand-carved candlesticks and a nineteenth-century ship captain's lap desk are on the cocktail table.





### ***No Negative Environmental Impact is Created***

Beyond the health issues in our homes, we should consider the costs to our planet. Even the very greenest furniture manufacturers distribute impurities into our air, waste systems, and water. New furniture requires the production of finishes, dyes, and sealants. Shipping them demands the creation of packing materials, and they arrive in retail stores via large vehicles powered by fossil fuel. The EPA estimates that three million tons of furniture are taken to landfills every year, only to be replaced with brand new pieces that can carry a large environmental cost.

### ***Antiques Are Recycling at Its Best***

Beloved family pieces, eighteenth-century Philadelphia furniture, and the softly faded colors of aged Oriental rugs do not belong in a landfill. Treasures from another time can be loved and used again. A federal mirror that has been passed from home to home and hand to hand brings history to life, and honors the work of artisans who lived long ago.

### ***Antiques Bring Unique Craftsmanship to a Room***

Rather than purchasing a mass-produced item, treat yourself to something created in a small workshop by a craftsman who made good use of few resources. In previous centuries, home furnishings were made by hand before machine assembled items flooded the marketplace. Artisans from years gone by had knowledge that largely disappeared during the Industrial Revolution. Old joining techniques were abandoned in favor of more rapid assembly using staples and nails. Fiber board was created, and the beauty of the wood itself was lost. Take the time to consider the difference between a finely hand-wrought piece and one processed in a factory.



This closeup of a Chinese puppy displayed on a modern lucite block is from the Han Dynasty, circa 220-206 BC.

### ***Antiques Have Stood the Test of Time***

Classic pieces are sturdy and well-made, which is why they have lasted. The quality of their wood is usually stronger, created from timber with tighter growth rings, making repair a simple task when necessary. Furniture that is unworthy of a craftsman's repair time adds to our cycle of wasteful consumption. Your rooms can be filled with the kind of solid, enduring pieces that elevate both your life and your home's design.

### ***Antique Collections Are a Very Personal Expression***

I often find that a simple gesture, such as placing an antique tea caddy on a mantel, can inspire my clients to begin collections of their own. There is tremendous beauty in items preserved throughout the years, particularly if they illuminate another time and way of life. Learning about the subtle differences among artisans, the period when an item was created, or the materials that were used to make it, gives us a greater appreciation for life. Whatever you collect, it is unique to you and your home, and cannot be duplicated.

My personal collections include treenware (hand-carved wooden items used in the home long ago), old hotel silver, blue and white porcelain, and things that speak to me of lives lived on the ocean, including whaling artifacts, scrimshaw carvings, and sailor whirligigs.

### ***Remember, It Is Not All Furniture***

You can find antique cabinetry, flooring, doors, beams, posts, mantels, and other architectural pieces. Consider a gorgeous eighteenth-century door to add punch and personality to your entry, or if that is not in your budget, how about antique doorknobs and a doorknocker? An old mantel delivers instant charm; remilled old timbers bring panache to the pantry. Add the incredible details that your home may be missing.

### ***Antiques Add Beauty and Joy to Life***

There is a thrill when you spot the perfect nineteenth-century French farm table, Georgian stand, or double pedestal dining table. You feel an immediate connection to the Italian walnut commode or a beautiful pair of small paintings. Antiques collectors know that old things have a soul, based on their authenticity. Whether you fall in love with hand-embroidered vintage textiles, white ironstone pitchers, or a four-door linen press, you can feel good about reducing your footprint on the surface of the earth. ■

