



My interior stylist

Expert advice from Zoë Brewer, West London's premiere Property Stylist

Which came first – vintage or the crunch?

Vintage, home-made and arts & crafts is so the style of the moment. Whether it's out of necessity in these tough times, or just because it's simply gorgeous, is open to debate. Certainly, during times of hardship, we are more likely to "mend & make do". This leads to much more imagination pouring into our home-made, customised, restored and re-cycled home decor, creating a new look which is both comforting and stylish. However, I believe interior trend predictions for this style were by far in advance of the credit crisis predictions. Either which way, it's definitely time to get out the sewing machine and get creative (or at least get someone to do it for you!)

For stand-out-from-the-crowd beautiful and unique pieces, you must check out the talents of local girl, **Lou Rota**. Based in Queen's Park, Lou breathes new life into an eclectic range of vintage and salvaged furniture and ceramics, hand- customised using collage, decoupage and hand-made transfers. The pretty & witty plates are perfect for serving up afternoon tea treats, or hang a collection on the wall for an interesting wall decoration. Her products are available in Liberty and www.notontheghightstreet.com.

For Lifewest9 customers only, Lou is offering a 10% discount on ceramics & 20% on furniture. Contact her via www.lourotta.com for any discount purchase.

Also take a look around **Alfie's Antique Market**. Alfie's has been used for many years by interior designers, celebrities and savvy homeowners looking for something genuine and unique. With a huge array of experienced dealers, I never visit without taking something away for a client – or myself! 13-25 Church Street, NW8 8DT www.alfiesantiques.com

If you want to have a go at your own home-made masterpiece, here are a couple of easy ideas you can try. Minimum skill and cash required. Maximum admiration will follow.

Customise. This is a great way to make individual and stylish one off accessories. Update plain cushions by adding colourful ribbons, buttons, and corsages. Or for absolute zero sewing, cut out shapes from felt and attach by ironing on with wonderweb. Extend your skills to throws, rugs and lamp shades.



Box frame art. Buy some box frames, available for most homeware stores. Stick a piece of fabric or wallpaper to the backing board, so that it's visible inside the frame. This could be plain or floral, depending on what you're adding on top. Then add – well anything really. You can create a personal collage/artwork with things you find around the house and garden – ribbons, glitter, and pressed flowers. Or position just one sentimental item in the centre with appropriate strength glue – for example a pretty wedding invitation or some shells collected on holiday.

Vintage is the perfect style right now, and whatever your reason for adopting it, no one need know your love for the home-made look is anything other than that of an eco-conscious style guru.

For a one to one consultation on revamping your home, email Zoë at zoe@myinteriorstylist.com



Zoë Brewer is Creative Director & Owner of My Interior Stylist Ltd, based in Kensal Rise. Please visit the website at www.myinteriorstylist.com for more info or call 07516 762 768 for some friendly advice.