



LAIT PUR DE NORMANDIE
ARRIVAGE 2 FOIS PAR JOUR

Le bon lait



Ferme du Vallon 31-29-73-46



Something old SOMETHING NEW

Interior designer and founder of Lavender & Sage **Mayke Hogestijn** provides helpful advice on how we can create a balanced mix of both traditional and contemporary design in our homes. A little love and care can go a long way...

For an interior that reflects your personality and gives your home character I recommend going for a mixture of the traditional and the modern: a clever combination of something old and something new that will create a unique and interesting space.

The title may suggest that these two concepts are mutually exclusive, but of course that isn't so. You can have something that is new, but that looks old – or at least quirky and different – or something old that functions as new. To me, the most successful interiors can combine all these concepts. All it needs is a good eye to put them together so that they complement, rather than mimic, each other.

PIECE OF HISTORY

If you have the budget to buy antiques to fill your new room, your first step will be to decide what pieces you want. You will have to take into account what periods you like best and which

pieces will work well together. That means reading up about antiques, going to museums, trawling the shops and talking to as many people in the know as you can to get ideas and advice.

Antiques can be expensive, which means that you will need to have at least a basic understanding of how much you should be paying for that lovely 18th-century chair before you part with your cash. Don't just shell out the money because the price tag says that's what it is worth. As in every trade, there are reliable and unreliable dealers. Ask friends and check on the internet to find out who others have bought from and, most importantly, use your gut instinct; I think deep down we all know a purveyor of hot air when we come across one.

Auction houses are a good place for antiques. The advantage is that experts are always on hand to tell you a little more about the pieces you're interested in. See if you can find out about the provenance of your furniture. It isn't just useful information, it also gives the piece an emotional depth that will make it more »

Above: Old china and newer items like this watering can and French-style kitchen clock are easy to pick up and throw into the mix;
Facing page: These items make great decorative pieces



precious to you. These kind of pieces often make good talking points so it's worth finding out their history.

NEW ADDITION

Although I am not a huge fan of new and especially flat-pack furniture, I have to admit that sometimes you can't knock it.

"You don't have to buy something that looks old. With a little creativity and elbow grease there are a number of ways to age a piece"

Furniture superstore IKEA introduced their Billy bookcases an aeon ago, which have happily housed my overflowing book collection in simple comfort and affordable style ever since. Of course, I dream of a real library with old oak shelves, glazed doors

and one of those old-fashioned ladders. Still, even though there are a number of really nice pieces out there, the 'something new' I'd like to talk about in this instance is more in the arty corner. Rather than sticking a framed poster on your wall, or a copy of a painting, why not find an original painting by a young aspiring, or a part-time artist? Ask around and you'll be surprised how many people know artists whose work you could look at. Their work might be quite affordable and an original item will mean so much more to you, as well as have far more impact on your room. Art doesn't have to be expensive and local galleries, university shows and even websites give you a great opportunity to seek out something with real presence.

FAKING IT

This is actually one of the reasons why I love running Lavender & Sage and partly why I set up the company in the first place.

It's lovely to handle new, well-made items that look as though they come from an auction house or antiques store with their own story to tell. However, with furniture you don't have to buy something that looks old, after all, with a little creativity and elbow grease there are a number of ways to age a piece.

I like using 'old' subdued colours such as greys, muted greens and blues to date a piece of furniture, making it appear rustic and French. The key is to apply the paint not too neatly and sand the 'high traffic' areas coarsely to achieve a 'worn' appearance. To get the best result, finish with one or two coats of dark furniture wax. If the piece of furniture you're working on is brand new, make sure you smooth down any sharp corners and edges and don't forget the area around the doorknobs or keyhole. Coarse sandpaper usually gives the best effect.

Before you apply the wax, consider adding some artwork of

your own. Stencils or hand-designed motifs will make your piece unique so that no one would ever think it had been near a high street shop or an IKEA store! Plus, it's nice to be able to put your own stamp on something.

"The 'throw-away' nature of our society must change. Everything costs valuable energy to produce; we must respect that"

REVALUE AND RESPECT

I've saved the best until last, as this is my favourite subject. People are often so eager to throw out old furniture and accessories, simply because they're not perfect any more, they've become »



Left and below: Use sandpaper on wood to age it or use paint to revive something that's looking tired. With a little attention, it's hard to tell which items are old and which are new. Facing page: Many French toiletries and beauty products on the market have old-fashioned appeal in order to reflect tradition





wobbly, or they simply don't fit in with the colour scheme of the new room. These days, however, most of us realise that the 'throw-away' nature of our society must change. Every single article in our houses has cost valuable energy to produce. We must respect that energy and treat the article with consideration.

So what do you do instead? What every single generation

“Repair the item, re-upholster, paint. Put something of yourself into it and it will become more valuable to you as a result”

before us has done: you repair the item, you change the shape or the use, you re-upholster, you paint. In short, you give it the respect it is due, you put something of yourself into it, and it will become all the more valuable to you as a result. This is not only an environmentally-sound way of recycling furniture, it is also a way of keeping the cost down. It will inevitably be cheaper to rework something old than to splash out on something brand new.

Ask me what kind of interior I like best to design, and my answer is unique ones that look as if they've grown up over the years, as though a designer has never been near them. This can be achieved with just a little patience, love, respect and a bit of hard work.

Lavender & Sage offers traditional, stylish French inspired accessories and furniture for all areas of the home and garden.

Visit www.lavenderandsage.com for more details. [fm](#)

Above: Kitchens look a lot more rustic with exposed brickwork or wooden features. Choose decorative pieces and materials that don't look too shiny and new. **Right:** A mishmash of materials – iron, wood, glass and china – ensure that there's variety as well as a more thrown-together impression (top); Wooden furniture goes well with a red and cream colour scheme