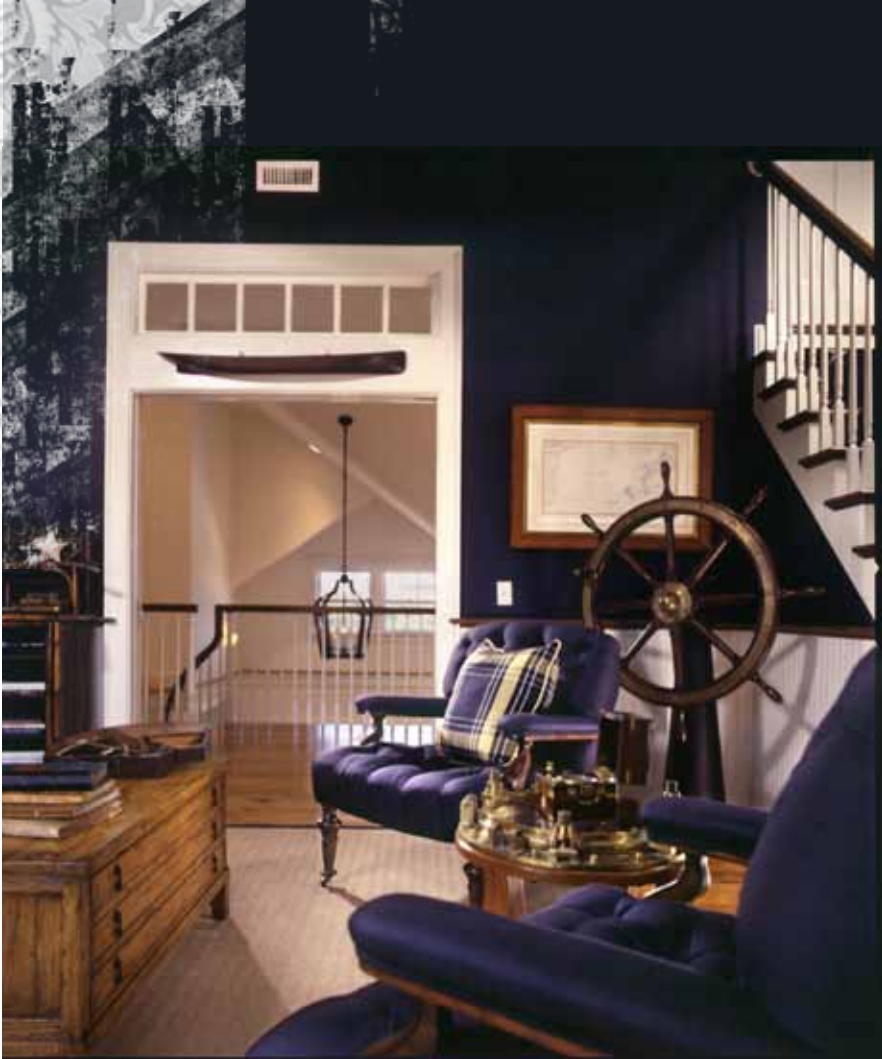


LEFT TOP: This study reflects the long seafaring history of the coast, with a nineteenth-century ship's telescope, and a nineteenth-century ship's barometer hanging to the right of the window. Framed antique prints are on the wall, and on the mantel is part of a collection of sea captains' doorstops.

LEFT BOTTOM: This extremely rare white tortoiseshell is an early nineteenth-century British scrimshaw. The whaler's handwork details ships, whales, and equipment used in the seafaring life. On the mantel are several antique lighting devices: a corkscrew pigtail candlestick, complete with hook for hanging over a chair; a rush light holder (made in its time by master craftsmen and never mass-produced); and antique binoculars. The whale carving beneath the mantel is done on an antique reclaimed beam.

*Antiques offer a key to the future as well as a link to the past.*





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**

The **antique ship's wheel** is from an old Australian ship; a wonderful **South Pacific map** on the rear wall was drawn by James Cook, the British explorer who later became famous as Captain Cook. The nineteenth-century ship's porthole made into a table holds a sextant; the cocktail table is home to an antique compass. On the far left is nineteenth-century **bamboo furniture**.

A **nautical/maritime collection of whaling logs** dating from 1840 offers a fascinating glimpse of the past as you trace the daily activities of a whaling ship. The whale stamps mark successful captures.

This nineteenth-century Chinese-influenced **étagère** is showing a collection of blue and white porcelain, both Chinese Exportware and Staffordshire English pottery. Hotel silver has been added for sparkle.

This **English antique dining table and chairs** date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and are displayed with an **eighteenth-century tapestry** and Chinese blue and white porcelain.

