

mix & match

Designer Jessica Helgerson shares her tips on how to mix different styles of furnishings

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DESIGNER PROFILE

Specializing in environmentally sustainable interiors, Portland, Oregon-based designer Jessica Helgerson artfully melds natural and recycled materials into healthy and beautiful spaces. Her travels throughout Europe, India and Morocco have also shaped her globally-influenced design approach, which highlights her knack for mixing furniture, new and old.

Mastering an ideal mix of furnishings in a room is no easy task. And when the pieces are of different styles or eras, the challenge becomes even greater. To find out how to get an eclectic group of furnishings to work together in harmony, we turned to interior designer Jessica Helgerson for advice. An essential starting point, she says, is to choose a piece of furniture or two that will anchor the room. "In a living room, that can mean a beautiful chair or a work of art," she says. "Select this piece carefully, and the rest of the elements can be easier to choose."

For more support in creating appealing compositions of antique, vintage and new furnishings and accessories, Helgerson offers the following tips:



Helgerson used color and composition to unify upholstered pieces of different styles. Throw pillows and trims echo the pale blue and yellow of the French chairs.

- 1 UNIFY WITH COLOR.** This pale color scheme, accented with subtle blues and yellows, sets a sophisticated tone and allows the shapes of furnishings to stand out. The whitewashed wood occasional chairs and ivory contemporary roll-arm sofas blend with the creamy walls.
- 2 THINK ABOUT THE BIG PICTURE.** "Select items that relate to one another through form, scale or some other vital quality," Helgerson says. To harmonize a collection of disparate pieces, try mixing only two or three styles. "Living with an eclectic style calls for good editing skills," she says.
- 3 CREATE CONTRAST.** When your backdrop is neutral, it's easier to compose a room with striking accents. For example, black and espresso-toned furnishings like the demilune table and black lampshade pop in the scene, add visual interest and break up the uniformity of the predominantly soft palette.
- 4 BALANCE SHAPES.** Here, the large, modern picture frame, with its sharp angles, starkly sets off the delicate Louis XIV-inspired armchair, creating a dramatic effect. But too many different shapes can be disorienting, the designer warns. To create a sense of balance, repeat shapes by including pairs of furnishings.
- 5 CONSIDER SCALE AND PROPORTION.** "If you want to pair a modern dining table with traditional chairs, be sure they all have legs of similar proportions," says Helgerson. Choosing furnishings with like proportions creates harmony and accentuates the essential qualities of each piece. +