



Vintage chic

Here's how to make a stylish impact with elegant touches using original furniture and exquisite soft furnishings in your period home.

FEATURE ROWENA CARR-ALLINSON PHOTOS © Flea Market Style, Ryland Peters & Small

Whether your heart is set on rococo-style antiques or exotic imports, you never know what you might find at an antique fair or market. And this is the best excuse to add character to your period home with touches of shabby chic style.

MARKET RULES

Browser's paradise

Picking up a bargain involves getting up early and browsing through markets, antique fairs or local auctions. A veritable treasure trove of vintage pieces and collectables, you can pick up some unique additions for your home when you visit these places. Sorting the treasure from the rubbish will require patience, but persistence will pay to give your home distinctive character.

Virtual shopping

If it's cold outside, there's a world of opportunities at your fingertips indoors. Become a virtual shopper, browsing the limitless internet to find some original buys. Sites like ebay.co.uk and ebid.co.uk or QXL.com offer a constant stream of goodies.

Vintage style: How it works

Mixing styles can be tricky, but if you are going for the vintage look, luckily most rules can be thrown out of the window. However, it is probably safer to aim for one focal point in the room and try to find pieces that blend with its colouring. Mixing eras and fabrics is allowed and even encouraged, while 'lived in' furniture shouldn't be shunned, as a tear is really a sign of experience rather than a reason for disgrace.



Top Create a translucent atmosphere with lace hangings and pile on the fabrics for a cosy, plush ambience.

Above Vintage style signs are a quirky addition to your kitchen, £13 from Garden Trading. Tel: 0845 608 4448 or visit www.gardentrading.co.uk

Right Mix old pieces of crockery with Laura Ashley's floral collection, prices from £4 for an egg cup. Tel: 0871 230 2301 or visit www.lauraashley.com



Bargain buying explained:

- **Where?** Markets, fairs and car boot sales are held all over the country in market squares and car parks, usually Sundays and bank holidays. For local events, check online for listings. Some websites set up for enthusiasts are full of information on sales, fairs and markets split by geographical location. A great example is www.boot-fairs.co.uk
- **What about London's markets?** Londoners should make a stop by the famous Portobello Road market, which takes place Fridays and Saturdays from 8am – 5pm. This market, which sells everything from vintage clothing to antiques and 'bric a brac', has become internationally known and attracts all walks of life; all looking for that little something special. Visit www.portobelloroad.co.uk

TRASH TO TREASURE

A new breath of life

If your find is a little worse for wear, give it a new lease of life. A new coat of paint can cover blemishes, or you can simply increase its distressed look with a little sanding. Interior Designer, Joanna Wood agrees: "Never be afraid to restore. Buy bits that need mending and see them transform." Otherwise, you will find companies who will transform second-hand pieces into one-offs.

Customise your fabrics

Salvage fabrics and reincarnate them. No matter where the material is from, there is always an ingenious way to integrate the right texture and pattern into your scheme. "Mixing and matching simple linens is a great way to get that shabby chic look!" says Joanne Shaw, Senior Designer at Beldorm. If you are looking for bold colours, use second-hand silk scarves sown together as pillow cases, or casually flung over side tables for a bohemian look. If you find the perfect material but don't like its colour, don't be afraid to dye it as customising is the name of the game.

Throw the rule book out

The beauty of shabby chic is its casual, relaxed style. By mixing and matching different eras and genres, everything is possible. Thinking 'out of the box' becomes normal and each piece can be used differently than its original function like using roof tiles as wall-mounted light shades or framing a piece of vintage wallpaper in lieu of artwork.

