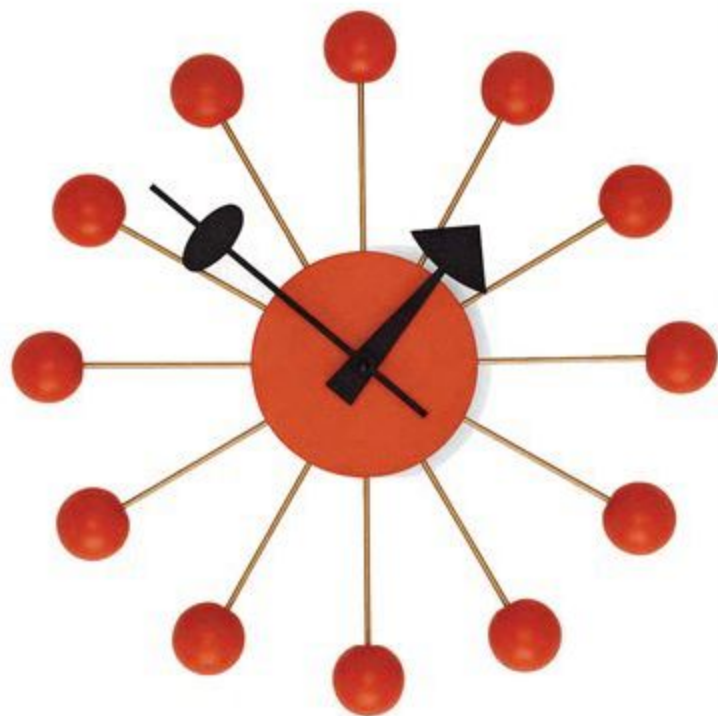


STORIED STATEMENTS

Add a bold, fresh touch with classic pieces



While the neutral shades and minimalist lines of today's ideal interior aesthetic—accented by touches both vaguely bohemian and Scandinavian—create a soothing backdrop, they are missing the defining power of a storied statement piece (or two).

"I think antiques are a very important part of the modern aesthetic," says Dawn Salzmans, owner of C'est si Bon, an antique shop in Cardiff. "They add soul and elevate the look of modern pieces—which, in turn, add gravity to the antiques. Recently, a lady visiting my shop told me that her house felt empty and like it didn't have a voice. Antiques give your spaces that voice—you don't need a whole house of them, that is passé, but when you combine a home with a modern feel and furnishings with ancient voices, they really speak."

Getting Started

Tess Loo, chief fashion officer of My Sister's Attic, the consignment chain with a newly opened Encinitas location, believes that taking stock of what you already have is the first step to hunting down vintage finds.

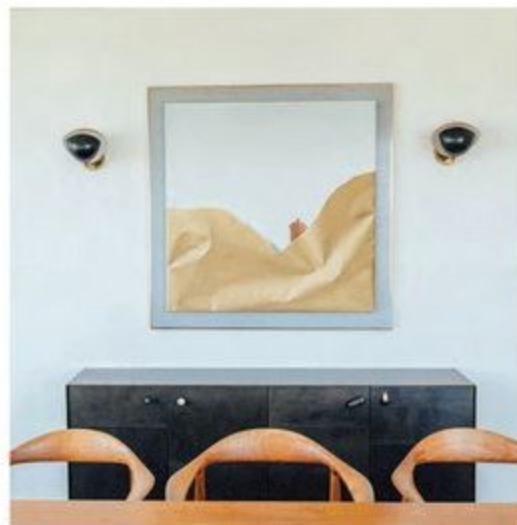
"Before seeking out new items, people should go through and edit their current belongings—if something new is coming in then something old needs to be going out," Tess says. "Then go through design magazines and make a list of colors and decor styles you like. Figure out the purpose of the room you're shopping for—what are you doing there and what do you want it to look like?"

Sara Wardrip, owner of C'est La Vie Antiques in Encinitas, also advocates for researching before wading into the wide world of vintage and antique furnishings.

"I think one of the best things that you can do is use Pinterest to create the look that you are going for," Sara says. "Then it is easy. You start noticing the links between things that you like and figure out the search words you need for the period they are from—for example, Rococo, Gustavian."

Sara notes that—if you are able—travel is another great way for people to educate themselves about antique furnishings and their history. She recommends heading to Europe for inspiration, particularly Paris. If an international getaway isn't in the cards, she mentions New York and New Orleans as great alternatives a little closer to home.

"Many of the [midcentury-modern] pieces that I sell were designed by prominent architects that my customers admire, so having these pieces in their homes is really special for them," says David Skelley, owner of Boomerang for Modern in Little Italy (and another supporter of researching before shopping). "Some people really get into it and want to immerse themselves in another era. It becomes an addicting pastime, the more you know about the furnishings the more interesting it becomes—their designers, the historic significance of materials from after World War II that were then being incorporated in furniture manufacturing, all of it."



This page, clockwise: The McCormick & Wright Interior Design team paired midcentury modern and Asian elements here. • Kristin Kostamo-McNeil of Anne Rae Design, juxtaposed this peace-sign figurine with a portrait. • Michelle Salz-Smith of Studio Surface, added vintage touches to this space. • Dawn Salzmans, owner of C'est si Bon, says these 19th-century French carved stone millstone spheres add "grit and real presence" to modern homes. Facing page, clockwise: George Nelson's ball clock is "the radical, atomic feel of the [midcentury-modern] era in a single, compact piece," says David Skelley of Boomerang for Modern. • You may find this 19th-century Chinese dry pantry at My Sister's Attic. • A Fritz Hansen Egg Chair is an enduring midcentury-modern furnishing.

