



# Feminine Charm

Anne Grubb is a serious collector—of cast-offs. Her passion creates a home of comfort and irresistible playfulness.

BY DENISE GEE PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER MARGONELLI PRODUCED BY BARB ROHM ROSSA

Anne found the green floral armchair as is and placed it as a focal point in the living room. The mantel is an ever-changing display, currently featuring a 1930s portrait that reflects the relaxed femininity of the space.



**A**t almost every turn in Anne Grubb's house there's a well-composed still-life moment. But this is no museum set full of fine antiques and precious untouchables. The 1921 Colonial Revival home that Anne shares with her husband, Lon, and 12-year-old twins, Will and Nora, is an eclectic yet uncluttered realm full of finds from garage and estate sales, antiques and junk markets, retail catalogs, even an occasional roadside cast-off. Each room is layered with earthy neutral hues and a mix of soft traditional patterns and furnishings that play alongside modern accents and personal art.

As an incurable shopper, Anne thrives on the hunt, easily swinging from scouring an upscale market to making a tablecloth from a bedsheet. "It's all about color and style, and what catches my eye," she says.

It's also about layering. Anne often starts with wallpaper, which she uses more as a paint color than the room's major focal point.

**Anne is a master at mixing various periods and styles of furniture. In the living room (above and far right), two white sofas play on the symmetry of the home's traditional architecture. The pink chair near the bookshelves is from the pair that Anne found at a rummage sale and had recovered. Audubon prints, all purchased at garage sales, add life to the stairwell (right).**



# “Rugs feel like little paintings on the floor.”

ANNEGRUBB

Anne made the table skirt from an inexpensive bedsheet. Vintage ribbon used as tiebacks adds personality to velvet curtains found in a catalog and hemmed to fit. The rug is part of Anne’s “worn out” collection.



In the small den, the dark matte wall finish is a rich backdrop for graphic white furniture. The painting is part of Anne's collection of portraits. "They add a bit of soulfulness to a place," Anne says.





**A large round table and oversize pendant light anchor the dining room (above). Antique French chairs sport striped seat covers that complement the wallpaper. “People think wallpaper has to be the focal point of every room, but it doesn’t,” says Anne. “It should just be another layer to a room.” In the bathroom (left), the red toile wallpaper, black-and-white floor, and old Oriental rug form a rich mix.**

“Wallpaper does so much to help soften a room,” she says. Then she freely mixes styles—French Regency chairs, Chinoiserie chests, Victorian breakfronts—with modern sofas and lamps. She adds framed prints, old books, her children’s artwork, and sentimental treasures.

To pull it all together, Anne relies on symmetry and repeating colors. Pink is a design thread that now runs from the front door—painted a soft peony color—to subtle touches through the house. “Funny thing is, I never really liked the color until recently,” she says.

Anne’s love of collecting and her decorating style may have deeper roots. “I had an Italian father and Danish mother; he loved what was ornate and heartfelt; she wanted streamlined and modern,” she says. “When I look around here I see that both can work together. Essentially, that’s my style because of them, and it’s a sweet thing to realize.”

The vintage iron-and-marble table is a prized piece that has seen many uses. "In our old house I used it as an island. Here it's our kitchen table, but maybe one day I'll have it outside," Anne says. The kitchen floor (*far right*) is painted a check pattern of dark and muted gray to mask the inevitable dirt and scuffs from an active family.





## ANNE'S DESIGN SECRETS

**Shopping:** "Go anyplace that has interesting goods, and then work quickly on instinct. I've always hated shopping with other people because I like to go in and scan. Usually what I like will jump out at me fairly quickly. If nothing does, I like to move on."

**Display:** "I don't like things that match for matching's sake, but I do like symmetry. It's easy on the eye and puts people instantly at ease."

**Rugs:** "I started collecting old—I mean, really old and decrepit—Oriental rugs because I loved the muted color and softness. And they were cheaper, especially when smaller. I'd ask the rug merchant to see the rugs that were in the lunchroom, maybe, or rolled up in a dusty corner. I also look for them at estate sales, and rotate them around the house. They add a spot of warmth and color and feel like little paintings on the floor."

**Freshening:** "Many people don't realize how easily they can change the look of a room just by changing a lampshade." Anne prefers paper ones, which are more affordable, and she keeps a stash in the basement.

**Comfort:** "Nothing is sacred in this house. We like to live in every room in the house, so we prefer furniture that will withstand a good plopping into."

**Adding life:** "You have to have fresh flowers in a place, I think. Even if you just go pull some branches off a tree or bush. That just seems to make everything and everyone feel alive." 🌿

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