

Character Driven

Antique and vintage items have a certain magical quality. They inspire us with the tales of their survival and with the stories of all the hands and homes through which they've passed.

A carefully selected piece from history can transform a space and is often the "secret ingredient" that gives a room context and character.

ASPIRE Metro asked designers to provide us with a glimpse at the pieces that give their own spaces special meaning.

TEXT JENNIFER QUAIL

Michele Taylor
Michele Taylor Interiors
Ramsey, NJ

I was lucky enough to inherit an antique mahogany secretary desk that was passed down from my grandmother to my parents and now to me. I love that the interior is fitted with little hidden compartments. Whenever I sit at the secretary to write a letter, I think of all the times my mother and grandmother did the same and wonder what they hid in those compartments!

Denise Wenacur
DW Design & Decor
Croton-on-Hudson, NY

There is nothing more wonderful than designing a room around a family heirloom. It's the story behind the piece that makes it so special. My parents have lived in the same house, which was built in 1900 and is filled with antiques and family treasures, for 47 years. Visiting their home reminds me of my grandparents' house, where various pieces, such as my favorite intricately carved silverware cabinet, originally resided. Memories of holidays past, taking out polished silver serving pieces for the table for family gatherings, make me smile.

Glenn Gissler
Glenn Gissler Design
New York, NY

I own many "antique pieces" that can be found in my design studio, my home in Brooklyn Heights or my Greek Revival house in Connecticut. They often play musical locations until they land somewhere comfortably, though it's no guarantee that they will remain there! The objects live in ever-changing dynamic environments. Some ultimately become permanent "residents" in clients' homes, and others are permanent "residents" at the RISD Museum.

Antiques: sculptural elements that lend cultural diversity and help place us in the continuum of human history. – GG

Charles Farruggio
FRED
High Falls, NY

My dining table and chairs are one of my favorite antique acquisitions! As designers, part of the luxury of shopping for ourselves is that we are not limited with a deadline, so we can wait to find the perfect item. However, limited with space, and simultaneously wanting a table to seat 10-12 people, finding the right-sized table was a challenge. The problem was solved when I discovered a gorgeous, efficiently scaled midcentury rosewood dining table with a set of six chairs at Decor NYC in Manhattan. In excellent condition, the rosewood's graining and finish are simply handsome. Best of all, the design and mechanism for the self-storing leaves are brilliant.

Sarah Zames
General Assembly
Brooklyn, NY

My favorite antique items are the pieces of art that came to us from my mother-in-law. She had an excellent eye for art and collected items in the 1970s from low cost auctions and even junk shops in Montreal. A particular favorite of mine is a set of Calder Circus reproduction sketches.

Roger Zierman
Poggenpohl
New York, NY

I'm a car enthusiast through and through. As a child, I spent hours sitting in the old cars in the woods at my grandparents' farm in northern Minnesota, pretending I was cruising down the freeway in style. I used to ask my Grandpa Metso for a few "artifacts" from those cars. These many years later, I have four 1940s chrome hubcaps – one from a Hudson, one from a Nash, one from a Plymouth and one from a Chevrolet – prominently hanging in my apartment's backyard, adding a bit of Minnesota to my NYC life.