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NAOMI STONE
LEVY

Part I

In 1963 I committed myself to discuss my favorite topic in a newspaper interview. I loved accessories then. I love accessories now. Am I consistent? They are the core of one's individuality and the basis of one's interiors.

Great interior designers can guide you through a morass of confusion in planning your interior design. They can aid in the choices of style, of color, of fabrics, of furniture, of carpeting or rugs, of lamps and of wall covering. They shouldn't influence your collection of "bibelot." This is the way you express your own personality.

Collecting for you may have begun when you were a youngster — perhaps with baseball cards. You are now a discerning adult. You have your own charisma. This is how you tell the world who you are. You collect, and you show off your acquisitions. If you still have your baseball cards (and they are worth a lot of money now), you could mount and frame them for an entrance hall, or for your library. Nostalgia.

Continue your adult life with meaningful accessories. Very small objects are endearing, but they get lost unless they are clustered in a group.

I have a client who has a countless number of small antique carved ivory "Netaukes." They provide him with hours of research and volumes of books discussing the subject. His wife is very understanding of his mania. They didn't know how to display his treasures. I found a hanging wall cabinet with a mirrored back. Now we can view the backs as well as the fronts of this incredible collection, and they are a focal point in their room.

Showing your metal

Haunting antique shops and shows will introduce you to a variety of collectibles, some extremely valuable, others less costly, but nevertheless desirable. Pewter, brass or copper objects are charming when displayed in an open Welsh dresser. Oriental bronze is unparalleled among the metals. Silver in any form is another subject to deal with. Any of the foregoing five metals can constitute serious collecting.

Pewter reproductions are very acceptable, but naturally don't measure up to antique pieces that have a glow, because there is a difference in the alloys. They should be highly polished. There are tankards and pitchers and mugs with elegant shapes. There exist pipkins and bowls, ad infinitum. A display of these is a study in Americana.

Brass must always be highly polished to suit the English. They take great pride in their collections, as do I.

A significant group of candlesticks is dazzling, the minimum number being four. If you are fortunate enough to have bought antique sticks years ago be advised they have escalated in price beyond belief. My own collection of brass is primarily composed of antique snuff boxes, though I have many other wonderful objects.

Investigate trivets, originally used at the open fireplace. They are marvelous accessories, with multiple uses. Their pierced brass tops are welded onto wrought-iron bases. There are also polished steel trivets that have unlimited possibilities. Place any trivet next to a chair and use it as a telephone stand. Antique dealers will be happy to share their knowledge on any of the above subjects; ask a zillion questions.

Copper also has a glow intrinsic to itself. Plates and bowls and cooking vessels are often to be found. Don't be discouraged if you find a badly discolored piece; a little "elbow grease" will rescue it. Copper weathervanes have become treasures for the discriminating. The patina of gray-green from exposure to the elements adds to their incredible beauty. The farm animal forms find a niche in a primitive decor as well as in a most sophisticated background.

Oriental bronze has its own dark, quiet elegance. The shape is the primary factor. There is almost always embossing on part of the surface. I recently bought a fabulous tall "Hibachi" that was burned and obviously much used. There is a plethora of bronze still out there.

A sensational way to handle any of the above very large metal vases or bowls is to amass a gigantic arrangement of bitterweet. This will last for months and months and justify the original cost. You must find the bitterweet immediately. It isn't always available.

Another metal that is intriguing is "Tole," or tin. It is often found in antique chestnut urns. It is often found in antique lamps. It is often found as lighting fixtures and sconces. It isn't often found japanned (painted). Associated with early French interiors, tole also blends especially well with Early American. It is so sophisticated you can use it anywhere.

For those of you who love the more formal look, silver in any of its shapes is elegant. A three- to eight-piece tea service on a tray is a discriminating accessory for a dining room.

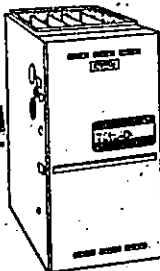
Remember our ancestor, Paul Revere? His classic bowl is available in many diameters. The largest size, brimming only with grapes, or only apples or only lemons, makes a colossal statement. In contrast, a group of three or more small-sized ones filled with nuts, candy and caramel corn is a welcome sight.

See LEVY, 8D

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