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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

How to Style Your Vintage Furniture

Some people shy away from displaying heirloom furniture or investing in antique pieces for fear of making a space look dated rather than vintage. To avoid an antiquated appearance, try these three tips.

Aim for balance. Collecting furniture from only one decade can make a room feel like a time capsule rather than a carefully curated space. Thoughtful interior design aims for balance in colors, shapes, textures, and scale. For example, if you have an ornate antique piece, choose other furniture with simple, clean lines.

Pair with trendy accents. Make formal heirloom pieces look a little more playful by surrounding them with modern touches. A vintage sofa looks right at home with a few graphic throw pillows and a sleek coffee table. A 1950s writing desk pairs well with a molded plastic chair, and a mahogany dresser looks classy rather than stuffy with black and gold decor and a colorful area rug.

Choose pieces you love. Most importantly, don't be afraid to reflect your style. If you find an antique piece that you love, there's bound to be a way to make it work in your home.

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3 Questions to Ask Before Remodeling

Remodeling is an opportunity to improve your space for your own enjoyment while also building equity in your home. Before you begin, consider these questions to ensure a smoother process and a high-quality finished product.

1. **What's not working?**

Think about how you use your space right now. Are there areas that consistently feel cramped or cluttered? Maybe you want to add a mudroom, create a designated office or install a kitchen island with built-in storage. Consider hiring a professional organizer to help you maximize your space in a way that's functional for your family and future buyers.

2. **What are your top priorities?**

In any renovation project, there will likely be at least one thing that doesn't go according to plan. To avoid blowing your budget on unexpected costs, decide ahead of time which features and/or materials are the most important to you and, if necessary, be willing to let other things go.

3. How will this affect other parts of the house?

An ultra-modern kitchen could make your living or dining rooms feel outdated. Consider what needs to be done to maintain a cohesive look with adjoining rooms before you take the plunge.

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Hide These Common Household Eyesores

Every home has a handful of necessary but unattractive items you'd rather not show off to your guests. Try these tricks to keep eyesores out of sight and out of mind.

- Conceal cords from a wall-mounted TV by stacking colorful hardback books on the console or mantel below.
- Utilize trendy baskets to conveniently store toys, pet items or extra toilet paper.
- Drill holes in the back of a desk drawer and thread cords through them to create a discreet charging station for phones, laptops, tablets, and fitness trackers.
- Hide your washer and dryer from view with a decorative room divider.
- By attaching small hinges to a canvas painting and mounting it on the wall, you can conceal an unattractive circuit breaker box without limiting access to it.

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Kitchen Cabinets: To Paint or Stain?

One of the best ways to change the aesthetic in your kitchen is to refresh your cabinets. When deciding between paint or stain, it's important to look at factors such as appearance, durability, budget, and return on investment.

The first thing to consider is what you want your cabinets to look like. Do you want a smooth finish and a variety of color options, or do you prefer the natural look of wood grain? Paint will mask any imperfections, creating a sleek, modern appearance. Stain highlights texture, which can enhance wood's natural beauty but will also reveal any inconsistencies in the grain.

Next, consider how much water your cabinets will encounter, including splashes from the sink and moisture in the air. Paint is more resistant to water than stain; however, it's also more prone to chipping and peeling. Professionals often apply paint with a sprayer, which makes it hard to fix with a paintbrush. Touch-ups blend in better on stained cabinets and are easier to do yourself.

Your budget will always be a factor in making your final decision. Paint typically costs 10-15% more up front, according to *Houzz.com*. It's also less forgiving than stain, which may result in higher labor costs or more of your time if extra coats are required. If you're installing new cabinets, however, you could drastically cut your expenses by using medium-density fiberboard (MDF) instead of real wood. It's hard to tell the difference between MDF and wood once cabinets are painted. Stain, on the other hand, does not take well to this lower-cost option.

When it comes time to sell your home, neutral paint colors are usually attractive to home buyers, whereas bold colors may be a turn-off. Stain's classic, natural appearance can also offer a high return on investment – just keep in mind that stain colors can run the risk of looking dated.

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Eggless Chocolate Mousse

Ingredients

¼ cup water
3 Tbsp. sugar
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
¼ tsp. kosher salt
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
1 cup heavy whipping cream
Fresh raspberries and blueberries

Chocolate shavings

Directions

Place water and sugar in a small saucepan over high heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips, salt and cinnamon. Stir until melted. Let cool to room temperature.

When chocolate has cooled, use the whisk attachment of a stand mixer or an electric hand mixer to beat whipping cream for 3-5 minutes or until stiff peaks form. Add a large spoonful of whipped cream to chocolate and stir to combine. Gently fold chocolate mixture into the remaining whipped cream until completely combined.

Divide mousse into 4 bowls and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Garnish with berries and chocolate shavings.



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