



TIMELESS APPEAL

The enduring attraction of antiques in the home

Put on your television mid morning and the chances are you will find you are watching a programme on antiques. It seems that people never tire of this subject as it encompasses so many categories – from a beautiful Victorian diamond ring to a magnificent Georgian library bookcase. The one thing they all have in common is they have passed the test of time and someone, somewhere, is hopefully going to give them a home again.

I read recently in one of the Sunday papers, that older properties were holding their value better than modern ones, particularly if they were Edwardian. No doubt this is because they were built in an era when top quality building materials were used and homes were built to gracious proportions, unlike the majority built today.

The same can be said of most of the furniture that would have been made to fill these homes in that they are often cabinet made from solid mahogany, oak and walnut and sometimes decorated with veneers, cross banding and inlays that enhance the items and allow for some artistic licence to be used. Often the inside of a drawer can be made from solid oak or mahogany, even though most of the time you don't even see them.

You will reap the benefits, however, as the drawers will run well and give you good service. It is well worth removing the drawers about once a year, perhaps when you spring clean, and running a simple white candle along the inside of the chest where the drawers run, and also along the underside of the drawer each side. This gives a good protective film which will help stop the wood wearing down and make the drawers positively glide.

Even when a house is modern or a home is furnished in an ultra modern way, one or two well chosen antiques can give an individual and interesting focus to a home that can add warmth, reflect your personality or interests and if it is a family piece, show part of your history. This gives a feeling of depth and individuality to a room which can be lacking when all the items match or come from the same source.

You sometimes read in the papers or hear in the news that brown furniture is out of fashion but my answer to this is that I have never had a customer say this is something they think – only that it is something they have heard. The point is most good timber is not brown but a variety of natural colours ranging from golden honey, plum, olive, to deep chocolate and so on. It varies so much because wood is a natural material that weathers and alters with time, and that is part of its beauty.

The alternative is very often painted or gilded and while this certainly has its place in an interior, it does mean that an inferior wood can be

used, as it is not on show. Another benefit with show wood is that over time a well looked after and lovingly polished item will develop a lustrous patination, while the painted or gilded finish will not.




All the different periods have their own styles and with time and a little study are relatively easy to spot. The main thing is that whatever type of home you live in – be it a country cottage or Georgian town house, a small flat or a modern home – you will find something perfect for every need if you look for an antique. Perhaps a small rustic oak coffer that can double up as useful storage and a coffee table in a cottage or a fantastic Victorian extending dining table that will seat six to eight when closed and maybe double that when fully extended with plenty of options in between.



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Another bonus when buying antiques at the moment is that prices are lower, in real terms, than ten years ago, so represent good value for money. For anyone that did buy ten years ago, you would still be able to get a good percentage of your outlay back, should you wish to sell – something that would be rare had you bought modern – and you will have had the enjoyment of owning them all these years. One thing is sure though, and that is the interest in antiques will endure into the future alongside changing fashions, whatever they may be. A good piece bought now may well get handed down through the generations, so it is always a good idea to keep any receipts or provenance which will add further to its interest in years to come.


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