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Winter 2001
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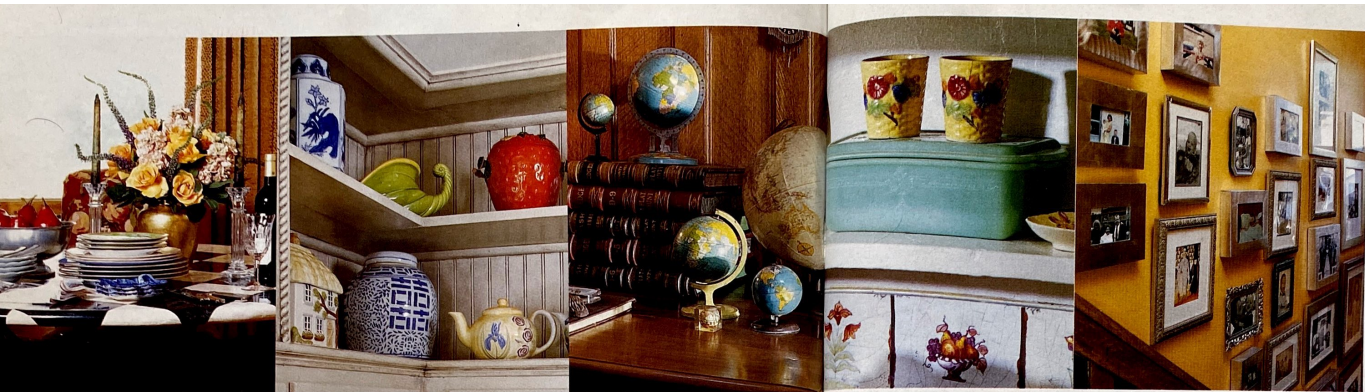
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COLLECTED CHARACTER

WITH A MIX OF COLLECTIBLES AND VINTAGE PIECES, DESIGNER LANE ELISABETH OLIVER ADDS CHARACTER AND STYLE TO EVERY NICHE OF HER DENVER HOME. COLLECT A FEW OF HER DESIGNER TIPS FOR YOUR OWN SPACES.

Excited to return to the city's parks, shopping, and restaurants, designer Lane Elisabeth Oliver was delighted when her husband, Brian Breitenwischer, agreed to move from the Denver suburbs back into the city, where they had lived just a year before. The couple quickly fell in love with and purchased a 1900 Dutch Colonial home. "The house had loads of architectural charm, but it was literally falling apart," Lane admits. "We had a lot of work to do."

The couple relied on simple solutions to update the home. Using paint, they revitalized the kitchen cabinetry, added a rich feel to walls to complement the oak woodwork, and gave damaged floors a vibrant style. A 500-square-foot addition provided needed living space for this young family.

To decorate the home, Lane weaved different decorating styles and assorted collectibles into a pleasing tapestry. "I like mixing styles to create an eclectic look," Lane says. "I don't have a matching set of anything in this house, and that lends to the character and charm."

An avid collector—of furniture and accessories alike—Lane had a solid foundation for integrating her treasures into the home. "We truly live with our many collections," she says. In fact, they've done so through indoor football, wrestling, and general horseplay with sons Bennett and Oliver. "I want my children to touch and explore them so they can appreciate the excitement of collecting."

BY PAMELA S. PORTER PHOTOGRAPHER: TIM MURPHY/FOTO IMAGERY
INTERIOR DESIGNER: LANE ELISABETH OLIVER INTERIOR DESIGN, INC. FIELD EDITOR: MINDY PANTIEL

By removing the soffit above the cabinets and adding beaded board and moldings, the couple created a charming display area for pottery, right. Homeowners Lane Elisabeth Oliver and Brian Breitenwischer enjoy a moment outside with twin sons Bennett and Oliver.



COUNTRY CHARACTER

Now reminiscent of a country farmhouse kitchen, the room *right* was once a disastrous sight. "Imagine dark brown cabinetry, peeling laminate counters, damaged maple floors, and walls covered with pink wallpaper and yellow tile. None of the appliances worked, and the windows were drywalled up," Lane says.

To start the facelift, the couple planned to refinish the wood floors. But after exposing the wood beneath the aged linoleum, they found burned and patched areas. Not wanting to incur the cost of a new wood floor, Lane opted to disguise the destruction with a weathered paint treatment. First the floors were painted apple green, then sanded just enough to let some of the original finish show through. A coat of clear sealer keeps the floor wear-proof.

Lane and Brian salvaged the existing cabinets, using paint and antique green-glass knobs to lighten their appearance. "We originally intended to rip the cabinets out, but once we got started, I decided an antique glaze would give us the farmhouse look we wanted," Lane says.



collected character



Lane and Brian especially adore the Arts and Crafts details throughout their Dutch colonial house, left. On the dining room chairs far left, covered buttons and tabs, below, give the slipcovers a special touch. With a button-cover kit, it's a quick, easy project.