BRADY ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP); JENNY SIEGWART (MIDDLE, RIGHT); JENNIE CORTI (BOTTOM)



Kristin added warm, classic touches—a refined backsplash and copper elements—to complement the antique light fixture in this clean-lined kitchen filled with touches of the past.

Perfect Picks

Once you've honed in on your favorite decor eras and styles, there are still other details to consider in a selection process that can feel overwhelming as you attempt to choose the perfect pieces.

Sara suggests approaching the situation as you would the hunt for a fabulous piece of artwork. "Go out and find that one statement piece that speaks to you and build a space around that. Sometimes one large fabulous piece is great or several pieces in a house are beautiful as well."

But don't let your stylish ambitions go too far. "The trick with antique pieces is that you still want your home to be comfortable and you have to remember that when selecting them," Sara says.

What's the magic number? David recommends using the rule of threes in a room, such as a vintage floor lamp, lounge chair and coffee table.

Then it's about finding harmonious complements for the antiques. "Asian things work really well with midcentury and ethnic items," David says. "I love a modern coffee table and chair on an ethnic

rug paired with some original abstract art—not prints—but pieces touched by the artist's hand. It doesn't have to be important or listed but the personal touch gives it a whole different feeling."

Dawn, who specializes in European architectural antiques for gardens and interiors, loves blurring the line between the two. "Bring something garden from the outside in and make it a part of your space—especially stone and iron artifacts that provide an unexpected and touchable element. Mix and match your pieces. Don't be afraid to experiment: You can take something that was part of a balustrade and use it as art in your home or a former iron gate could be an amazing headboard or room divider from your living space to kitchen."

It's important to remember that inventory is constantly changing in antique, vintage and consignment shops. Have patience, shop often, and if you've set your sights on something specific, Tess says it's helpful to share that info with the store. "Tell us what you're looking for and we can keep an eye out for you as well."

Storied Styling

Bringing a storied statement piece (or pieces) into your home takes the same consideration and forethought that any bold addition to your spaces requires. What are the best ways to blend standout decor into your settings? Local interior designers weigh in.

Kristin Kostamo-McNeil, principal interior designer at Anne Rae Design, notes that it is essential to strike a balance between contemporary and antique to keep your spaces feeling modern overall. "We had a project with a 1930s Spanish bungalow in Kensington where the clients wanted to incorporate some pieces that would pair with the home's historic nature. We found a stunning antique wardrobe with Spanish conquistadores carved on it but made sure to pair it with more modern furnishings with clean lines and we didn't overload the home with traditional Spanish pieces."

Vintage accessories are great additions to a roundup of accent pieces for a bookshelf, Kristin says.

Kate Lindberg, senior interior designer at McCormick & Wright Interior Design, reminds people to consider the kind of



energy you enjoy in your spaces when choosing standout pieces.

"If you are a fan of mixing patterns and colors and like a very active-feeling space, I say go for it," Kate says. "You can have multiple patterned pieces (furniture, art, rugs) in one space, but make sure that you are mixing the scale of the patterns to keep them from fighting with each other."

"If you prefer a calmer space but have bold pieces that you love, create focal points with these pieces, and let the rest of the room complement from the background. If it is a painting that is the statement, try to pull some of the colors out of the piece to add to the decor in the space—with pillows, flowers or even a small chair that brings some harmony."

Art or furniture should never feel forced into a space, says Christie May, principal interior designer at Rockwell Interiors. "When designing a space, I consider all elements as one. Everything must come together and work together as a whole—and it's no different when introducing vintage pieces. A space is developed with many factors considered, such as scale, material, finish and the way it all looks together. Mixing styles (new and old) is about what feels good together."



Above: The Studio Surface team invited simple elegance into this white hallway with a statement chair. Top left: The search for this carved Spanish wardrobe for a client's 1930s Spanish bungalow, cemented Kristin's love of 1stdibs.com.

Strike a happy balance and create a space that feels collected in your home. "The juxtaposition of old and new pieces is what creates interest and good design tension," says Michelle Salz-Smith, principal interior designer at Studio Surface. "Too many vintage, antiques or thrifted pieces can obviously make a home look dated, so don't go overboard—especially when sprinkling in smaller touches. Be purposeful and thoughtful to avoid random tchotchkes. New fabrics on a found piece can make it feel fresh. Incorporating vintage light fixtures in an otherwise modern space is a beautiful thing."

Where to Look

Besides the local shops mentioned here, Kristin, Kate, Christie and Michelle agree that online marketplaces such as 1stdibs, Chairish and San Diego's online auction Loveseat have amazing options.

1stdibs.com is a good place to start if you know what you want but don't have a clue how to hunt it down since the site can connect you with a vast network of antique stores all over the country. Additionally, 1stdibs will recommend local craftspeople in your area qualified for restoration projects.

David's a fan of checking out reputable auction houses like Los Angeles Modern Auctions for quality and also scouring Kobey's Swap Meet locally or visiting the Long Beach Antique Market.

When traveling, Sara suggests stopping at the markets in Belgium, Sweden and especially France, where the booths that compose the Marché still lead the way in the world of design. ♦

What's hot now in antiques? Visit sandiegohomegarden.com to see.