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Not Your Mother's LOUIS

BY LAURANN CLARIDGE. PHOTOGRAPHY JACK THOMPSON.

Antiquarian Geoffrey Westergaard is the go-to guy who makes Regency rock and transferware sing.

In the Louis-filled lair of Carl Moore Antiques, where Empire meets Gustavian and mingles with a bit of *Régence*, you will no longer find its namesake on the premises. Instead, you'll make the acquaintance of his friendly former protégé, Geoffrey Westergaard, who acquired the shop — which specializes in 18th- to 20th-century European antiques and accessories — six years ago. While Moore has moved on to deal in art, opening Cavalier Fine Art at the Decorative Center Houston, Westergaard has deftly taken his weighty mantle, not only filling the shoes of the lauded Moore but growing into the role of mentor for the next generation of young collectors.



Adam-style mahogany, bowfront presentation serving table from England, circa 1860; trio of convex, Regency-style mirrors in gold leaf; two of six vintage faux-bamboo armchairs made of tole, circa 1950; and a Regency cherrywood table on a tripod base made in Great Britain.



Carl Moore Antiques shop owner Geoffrey Westergaard is seated on one of a pair of painted Louis XV fauteuils from France. Empire-style mahogany buffet with marble top, from France. Mid-century French brass sunburst mirror; vintage 1940s French gold-framed starburst mirror. Weathered driftwood acquired in Denmark was mounted on an iron base and electrified as a lamp.

“I wanted to yell, ‘Turn down the task lighting and raise the volume on romance and attractiveness!’”

The Introduction

“When young collectors come in, I ask them how they want to experience their house when they walk in the front door. I believe acquisition isn't instantaneous. Start with quality pieces, and you have to only buy once, then build on that,” Westergaard says. “It's just like jewelry, clothing, art: Find pieces with a sensibility that you have a response to. “When starting your own home, you don't want to live like your parents. They came up in a time, during the '70s and '80s, when decorating was about ‘How much furniture can you put into a room?’ Think of the Steinbergs, Carolyne Roehm and all those homes that were pictured in the glossy fashion and shelter magazines. It was all about ‘How opulent can it be?’ It was really dazzling to people.”



Making Mother's Hand-Me-Downs Your Own

“How can you mesh a piece of antique furniture passed down through your family into your life today? The solution lies in learning to see the piece from a fresh perspective. What we think of as traditional furnishings were always displays in rather elaborate, formal settings. There was always a feeling of ‘stuffed to the gills’ in these rooms because of the sheer quantity of objects in a single space,” Westergaard says. “Separate it from its previous incarnation. Look at its shape and sense of proportion. Does it need to stand alone or be part of a grouping? Many pieces have a dark finish and will pop in a modern way in a room using a lighter palette ... The largest obstacle to successful integration is the set of accumulated memories attached to a family antique. Banish the thought ‘It was always in the dining room.’ This is your home; be fearless, and make it your own.”



Above: One of a set of four shadowboxes with a collection of antique English red wax seals mounted on a background of antique legal contracts. Right: An oak potboard Welsh dresser from Great Britain holds a collection of 19th-century French and English ironstone. The lamps are a pair of turned-wood balusters from France, circa 1870, with original painted finish. Mahogany Gainsborough-style leather-upholstered armchair from England, circa 1900.



Left: In the living room, a collection of Hispano-Moresque *reflejo metálico* (luster earthenware) originates from the town of Maniffes near Valencia, Spain, and dates from the 16th and 17th centuries; it is displayed on an 18th-century Italian console table. The oil painting is a 19th-century French depiction of a country landscape.

Bottom: In the living room, the sofa, slipcovered in antique thistle cloth (a hemp fabric), was created by Pam Pierce, and the embroidered pillows were purchased at The Mews in Dallas. A pair of carved and painted 18th-century Venetian mirrors has its original looking glasses. Duo of Louis XIV armchairs and a French bergère covered in lilac gingham, from Tara Shaw Ltd. and W. Gardner, Ltd., respectively. The Oushak rug from Carol Piper Rugs was made in Turkey. A pair of 19th-century French stools, along with the iron garden table that serves as an end table, from Chateau Domingue.

Below: Covering the surface of an 18th-century English table in the living room are hand-painted 18th-century Delft tiles found at Jane Moore Interiors. Sterling roses with pale blossoms are arranged in a French 18th-century faience vase.



countryside. They didn't find much on their initial scouting trip, but Gay came away realizing there was a market stateside for reclaimed architectural pieces.

Taking the maiden name of Gay's mother-in-law, who was raised in New Iberia, Louisiana, the four-year-old company works with both pickers and demolishers scattered throughout France, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Sweden.

"The demolishers go in before a property is slated to be leveled, buy the building and reclaim anything that can be resold," explains Gay. "Other times, people renovating, who perhaps want a more contemporary space, call us. And there are other people, too, who know the value of their architectural piece, and they want to sell it and replace it with something less expensive."

With a trove of stunning pieces available to her, Gay has recreated a timeworn *mas* for her family. "'Mas' is their word for an old farm compound," says Gay. "Something very rustic with old stone walls and floors. I think the look is really comfortable and casual with an atmosphere of Provence." She worked with interior designer

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