

JULY-AUGUST 2015

VERANDA

THE NEW MIX


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COLLECTED WISDOM

**AT HIS HOME IN ALABAMA,
A GLOBE-TROTTERING DESIGNER
CREATES A DRAMATIC BACKDROP
FOR HIS VINTAGE FINDS
AND CHERISHED TREASURES.**

INTERIOR DESIGN BY ANDREW BROWN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANIE ACEVEDO
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A living room wall painted high-gloss black grounds the array of furnishings. Antique bergère in a Garrett leather; Victorian side chair in a Dedar silk ikat; custom sofa in a Harlequin velvet with pillows in a Clarence House zebra print; sea-grass carpet, Design Materials; walls in Black and in Super White, Benjamin Moore. ABOVE LEFT: Designer Andrew Brown in the living room of his Birmingham home.





Treasured mementos on an 18th-century Chinese desk personalize the space. Armchair slipcovered in a Great Plains fabric, B&B Italia; pillow in a Clarence House fabric; pouf, John Derian. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Table, Victoria Hagan Home; antique fauteuils and side chair in Dedar fabrics; lantern, Dennis & Leen; armchairs in a Great Plains fabric, Verellen; lamp, Arteriors Home; doors in a Holly Hunt leather; curtains in a Lewis & Sheron Textiles velvet with a Great Plains trim. Custom console; antique stool in a Dedar fabric; basket, Williams-Sonoma Home.



WHETHER PLANNING HIS NEXT TRIP OR DESIGNING A ROOM, ANDREW BROWN MAKES EVERY DECISION WITH ONE WORD IN MIND: AUTHENTICITY.

“Travel is a huge source of inspiration,” he says. “It opens your eyes to so many new things and forces you to look at everything in a different way.” Seeking native flavor, Brown insists that the pulse of a city is found through a local’s eye. The same goes for his design philosophy—everything he brings to his own home is a reflection of his journeys.

Brown spent his formative years in France and West Africa. As an adult, he returned to his Alabama roots but held on to his affection for wanderlust, making world travel and great design a lifestyle priority.

Choosing items with provenance, Brown curates his collection of furniture, accessories, and art to be a veritable representation of experiences and memories. His 1930s Colonial Revival in Birmingham is the theater that tells his story. “Some pieces have been accumulated on travels, some are a reaction to places I’ve been, and all of it is a mix of the diverse places and styles that I’ve been exposed to throughout my life,” he says.

Brown’s seemingly disparate assemblage unites under his affinity for clean lines, bold statement pieces, and classic color palettes. In his living room, a 1960s burl-wood games table by John Widdicomb anchors the array of seating that includes a modern, armless custom sofa covered in royal-blue velvet, a Victorian gilt slipper chair, and an antique French bergère. Global references come through in zebra-print pillows, a Syrian taboret table, and a chic ikat fabric. An antique Italian Rococo-style mirror adds dramatic flair.





“A combination of textures, patinas, layers, varying heights, order and disorder, old and new, aristocratic and tribal—that, all together, is what creates a successful space,” Brown says. “It’s about creating the right amount of tension between everything.”

Only one room deep, the home is a series of narrow spaces that visually flow into one another. Bold focal points, such as leather-covered doors, faux finishes, large-scale prints, and black accents draw the eye from one room to the next.

Eschewing the bad connotations of the word *souvenir*, Brown says his keepsakes are honest mementos from his travels: “It’s best to find local markets or antiques fairs to buy art, or plates, or something you will actually use. Some of my most treasured finds come from flea markets in Buenos Aires, Paris, and Bangkok.”

Insisting that self-editing is key, Brown refers to a favorite mantra: “Dorothy Draper said, ‘If it looks right, it is right.’ Of course, I’m pretty sure she meant that it was right if *she* thought it looked right, but I guess I go by the same philosophy.”

To Brown, the mood of a room is just as important as the look. “I love ambience,” he says. “Or, as my great-grandmother used to say, a place with atmosphere.” He designed his own home with this in mind—draped walls envelop and add a layer of theatrical drama, lamplight and sconces are dimmable to set just the right tone, and favorite fragrances, such as Cire Trudon candles from Paris, conjure time and place. “I like to re-create the best parts of my travel in my home through sight, scent, and touch, so I can recall those great experiences every day,” Brown says. □



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Floor-to-ceiling curtains create a striking backdrop in the study. Chaise in a Lewis & Sheron Textiles linen, Verellen; antique bergère in a Garrett leather and a Great Plains fabric; custom desk; pendant, Barbara Barry for Visual Comfort; rug, Jaipur. Bed, Crate & Barrel; custom bedding in Christian Liaigre, Rogers & Goffigon, and Jim Thompson fabrics; sconce, Visual Comfort; antique wing chair in a Great Plains silk velvet; rug, Stark. Headboard in a Nobilis fabric; pillow in a Dedar fabric; walls in a Cole & Son paper; lamp, Thomas O'Brien for Visual Comfort. For more details, see Sourcebook.