



THERE'S SOMETHING INNATELY, YET UNEXPECTEDLY, CHARMING ABOUT A RECESSION. YES, YOU READ THAT RIGHT; THERE IS SOMETHING TO EMBRACE IN LEAN TIMES. AND THAT PARTICULAR JE NE SAIS QUOIS ENCOMPASSES THE ART OF CREATIVELY RETHINKING, REWORKING AND REUSING ITEMS FROM OUR PAST TO SERVE US IN THE PRESENT.

Europe has long been at the head of the class when it comes to setting fashion and design trends, and currently, they're showing a strong draw to times of yore. The recent economic downturn seems to have affected us all, and we're clinging to nostalgia more than ever. We think fondly of making more with less, of recycling, reworking and finding new life in old items. And if we can do so with panache, then all the better, as Europe is triumphantly proving with their wildly popular quirky designs.

If we know one thing about interior design in uncertain times it's this: fashion reflects life, and likewise, life reflects fashion. Returning

THE OLD-WORLD STYLE OF NEW ROMANTICISM

*Bringing Europe's Top Design
Trends to Your Home*

BY LORI ANDERSON

to good, old-fashioned design ideals is a reflection of the state we're in, and it is termed New Romanticism.

What is New Romanticism?

New Romanticism is a reflection of leaner times, and how people have been forced to get creative because of them. One of the best ways to embrace

invest in antique furniture pieces. Beware, however, that the term "invest" should be accepted in its fullest sense. When purchasing an antique item, you are buying quality for longevity. Gone is the trend of immediate gratification and "disposable" furniture—we don't want to clutter our homes with mass-produced items that will last only a few years. Rather, look to buy items today that will continue to yield pleasure tomorrow.

Nesting: It's Not Just for the Birds

The insecurity that the recession brought with it is also manifesting itself in a call to nest. We are clinging to images of our past that bring us comfort, which is exactly where antique—oftentimes European—influences come in. That massive, mahogany buffet your mother owned that you so vividly recall deep in your childhood memories now offers you a sense of safety. The reassurance is found not only in the memory conjured, but in the strong craftsman-

ship of the item. The perfect dovetail joints, the sturdy pulls and the finely finished woodwork all give off a feeling of stability that we won't find with disposable furniture. Now, more than ever, we want to rely on lasting pieces of timeless design to furnish our homes.

Incorporating European Influences into Your Home

Many European designers reflect New Romanticism by incorporating eccentricity into standard items. Think: the fanciful unexpectedness of Alice in Wonderland. Designers like Philip Treacy (the master behind dozens of winsome fascinators worn to the Royal Wedding earlier this year) have embraced fanciful fun, and now others, such as the UK's Timorous Beasties, are finding creative ways to add flair to existing objects in an almost theatrical way. It is often a marriage of the Victorian and Punk periods—a link that in itself is quite unexpected.

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this trend is to create a personal statement in your home by incorporating beautiful, Old World or heirloom furniture, which instantly adds warmth to your surroundings.

Of course, not all of us are so lucky to have an arsenal of heirlooms to choose from, and so we may decide to

>> CONTINUED TO PAGE 21





» FEATURE, CONTINUED FROM PG 19

For you, though, the most likely place from which to draw when incorporating New Romanticism into your home is your past. Reminisce and pull from your heritage to bring new life to old objects. Perhaps this means bringing an heirloom item to the forefront of your home. Maybe your grandmother's maiden hope chest has been sitting quietly at the foot of your bed, or perhaps nimble family fingers have crafted an intricate quilt now folded safely away in a closet. Now is the perfect time to display these treasures. But if you don't have a fully stocked attic to rummage, find pleasure in shopping antique stores and drawing from another's rich past.

To ensure your home envelops the perfect balance of new and old and celebrates this recent trend, a safe bet is to heed advice from an interior designer. They will be able to assess the items you already have, and bring key pieces or heirlooms to new life. Trust a designer's knowledge of New Romanticism and watch as your home transforms into a safe haven of comfort in these tumultuous times.



About the Author:

Lori Anderson scours Paris flea markets and searches the Cotsworth countryside for the elegance of fine European treasures and brings them to her destination home furnishings

and interior design store, EuroNest (www.euro-nest.com) in Minneapolis, which also offers reproduction furniture, unique home accessories and interior design services.