

Cozy and comfortable

‘Lived-in style’ author shares how to use vintage and worn pieces for a unique look

BY KHRISTI ZIMMETH
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Best known as the editor of Flea Market Style magazine and founder of Minnesota’s vintage shopping experience Junk Bonanza, Ki Nassauer has been nicknamed “the Martha Stewart of vintage.” More recently, she created Lived-In Style online magazine, which shares her tips and techniques with an army of antique aficionados. She recently took that a step further, with “Lived-in Style: The Art of Creating a Feel-Good Home” (CICO Books, \$35).

Filled with inspiring and eclectic homes across the country, it spotlights creative collectors and homeowners who have used antique, vintage and thrifted pieces to create a cozy and comfortable home.



Nassauer

“Rather than purchasing an entire living room from a catalog or copying a neighbor’s perfectly pointed parlor, each homeowner has gathered pieces they love from here, there and everywhere and, over time, woven them together to create energizing spaces that are truly their own,” she explains in the book’s introduction. More than just pretty pictures (although there are plenty of those), the book also includes plenty of tips for finding and using timeworn treasures in your own home. We caught up with Ki to find out more about the book and her own collections.

How do you define lived-in style? What makes it special?

Perhaps better defined as a way of living rather than a specific look — for some it may bring to mind the comfy reading chair you cozy up in next to the window with a stack of books nearby. Or, it might make you think of the soft and faded jeans you pull on every weekend. Or the collection of treasures displayed on your mantel. It’s laid-back, comfortable, no-fuss and uniquely you. Lived-in style isn’t about perfection, but rather about finding joy in the imperfections that give our lives and our homes their unmistakable character.

What elements are key to the style?

Whether they are in the city or country, spartan or luxe, modern or traditional or a style in-between, homes that ooze lived-in style share common elements. Vintage, antique or thrifted furnishings are a key component to imparting instant personality. Embracing creative expression —



Photography by Edmund Barr / © CICO Books 2023

In this kitchen, the homeowner was happy to forfeit storage in exchange for sweeping backyard and garden views. The island is actually a farm table that was found outside of a barn in England

yours, or someone else’s — is a hallmark of a lived-in style home. It might be paintings, music, a piece of pottery, a quilted throw, collections that spark a memory or please you. Whatever makes you feel at home or speaks to you will resonate with everyone who enters your home, and make it feel uniquely authentic to you. Lived-in style is never rushed, it is a process that takes time.

What do you collect? What are your favorite things in your own home?

Over the past few years, I have had to whittle the number and size of my collections to fit into my smallish home with limited storage. I kept only my most treasured pieces. Believe me, it has been a difficult process, particularly when it came to finding homes for my conversation-starting oil portraits from the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s.

Currently, my largest collection is my

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bowling display — it includes a vintage wood Brunswick bowling locker cabinet, trophies dating to the ‘30s, colorful swirly patterned bowling balls and multiple trinkets including advertising ashtrays and glassware. I am not an avid bowler but my mom bowled every Wednesday on a league when I was growing up.

Her team, the “French Rolls,” cleverly donned that hairstyle of the day. She was a rock star! I have trimmed my game wheel collection to one. I guess it is no longer considered a collection, but it is spectacular. I still have room for my collection of plum bobs, and new acquisitions are easy to stash in my suitcase when I am tempted to bring home a souvenir. My kitchen drawers are filled with advertising barware, which I use daily for beverages. Does

wine taste better in a vintage glass from the American Legion Post 18 in Mitchell, South Dakota, or the Buccaneer Resort in Marathon, Florida? Definitely!

Hands down, the favorite item in my home is the Moline, Illinois, Shrine bass drum I converted to a coffee table. (My dad was a Shriner.) It adds personality, color and function to my space.

What can’t you pass by?

I like quirky, one-of-a-kind items that fit in my carry-on. As Grandma KiKi, I find myself picking up trinkets for my kiddos. Best find ever? The aforementioned bowling lockers. Thank you (Pasadena, California) Rose Bowl Flea Market!

How do you keep a home filled with antiques from feeling overstuffed or like a museum?

Mix it up! Not every piece of art in your home needs to be museum quality. I like to see everything from handmade items to kids’ art and collections given a place to



The gallery wall in the living room showcases the homeowner’s love of collecting old paintings; two of her favorite subjects are dogs and white farmhouses.



A weathered bench that offers a perfect perch for potted plants makes the bathroom feel like a greenhouse.



“Lived-In Style: The Art of Creating a Feel-Good Home” by Ki Nassauer.

CICO Books

bership magazine. If my grandma duties allow and if my book continues to sell well, there may be the possibility of book number two!

Have you been to Michigan? Any sources here?

I am not as familiar with Michigan vintage shops and shows, but I asked a Chicago homeowner featured in my book, dealer extraordinaire, Melissa Parks (<https://www.instagram.com/megillicutti/>), to list her favorites.

Her response:

■ I LOVE the Allegan Antique Show. It’s during the summer. But it is so good. And the environment is so nice. Shaded lanes at the fairground. Lots of buildings. Lots of old stuff. <http://www.alleganantiques.com/>

■ And of course, Petoskey Antique Show is amazing. <https://petoskeyantiques.com/>

■ I love Boomtown Mercantile in Holly. <https://www.instagram.com/boomtownmercantile/>

■ The Found Cottage Mercantile in Holland MI. <https://www.instagram.com/thefoundcottagemercantile/>

■ The Maumee Antique Mall right on the border of Michigan and Ohio is HUGE and so much fun. <https://www.mau-meeantiquemall.com/>



The homeowner found the entire kitchen at a local salvage business.



The entryway’s cabinet in a California closet offers a pop of gray-blue color and a spot to stash absolutely everything from a dog leash to spare candles.