INTIMATE DINING

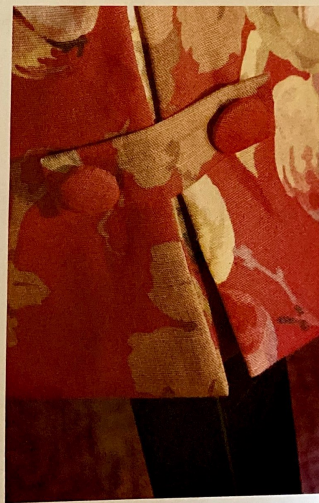
By filling the small dining room with oversize antiques, Lane created a warm and cozy area, left. The room was originally the living area, but she switched the two spaces so family and friends could enjoy meals by the fireplace.

Lane re-covered the chairs with casual floral linen slipcovers to achieve a cottage look. "I used a red-pattern fabric that is red-wine-proof so I wouldn't have to live in fear of spills," she says.

With a knack for successfully blending old with new, Lane combines the current diamond-pattern mosaic top dining table with an antique chandelier rescued from an old Gothic church in Denver and several works of art picked up during various travels.

DESIGNER TIP

Even in a small space, a warm color sets a rich, elegant mood perfect for entertaining and relaxing. Here, the pumpkin hue in the dining room does the trick. "Using a rich color works well because it enhances the small room without closing it in," Lane says.



The stairway right displays framed family photos in gallery style. Lane suggests creating a photo gallery to help fill not-so-attractive spaces such as hallways and staircases. Lane groups her globe collection on an antique pine table, below, to make the small and medium-size items more substantial.



ART ATTRACTIONS

Like the dining room, the living room right is filled with numerous antiques. Above the original Gothic windows is a collection of tramp art, which was popular in the 1920s. "Each piece is a one-of-a-kind whimsical creation," Lane says. Because the living room is adjacent to the dining room, Lane painted it the same pumpkin hue to continue the rich feel.

"The pink wallpaper that hung between the panels of tiger oak had to come down," Lane says. She salvaged the original wainscoting, however, and had an artist "flog" the spaces between the panels using a stiff brush and warm sumac-color paint. This technique flatters the walls by creating a faux-wood-grain look. Heavy draperies envelop the windows with warmth. "They complete the rooms without being overbearing," she says.

DESIGNER TIP

When displaying small collectibles, amass at least five to seven items: the more, the better. "I advise clients to create an arrangement with small collections so they become a larger accessory and appear more impressive," she says.



collected character

collected character



This awkward room left presented several design challenges: a slanting wall, many doors, and a brick wall. Lane chose a solid coat of red paint to unify the spaces. She turned the space into an office and library with plenty of display space.

MIX AND MATCH

Even though the bedroom *opposite* is small, Lane filled the space with large furniture, using distinctive antiques in an eclectic style. "One of the key factors when creating this type of interior is to search for unique items," she advises. "Most importantly, do not buy a matching set of furniture."

The room's focal point is an Italian iron bed from the late 1800s. It's big but elegant, and it provides the Old English style Lane was looking for. "It cost a bit," she says, "but it's very unusual and well worth the price to me."

The marble-top dresser *right* adds necessary weight beside the large bed. "I placed the dresser here because it suited the size of the bed," she explains. "I encourage using a 30-inch night table with as much width as possible to accommodate lamps and a variety of other accessories."

DESIGNER TIP

To dress your bed with this elegant look, use fabrics with similar weights and prints with a variety of scales, such as chenille, velvet, and tapestry. If you're on a tight budget, buy a standard duvet cover to match a custom-made bed skirt and pillows.



When staying with the family, visitors enjoy their own guesthouse, complete with front porch, below. A fresh coat of paint did wonders for the house's old cabinets and dull walls, right.



BE MY GUEST

Situated on the back lawn, the guesthouse doubles as Lane's interior design office. Previous owners transformed the space from a garage, but it needed a few renovations before it was usable.

Designing the main room *left* with antique furniture and new, casual fabrics achieved the cottage style Lane was seeking. And it was her chance to play with pink—a color Brian resisted using in the main house. Refinishing the pine floors and painting the walls completed the room.

In the 8-foot-square kitchen *above* and *opposite*, Lane continued the cottage look, covering the counters with contact paper resembling ceramic tiles. For a smooth finish, she applied it as you would wallpaper to a wall. Chicken wire and pink toile fabric replace the recessed cabinet panels for a homespun touch. She gave existing wood floors the same treatment used in the main-house kitchen, this time trying red. Now complete, the cottage-style space offers a sweet retreat. □

For buying information, see Resources on page 97.