



Stylish Shelves

An acclaimed interior designer offers her tips on creating polished displays.

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MINDY LAVEN



MINDY LAVEN RUNS A FULL-SERVICE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN FIRM based in Yorba Linda, California. We admired her work—which often features vintage items—and her beautiful, organized office. We asked her if she could share some of her tips for creating stunning displays on shelves, and luckily for us, she obliged with some great advice.

FLEA MARKET DÉCOR: TELL US ABOUT THE VINTAGE ITEMS ON DISPLAY ON YOUR OFFICE SHELVES.

MINDY: I have a fabric-bound copy of *The New York Times Cook Book*, green glass garlic beads from Greece, Depression glass ice cream cups from a tag sale (see those at left), brass roosters and various handmade pottery pieces that I can't get enough of. I don't collect anything that I don't love, and I don't worry about where something is going to go. If you love something, you will find a place for it.

FMD: WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU MAKE WHEN WORKING WITH CLIENTS WHO ARE HAVING A HARD TIME CHOOSING WHAT TO DISPLAY?

MINDY: When I have a client who has a lot of wonderful things that are collected or have personal meaning, I begin by sorting those items by color. It's pleasing to the eye and it marries pieces nicely. I may use all white for a winter or New Year's display, and then rotate those pieces out to a more colorful grouping of greens and yellows for the warmer summer months. Everything you own does not have to be displayed at once, and the nice thing about a rotation is that you maintain the specialness of your treasures because they aren't always in plain sight.

FMD: HOW IS ORGANIZATION PART OF THE EQUATION WHEN YOU ARE DESIGNING?

MINDY: Collections can look cluttered or they can look like an art installation. It's all in the presentation. I like to keep





groupings together for impact. Sprinkling milk glass dishes in every room doesn't have nearly the same effect as grouping the entire collection together on kitchen shelves or on the top of a buffet.

FMD: WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU GIVE US NON-PROS WHEN IT COMES TO FRESHENING SHELVES?

MINDY: Vintage books with leather bindings or marbled covers are works of art, so I often use books as the base for everything else that will go on a set of shelves or in a bookcase, building my vignettes on top of them. Also, add in some precious metals. A pair of brass candlesticks or a vintage sterling teapot can provide miles of style.

FMD: WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE PLACES TO FIND UPCYCLED HOME ACCESSORIES?

MINDY: Tag sales and estate sales. I'm on email lists for companies that have regular estate sales, and I'm always checking Craigslist to see which sales are happening near me. A few months ago, I bought a Chippendale mirror on the last day of an estate sale in Montecito for \$225. When I checked the value on 1stDibs, the exact mirror was selling for \$4,500! I couldn't believe it!

FOR MORE ON DESIGNER MINDY LAVEN, VISIT MINDYLAVEN.COM.

Inside Scoop

Trend Alert:

Pleats for Spring

Photo courtesy of Chairish

SLEEK, DRUM-SHAPED LAMP-SHADES have ruled the roost for quite some time, but lately we're seeing the return of a traditional type of shade: pleated. "After years of only seeing minimal linen lamp shades, the return of pleated shades is so refreshing," says Noel Fahden, the vice president of merchandising at chairish.com, where they have seen an uptick in interest in pleated shades. "We especially love shades that use block-printed cottons; it's a fresher way to add pattern than more traditional staid floral patterns," he says. If you have a flea-market lamp that needs a little oomph, try a pleated shade to get on board with this latest trend.



-K.D.W.

Take a Shelfie

Arranging books by color turns shelves into works of art.

BY KATHRYN DRURY WAGNER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALUN CALLENDER/NARRATIVES



IN THIS COZY LIVING ROOM, a leather chair with plenty of tales of its own to tell creates the perfect reading nook. It's accompanied by flea-market finds and family treasures, but the focal point is the shelving. Plain white shelves are made eye-catching using a simple trick: Herd all the books of the same hue together, and suddenly, there's a color-block effect.

In our "Q & A," designer Mindy Laven gives some ideas on how to organize shelves. She also shares, "When freshening shelves, I take everything off and start from scratch. A clean palette is always the best inspiration." Once

you have the clean slate to start, arrange books by color. Then add some conversation starters. Your shelf displays might include flea-market finds and mementos from a recent trip or reference special memories. "Last summer I pulled out a handful of shells and sand dollars that my daughters and I had collected in Hilton Head years ago," says Mindy. "I poured a little sand in the bottom of a silver bowl and placed them on top. Every time I walked by, I was reminded of that sweet time of life when my girls were young and time seemed to stand still. Cost: nothing. Value: priceless!"