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Spring/Summer 2009

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{home tour}

objects of affection

Decorating piece by piece sets the course for romance in this California cottage.

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STYLING BY SUNDAY HENDRICKSON

WORLD TOUR

A large mirror-topped table reflects the sunshine streaming through floor-to-ceiling windows in the cottage's living room. Having worked with British designer Kathryn Ireland, Gretchen chose the designer's floral jacquard fabrics to upholster the room's chairs. Above the fireplace, a Parisian painting, entitled *Arc de Triomphe*, is flanked by a pair of antique Italian sconces purchased in a Los Angeles shop.





{home tour}



FAR LEFT: **CHERISHED CHERUB**

A collector of cherubs and angels, Gretchen is especially fond of this angelic planter – an anniversary gift from her parents.

LEFT: **FIRST CLASS SEATS**

Whether nestled on the pillow-strewn window bench or ensconced in one of the Country French chairs, the DiNapoli family loves to gather in the kitchen. Glass cabinet doors echo the sunny paned window and protect Gretchen's colorful ceramic treasures.

BELOW: **GARDEN PARTY**

Matt and Gretchen, along with their three children, Madison, Christopher, and Justin, enjoy their beautiful backyard oasis. Tearing down the original garage made room for the terraced extension and a brick patio.



As a little girl, Gretchen DiNapoli was often found decorating her mother's dining room table with root beer bottles filled with freshly cut geraniums and she cheerfully looked forward to creating her own happy nest one day. Years later, Gretchen and her husband Matt have found that perfect nest.

"About fifteen years ago, we were living in a condo with our one-year-old baby and started looking for a larger home," Gretchen recalls. "After months of house hunting, I spotted a quaint cottage for sale. I thought it was wonderful and Matt agreed."

Located on a corner lot in Santa Monica, the house was within walking distance to town and just blocks away from the beach. Built in 1942, the cottage was small, but Matt envisioned adding on to it one day. "We were very excited to make it ours," Gretchen says.

TASTEFUL ELEGANCE

In the dining room, Gretchen delicately balances old and new. An antique crystal chandelier – a housewarming gift from Gretchen's parents – illuminates a French patisserie table, a mirror framed in gold, and satin drapes inspired by one of Gretchen's party dresses. An antique Victorian chair blushes with pride in a pink Pashmina throw from a Los Angeles boutique (Styles of Elegance).

"Mirrors of any size and shape add fluidity to the house."



"Add little touches of color to white and neutral palettes to keep the look fresh and alive."

ROOM WITH A VIEW

A serene alcove filled with oversized club chairs and a pretty ottoman covered in The Marriage of Figaro toile fabric creates an inviting retreat in the master bedroom.





ABOVE: **IN THE PINK**

Painted by a Santa Monica artist on French newspaper, a pair of birdbath prints hangs above an eye-catching buffet (a reproduction piece). A pink pashmina plays up the casually romantic quality of the family room's furnishings.

BELOW: **ROOM SERVICE**

Hints of lilac and purple add a harmonious accent to the bedroom's neutral tones. An upholstered tray, adorned with nickel-plated nailheads makes a unique serving piece.

Building Blocks

Two and a half years after purchasing the home, the couple hired an architect and contractor, and began renovations. Although the overall square footage was doubled, the project retained the home's storybook character and charm.

"One of the things we loved at first sight about this property was the garden – it was spectacular," Gretchen explains. "By tearing down the garage we acquired an even larger garden and maximized the pretty views from inside."

The Inside Track

When the renovations were complete, Gretchen turned her attention to decorating each room in a style she describes as "traditional chic with an edge." "I love antiques but prefer to mix them up with flea market finds and reproductions," she says.

Unlike many homeowners who are in a hurry to complete their décor, patience is one of Gretchen's virtues. The French patisserie table in her dining room, for example, took time to acquire. "Matt and I found the table in a French antique shop in Northern California, but it wasn't for sale at the time," Gretchen notes. "We went back one year later and the table was still there...and for sale. Matt bought it for me as a Christmas gift!"

