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HOME & GARDEN

SMART CHOICES

Vintage, modern furniture together make for family-friendly design

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to The Washington Examiner

The word "vintage" sounds old, but interior designer Marika Meyer used vintage finds to create a modern space for a young Washington family.

Pointing out that vintage is as much about style as age, Meyer said she loves incorporating classic pieces in casual settings.

"Stylistically, they wanted something eclectic," Meyer said of the young couple. "They wanted something that would be one-of-a-kind; vintage pieces, rather than something you'd see every day."

Rather than a living room that looked like it was ordered from a big-box-store catalog, Meyer wanted to infuse the character and personality that come with vintage furniture into the newly designed space so it looked lived in, like it had always been there.

Finding the right pieces was tricky because the living area had a variety of angles and niches. The floor plan is charming to the eye but a challenge to design.

"The floor plan was the biggest challenge," Meyer said. "You have these niches, and how are you going to maximize the floor plan?"

Instead of trying to minimize the design, Meyer found furniture that could go with the flow, and most of it was vintage.

She shopped locally, which is budget- and eco-friendly. The main find



Interior designer Marika Meyer used vintage furniture in a newly designed space to create a unique living room for a young family.

PHOTO BY ROSS CHAPPLE

was a camelback sofa from GoodWood on U Street. Meyer had the sofa reupholstered in a soft cream fabric and left the wooden legs exposed.

"I wanted to maintain that feeling of airiness about the space," Meyer said. "I think if we had started skirting everything, it would have weighted the furniture. In addition,

the family is young and I wanted to make sure things did not feel too traditional."

Two Dunbar chairs upholstered in a Kravet fabric, a black coffee table and chrome stools are all vintage pieces from Sixteen Fifty Nine in Georgetown, the former store of Mike Johnson, a senior designer at Lori Graham Design. Johnson still

collects vintage accessories and furniture and sells them through Graham's Showroom 1412 under his line called Sixteen Fifty Nine by MRJ.

"Vintage represents the high quality of a past time; retro refers to the style of a past time; antique dates back from a period long ago, representing something old-fash-

Resources

- » Meyer Interiors
meyerinteriors.com
- » GoodWood
goodwooddc.com
- » Showroom 1412
showroom1412.com
- » Z Gallerie
zgallerie.com

ioned," said Johnson. "When you mix vintage with modern, don't spread your vintage collections all over the place. It's better to group them together in one area for more impact."

He said to continue colors and design styles from room to room and rather than using Midcentury Modern pieces in one room and traditional in another, to mix them together.

Meyer seamlessly merged the modern and vintage. A ceramic stool from Z Gallerie sits between the vintage chairs. She had a new black custom-built bookcase and repeated the baseboard molding around the base of the bookcase.

The beauty of vintage items is their quality, Meyer said. It already has been proved that they can stand the test of time — making such pieces surprisingly ideal for families.

"About 95 percent of our work is with families that have small children," she said. "All the surfaces are indestructible and durable."

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