

# Past Meets Present

WITH THE HELP OF AN INTERIOR DESIGNER, THIS HOMEOWNER FURNISHED HER COMFORTABLE, YET ELEGANT, HOME WITH A MIX OF ANTIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY PIECES.

By Kelly McBride  
Photography by Eric Roth



A china cabinet with glass doors shows off homeowner Mary Hayes' collection of glass and silver serving ware. (opposite) Seafaring accents, like a model ship, add to the outdoorsy, causal feel of the sitting room with its bright geometric rug and clean-lined leather chairs.





“I needed to choose the style of the new pieces to make the whole home look fresh.”

Floor-to-ceiling drapery makes this room appear larger, as do the light color choices.

IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DISPLAY ANY KIND OF COLLECTION, BUT IT'S PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING WHEN YOU'RE WORKING WITH A COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE FURNITURE. When Sally Wilson began designing Mary Hayes' condo in a historic area of Salem, Massachusetts, she had two main goals: to make Mary's antique furniture collection look fresh with complementary contemporary pieces, and to make the home livable and hands-on with soft, casual items. Mary is active in the organization Historic Salem, and had recently inherited a collection of country antique furnishings that set a wonderful foundation for the interior. Sally's favorite parts of traditional furnishings are their craftsmanship, good sense of proportion, beautiful old wood and natural patinas.



This armchair has an upholstery of flower- and bird-embroidered fabric, elegant but comfortable enough to be livable.





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**READY, SET, GO**

Antiques provided the foundation for the home's design, while individual pieces set the tone for various rooms. When beginning a décor project, Sally suggests that you identify a key piece in each room that will set the tone for the rest of your choices. "This will give you a constant that can help you evaluate the rest of your decisions," she says.

With an existing collection of antiques, such as in Mary's home, the guesswork becomes even easier—you just have to pick the largest or most aesthetically interesting pieces from the collection. Then decide which rooms will make them shine. "This will help you avoid a hodgepodge of collecting," Sally says.

(top) The furniture's simple lines and contemporary fabric complement the clean, newly remodeled kitchen. (bottom) An antique piece is replete with gorgeous detailing like the carving on this side table.



A light-blue glazed ceramic fish sculpture provides an unexpected contrast to a traditional dark-wood bureau and chair.



An antique bust on a classical-style column looks onto the sitting room, mixing ancient and traditional styles.



A polished side table beneath a landscape painting makes an elegant tableau.

## The Collected Life

GET THIS LOOK WITH 3 TIPS FROM DESIGNER SALLY WILSON.

1. **Buy new, soft pieces.** "Hard antiques are the ones that survive the years the best," Sally says. This means you'll want to buy new soft, casual pieces such as sofas and rugs to balance the home and keep it casual and livable. "Make a space feel comfortable with welcoming places to sit," Sally says.
2. **Consider sculpture.** When we think of adding art to a space, we often think of hanging framed pictures, but interesting art objects give variety. "Adding sculpture to a space really elevates it," Sally says.
3. **Think of unexpected ways to display a collection.** Sally wanted to display the collection of decoy ducks that Mary inherited from her father in a way that was more exciting than the usual tabletop or shelf collection. "I wanted to do something more creative, and to use her space more creatively," Sally says. She placed them above the stairwell on brackets she designed herself (see the next page).





Sally and Mary both love textiles. In this bedroom, Sally softened hardwood antiques with an array of fabrics in a variety of textures.



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(above) Mary’s father’s collection of decoy ducks is mounted on the wall with custom-made brackets. She calls it the “Aviary,” and it reminds her of favorite times with her father. (below) The home is located in a historic area of Salem, Massachusetts, near the Salem Common and harbor. The single-family home was divided into two condos and renovated before Mary moved in.



An ornate mirror and picture frame are perfect accents to the simple lines of a rustic wood dresser.

#### OVER THE YEARS

Another important element to keep in mind is the new pieces you’ll introduce, which will energize the home and translate it into the present. “I needed to choose the style of the new pieces to make the whole home look fresh,” Sally says. This was especially important in the sitting area adjacent to Mary’s kitchen, as the kitchen was newly remodeled and featured a sleek, updated design. Sally kept the furnishings in this area sparse and simple, with modern fabric for the chairs and windows. “This lets them talk together more easily,” she says.

The tension that keeps the home energized doesn’t just exist between the modern and traditional furnishings—as with many antique collections, Mary’s represents a wide variety of time periods. In the hallway, a classical-style bust sits atop a Doric column near a rustic wood armoire. “I like to mix different periods so it looks like your collection has come together over many years by picking up what you love, little by little,” Sally says. “I think it’s this mixing of styles that makes living with antiques today look natural and comfortable.”

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 128.

