

## INTERIOR MOTIVES

## Eclecticism is the word for blending the best



NAOMI STONE LEVY

**ECLECTICISM.** In 1935 I thought this to be an overworked and overused word as it applies to interior design. Therefore I looked in my Webster's dictionary to seek its real meaning. "Selecting what seems to be best from various systems; methods; cull; choosing; pick out; single out; discretionary; discriminate between." And therein lies the reason for the extraordinary popularity of this all-encompassing word. I recant my opinion. "Eclectic" says it all. Culling the best from each era and MIXING them with knowledge is MY best thought for the 20th century, and the 21st century on the horizon. CONTEMPORARY qualifies as the title of this mix. SIMPLE uncluttered lines must prevail, because they blend with everything.

If the lines of the upholstered furniture are classic and comfortable and the tone of the fabrics used are one color and TEXTURED, they are harmonious. Why not incorporate a patterned rug? I would favor an Oriental that could be 60 to 80 years old (the older

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the better, because the original bright colors will have muted and faded).

Now, drawing from these colors one can install several "period" style chairs that are reproductions. They lend themselves to "period" patterned fabrics. These will help economize — an obvious bonus. If the budget won't accommodate an Oriental rug there are other less costly patterned rugs. A Dhurrie or Kilim will happily qualify, still adding an exciting factor. These are flat rugs with geometric designs and tasteful colors, available in both old and new and generally strong in character.

Tables needn't be all circa 1730. Because we are choosing "the best of various systems" that won't be an issue. The coffee table — there were none in the 18th century — could be circa 1935, metal and glass topped, the better to view the rug beneath. One of the outstanding designers of metal furniture was Diego Giacometti, brother of the sculptor Alberto Giacometti. Look for

his work. Fabulous. A collector's item.

The curvilinear lines of a black lacquer French commode circa 1820 would add further distinction and elegance to this mixture.

A very contemporary cabinet to accommodate the ubiquitous television and VCR appeals to me because this equipment won't intrude on the scene when not in use. This piece would look right in walnut wood, slightly faded in color.

Another sleek and very modern unit, just emerged from a furniture store, might be an etagere. It could display a handsome set of leatherbound "Works of Shakespeare" as well as a number of current best seller novels — "discriminating between." Another shelf will display beautifully framed photographs of one's great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren. How do these qualify for "the best of various systems"?

The walls are bare and call for a fur-

ther blending of new and old. A large and striking Frank Stella in a lucite frame would mingle well with an oil painting by Gainsborough in an ornate gilt frame. Continue with the idea of mixing contemporary with 17th, 18th and 19th century artists. One word of caution: NO "starving artists," please!

I would love adding accessories CULLED from years of collecting, and as current as a stunning Dale Chihuly blown glass sculpture of exquisite colors.

In a corner I see a simple black marble column displaying an ornate French Sevres vase. Or on a low, new pedestal, a tall, slim piece of stainless steel sculpture.

Don't ALL of the preceding thoughts and suggestions qualify for that one encompassing word "ECLECTIC"? If you try to use all of these ideas I will have blown your budget, but you would have a room of incredible distinction.

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## Lamp artist is hailed as the 'Tiffany of tomorrow'

BY MARY KLEMIC  
STAFF WRITER

Ulla Darni's art is literally illuminating.

Darni paints vibrant patterns and lush floral designs on the inside of glass lampshades. When the shade is lighted, the work is seen through a lightly frosted surface. Darni also makes the metal bases and finials for the lamps.

The one-of-a-kind lamps are offered exclusively in Michigan at the deGrimme Gallery in the Michigan Design Center, 1700 Stuts in Troy (call (810) 649-4664).

"They call her the Tiffany of tomorrow," said the gallery's Margaret Schmidt.

"She just sits down and paints."

Darni creates a variety of lights, including sconces, standing lamps, table lamps and chandeliers. They range in size from eight-inch lamps to 48-inch chandeliers that hang from the ceiling in ornate holders like giant pendants. Many combine antique and modern looks.

The shades resemble ladies' wide hats from another era. They are filled with color — flowers, birds, a collage of swirling designs or a combination of these. Their bases come in many different forms as well, and in many different materials, among them bronze, iron and silver. The shapes of the bases include flowers or plants; graceful, abstract curves; and forms that look like sea creatures, with a shell and tentacles.

The artist fills custom orders, match-



**Illuminating:** Ulla Darni's lamps feature painted glass shades and bases designed by the artist. They are available at the deGrimme Gallery at the Michigan Design Center in Troy.

ing colors, fabrics and other samples sent to her by clients.

"Everything is completely handmade," she said from Florida, where she works. "(Receiving the samples is) good inspiration . . . Sometimes something very exciting can come out of it."

Darni is a native of Denmark who studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. She started her lamps about 6 1/2 years ago through what

she calls a "very happy accident."

This accident was when the owner of a blank Handel glass lampshade asked her to paint it for him. Later she found the painted shade in an upscale antique shop. You could say she saw the light, and artistic lamps became her work. She found a glass blower to make the glass. Soon she began designing her own bases as well; these were hand-forged for her.

"If you had told me 10 years ago I would have said 'Impossible,'" Darni said of her career.

The shades are numbered, signed and fingerprinted, Schmidt said.

Darni received a sign that indicated she was meant for this work. Her art is called "reverse painting" because it is done on the inside. She found out that "ulla" means "in reverse, or as done from behind" in Japanese.