

Boxes of antiques challenge designer's ingenuity

By Corinne Abatt
Staff writer

Antiques and collections can easily take over a household, spreading across shelves, tables and walls in a homey, interesting, but often bothersome clutter.

When antique dealer Jim Taylor bought a home in a pleasant, well established Royal Oak neighborhood, he put in a call for help to Margie Cockle, Birmingham interior designer.

Now, she can smile as she remembers opening the front door to see a mountain of packing boxes in the living room, many dusty from years of storage.

"I want all of these in my house," he told her.

So, her first task was to sort through everything, set priorities with her client and establish how the many things could best be displayed, the many colors pulled together and the antique furniture used to best advantage.

Basically the house was in good condition. And although the former occupants had done the house in a very contemporary style, much could be retained. A wet bar in the living room, for instance, was just too handy for entertaining to consider getting rid of. All windows were either shuttered or had louvered blinds, many of these, too, worked well with what was to be an eclectic interior.

Taylor said he bought the 1920s era Dutch colonial with the Oriental rug in the living room in mind. Cockle picked up a subtle

olive green from the rug of many colors to reupholster a lovely old Chippendale style sofa in the living room. She had two wing chairs on each side of the fire place reupholstered in a soft white and gray green textured material that looks almost like a plain color from a distance.

The glass-topped brass coffee table is new. It was chosen because many treasures could be displayed on it, creating the kind of a conversation area which Taylor liked.

The brass floor lamps, too, are modern, chosen, Cockle said, "because they make the other curved lines more dramatic."

The look of the modern brass fixtures and that of the old brass ceiling fixture in the dining room are surprisingly compatible. The dining room fixture, originally gas, came out of an old Detroit house on Fort Street near Tiger Stadium. There's a touch of blue and green in its ceramic center. Blues show up frequently in the dining room — in the Flo blue, Staffordshire, and other pieces of prized china displayed in the 1910 American walnut china cabinet, on the buffet and tea cart. There's lots of color in the Oriental rug in the dining room, but blue and a rose-red are the standout ones. Cockle chose a blue and rose flower pattern with lots of white background for the seats of the Queen Anne dining room chairs. And this material is also for the valance with a matching plain fabric for a windowed alcove in the dining room that houses some lush, live plants.

Because she was working with Oriental rugs and the collections — books, brass can-

diesticks, china, early ceramics and such — Cockle kept window treatments to a minimum and declined to fill the white walls. So, while the rooms are filled with interesting groups of accessories from Taylor's collections, on small tables, in wall cabinets, on the mantle and on top of the kitchen cabinets, there's a well-organized, feeling to the entire house.

The only room where more than superficial changes were made is the breezeway. The cement floor was improved, a tile floor added, new windows installed and three coats of white paint put on the wood paneling which had been done in three different colors.

The cushions on Taylor's set of white wicker were covered in a gay green print, making this light, cheery area, a wonderful place for reading, relaxing or accommodating the overflow from a large party. Blinds were put on one side of the breezeway for privacy, the windows facing the garden were left alone.

In fact, several other windows in the house have been left without any treatment, those along the stairway, for instance. Cockle said, blinds and shutters are often problem solvers, but too many can look tiresome and overdone.

She left Taylor with optional plans for rearranging each room, knowing that collectors are prone to change things around as they substitute one piece for another.

Cockle's firm is Interiors by Margie Cockle, Inc. Taylor's antique business is in the old church at Troy Corners, Square Lake and Livernois.



Once an ordinary breezeway, this became a room for all seasons when new windows and a tile floor were installed. Windows along the street side of the house have

blinds, the rest in this room of white wicker and red tile floor were left bare for a pleasant view of the yard.



Antique dealer, Jim Taylor bought the house because his Oriental rug of many colors would fit in the living room. The decorator's challenge — build an electric atmosphere around it.



When grouped and carefully arranged, antiques become the most charming of accessories. Margie Cockle, now an associate member of A.S.I.D. (American Society of Interior Designers) uses many

of her clients treasured pieces in the kitchen and breakfast area and still maintained a neat, orderly look.

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