Right Use old-fashioned cake tins to add a little vintage chic to your kitchen, £24 from Garden Trading. Tel: 0845 608 4448 or visit www.gardentrading.co.uk

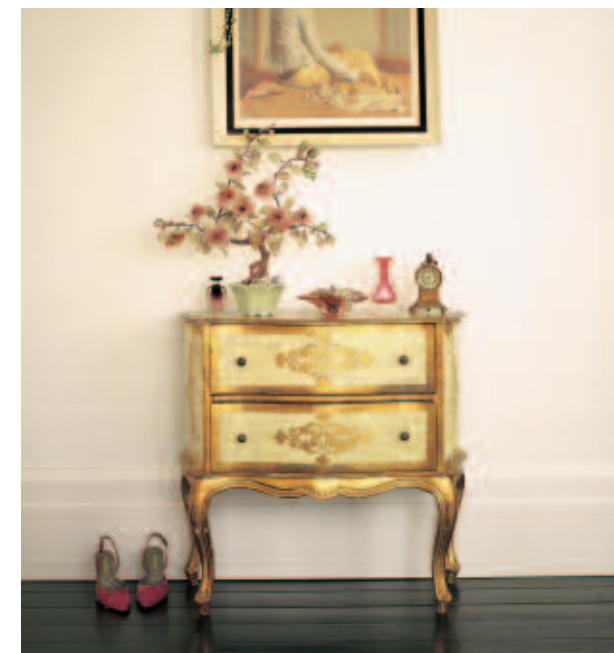


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MAKING MARKET STYLE WORK FOR YOU

Decorating your home with vintage market treasures is about being creative and seeing potential in something that someone, somewhere has discarded.

Kitchen etiquette

Never mind matching cutlery, china and glassware, as vintage style demands mismatching crockery aplenty. Choose an array of colours and a style like the popular 'country chic' look. If you prefer to go with >>

Top The right kind of gilt. A glamorous find from Portobello market adds chic and charm to your boudoir.
Above Antiques on display in Worcester.



6 tips for the absolute beginner

- 1. Rise & shine:** The market is very much a morning person's world.
- 2. Haggle:** Negotiating is part of the fun. Always ask for the best price.
- 3. Look the part:** Don't dress in expensive clothing or jewellery, as it won't help your haggling.
- 4. Be prepared:** Know your room sizes, dimensions and colour schemes so that you won't hesitate or make a mistake.
- 5. Make a list:** Take a list along of what you actually need as a list will help you keep focused.
- 6. The expert's kit:** Bring a tape measure to check dimensions, a magnifying glass for close inspection, a guide book and cash as credit cards don't work in the flea market world.



something old, something new and blue, why not mix in a few new pieces, like those with floral prints? For new accessories with a vintage look, try a classic cake tin.

In the bedroom

Your bedroom is a real reflection of your personality. Pick up souvenirs from your travels or build on a theme close to your heart. Whichever your style layer patterns and fabrics to create a feeling of warmth. "Instead of duvet covers, you can clothe your bed with lovely old woollen blankets, such as tartan rugs, and ex army blankets. Country patterns – paisley, floral, stripes and gingham can also be used to make curtains, cushions and chair covers," says co-author Ali Hannan of the 'Flea Market Style' book.



'I love the idea that something old with a past can give so much pleasure.'

Nina Campbell, Interior Designer

Living room chic

Dare to use random pieces together to add plenty of character. There are so many choices from chic Chesterfield sofas, to chintzy comfy armchairs or minimalist chairs. Hide imperfections with luxurious throws, or simply embrace its history.

Interior Designer Nina Campbell, whose range is inspired by Italian antiques, says: "There is something unique about owning a piece of furniture, which has roots in the past. Market style feeds the imagination, and I love the idea that something old and with a mysterious past can give as much pleasure as something new and pristine."



Above Scatter silk pillows in your bedroom or living room in different colours and patterns. This paisley blue is a stylish solution, £35 from Marks & Spencer. Tel: 0845 603 1603 or visit www.marksandspencer.com

Accessorise

Accessories are key to finishing off the look. If you can't find it on the stall, try shops like Garden Trading for its retro touches like the classic cake tin, or Temperley's latest exotic inspired quilts and cushions that will tie the whole room together. **PH**

Above Asymmetric wall hangings fit right in above the eternal classic: a chesterfield sofa.

Left Everything is allowed, even matching up stripes, flowers and chinoiserie!

Reader offer

'Flea Market Style' will be available to readers for the special price of £16.99 including postage & packaging (rrp: £18.99) by calling Macmillan Direct. Tel: 01256 302 692 and quoting the reference GLR D62.