"Everything will fall into place if you don't rush into your purchases," she believes. "The perfect fabric will be there waiting for you when you are ready."



Tray Chic

MATERIALS

WOODEN TRAY
TAPE MEASURE
BROWN PAPER BAG OR CRAFT PAPER
FOAM PADDING
FLAT 1-INCH PAINT BRUSH
WHITE GLUE
LINEN FABRIC
FABRIC GLUE
NICKEL-PLATED DOME NAILHEADS
HOT GLUE GUN
GLASS TO FIT INSIDE OF TRAY

METHOD

MAKE PATTERN FOR COVERING INSIDE SERVING SURFACE OF TRAY: Using tape measure, measure the serving surface of the tray, then make a paper pattern to fit.

COVER INSIDE SERVING SURFACE OF TRAY: Use pattern to cut a piece of foam. Dilute white glue slightly with water and brush on tray. Press foam in place and let dry.

Before cutting fabric, carefully press to avoid wrinkles in your finished

project. Adding one half inch extra around all edges, use pattern to cut a piece of fabric. Turn edges under and press in place. Brush fabric with fabric glue and press in place over foam. Let dry.

MAKE PATTERN FOR COVERING SIDE AND BOTTOM OF TRAY:

Using tape measure, measure length from one edge of fabric, up over short side edge of tray, down that side, across bottom of tray, up over other short side, and down that side to other edge of fabric. Measure width in the same manner and make a pattern. Before cutting foam, place tray on top of pattern and fold sides up. Make a slit at each corner, as necessary to create neat corners.

COVER BOTTOM AND SIDES OF TRAY:

Use pattern to cut a piece of foam. Dilute white glue slightly with water and brush on tray. Place tray on foam and press in place, folding foam up to completely cover sides. Let dry. Before cutting fabric, carefully press to avoid wrinkles in your finished project. Adding one half inch extra around all edges, use pattern to cut fabric. Turn edges under and press in place. Brush fabric with fabric glue and press in place over foam. Let dry.

Following photo, use hot glue gun to affix nail heads in place. Insert glass to form serving surface of tray.

Simply Elegant

The DiNapoli home reflects not only Gretchen's willingness to wait for just the right piece, but the generous and thoughtful spirit of her family. "I have a personal connection to the furnishings in our home. My most treasured ones are from the special people in my life," Gretchen says.

Whether topping a table with hurricane candles and mercury glass or hanging a mirror in a hallway as an embellishment, Gretchen looks for accessories that bring sparkling light into her home. "Mirrors of any size and shape add fluidity to a house," Gretchen advises. She also stresses that details make something ordinary become extraordinary. "Whether it is smocking on a drape, beading on a headboard, or a monogram – it's the details that make a space uniquely personal." 🌸

RIGHT: SITTING PRETTY

A French settee covered in Jane Churchill fabric (www.janechurchill.com) is one of Gretchen's favorite spots to unwind. The frame's gray tones are repeated in a monogrammed pillow (from Nancy Stanley Waud of Beverly Hills) and a pair of charcoal and pastel drawings by artist Ellen Bass. The illustrations depict scenes from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, a recurring theme in the couple's bedroom.

OPPOSITE PAGE: LA BELLE BATH

Tucked into an airy niche, a spa bath boasts a luxurious marble surround. A Bellesol sunburst mirror (www.ballard-designs.com) radiates light into every corner of the master bath. Supported by a trio of angels, the small antique table was a Mother's Day gift from Gretchen's family.

BELOW: SUITE DREAMS

The master bedroom is wrapped in soothing hues of cream and blue. The custom headboard, created by Charles Fradin (323-951-1200), was fashioned after an antique mirror frame and upholstered with a *Marriage of Figaro* toile pattern.



Select a chair
with a nicely
curved silhouette;
and for the bed,
rounded bolsters
and graceful
headboards for
added romance.

