

CANADIAN

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HOUSE & HOME

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Lynda Reeve Own Kitchen

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Cosy Fall Style: 8 Fabulous Houses

DISPLAY SMALL OBJECTS TOGETHER

As these treasure-filled shelves in the living room show, grouping smaller items in a single display area gives them a visual weight and impact they might not have on their own. Here, a pair of phrenological busts sits above a larger cluster of antique ribbed match strikers, including a rare red one. In both cases, books serve as frames and/or bases for the objects.



When it comes to

antiques, dealer Lee Caswell is more than just well versed in their provenance and prices. As his superbly restored home in the historic Lake Ontario town of Port Hope makes clear, his talents also extend to decorating with them in novel and interesting ways. During a three-year refurbishment of his stately 163-year-old house, Caswell (above on right, with partner Blaise Gaetz) incorporated a vast and diverse range of antiques, from fine furniture and art to salvaged architectural elements. Here are his tips for living with vintage treasures to fresh and stylish effect.

LET THE OLD INSPIRE THE NEW

For the design of this elegant bookcase in the living room, Caswell and Gaetz took their cue from the much older fixture next to it: a painted-pine fireplace that was original to the house. Echoing its scale, colour and Greek key motif, the new unit serves both a practical purpose (housing books and collectibles and concealing a radiator behind the doors) and an aesthetic one. An identical bookcase on the other side of the fireplace completes the effect, lending visual balance to the room.





CREATE DRAMATIC VIGNETTES

In the dining room, Caswell and Gaetz transformed an array of traditionally functional objects into a striking wall installation. To be sure, more than half the trays are valuable period pieces, with the earliest dating to 1780. But they also interspersed a few new ones, basing their choices on shape, scale and suitability rather than age alone. Underneath, they anchored their arresting tableau with a 19th-century American Federal card table and two vintage ballroom chairs (one Canadian, one from the U.S.). The wall was painted a vivid red for yet more richness and drama.



PAIR VINTAGE WITH CONTEMPORARY

Although it isn't immediately apparent, the furnishings in the library span several centuries, ranging from a mid-19th-century French gilded settee to the contemporary Ikea bookcase (a handsome alternative to expensive built-ins). A sumptuous floral skirt, behind which larger items are stored, skillfully bridges the two disparate elements.



ESTABLISH A THEME

Despite the variety of sizes and frame styles, the wall art in this corner of the living room has a coherent look to it, achieved through its artful configuration and a single unifying focus: Canadian and U.S. landscapes. Appropriately, the wicker Louis XVI-style wing chair (repainted by a family friend, the late decorative painter Raymond Archer) was procured from a prominent Canadian landmark: Le Château Frontenac in Quebec City. The chocolate stripes on the wall — a luxurious backdrop for the mostly gilt frames — were created with two sheens by painting varnish on brown paint.