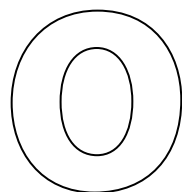




STORAGE SOLUTIONS: Floral embroidered vintage suitcase by Bouf, above left; Ele Jumbo Storage from Ganesha, above right; Vintage Union Chest from The Old Cinema, below.

Designs on the past

LOOKING BACK: Upcycling is the new interior buzzword. Interior designer **Jamie Hemsall** shows you how to use it to best advantage.



ONE of the things we enjoy best when developing a design is to juxtapose modern and vintage pieces. This is an interesting option and one that opens up

a world of opportunity – away from the standard high street offering.

Going vintage does not mean a slavish return to antique interiors, but simply embracing the world of second hand. It can be a brave option, but with a little bit of imagination then people on all budgets will find that they can create bespoke, retro-chic interiors, beloved of many of the biggest names in interior design.

What is more, you will often find that vintage pieces are of exceptionally good quality, harking from an era when goods were meant to last and did not have built in obsolescence. That is why many standard household items from the turn of the last century are still usable, not something you will probably be able to



say about many products developed in the 1980s or 90s.

More and more companies have hit upon the developing trend for retro chic and have realised that there is more to this than simply buffing up an old sideboard. The new trend is for upcycling. This term basically means reusing an object or materials to create a product of higher value or quality than the original object or materials.

A nifty example of this are a pair Large Vinyl Record Bookends from Shop On Your Doorstep (£14.50; 01843 808061 – www.shopyourdoorstep.com).

The company has taken the simple idea of bending a pair of 12 inch LPs (a product that those under 20 may never have even encountered) at 90 degrees so items are held neatly and in order. The easiest way to dip your toe into the world of vintage and upcycling in particular has to be to address the issue of storage. If you take a look around any airport these days you will see the demise of the old fashioned suitcase. Modern flight weight and dimension restrictions mean that these are impractical and many homes no



longer have loft or boxroom space for them.

Suitcases and trunks are designed for storage and can work brilliantly when placed at the end of a bed to hold overflow pillows or throws. Companies such as Bouf are taking vintage examples and giving them an overhaul with the likes of decoupage decoration to turn them into something that you will actually want to have on display, rather than tucked away

in a cupboard (from £120; 0845 519 2259 – www.bouf.com).

The main issue with suitcases is the need to open the lid to gain access, which can hinder their potential use as a day-to-day storage option. However, this has been addressed by James Plumb who have developed a new range of chest of drawers fashioned from old suitcases housed in antiqued steel and wood chests. Removing the lid and transforming the body into a



drawer is inspired thinking. Every case has then been relined in Swedish linen and each chest is a complete one off. Prices vary from about £2,800. The team are also happy to create commissioned sizes and drawer combinations (0207 738 5547 – www.jamesplumb.co.uk).

Another bastion of upscaling is The Old Cinema in London who feature an impressive range of vintage pieces on their ever changing website. The designs

TUCKED AWAY: Suitcase drawers by James Plumb, main picture; Large vinyl record bookends by Shop on Your Doorstep, far left; Vintage heavy duty factory crates from Bubbledrum, left.

and uses make their pieces perfect for even the most achingly trendy interior. A great example is the Mid-Century Painted Chest which transforms an uninteresting set of drawers into a statement fashion piece (£650; 0208 995 4166 – www.theoldcinema.co.uk).

Industrial chic is also very hot, with companies such as Bubbledrum developing a whole market around reclaiming and upcycling vintage crates and boxes for domestic use. This look works well in modern flats, particularly when combined with brick or metal backgrounds. Their vintage heavy duty factory crates are £42 each (0203 092 8974 – www.bubbledrum.co.uk).

The ultimate in upcycling has got to be combining clever eco-styling with fairtrade philanthropy. Old cement bags may not be the first choice for many people to have around the house, but they are now being developed in Bangladesh into attractive handbags, shopping trollies and tote bags as well as useful home storage solutions. For an excellent selection head to www.ganisha.co.uk (0207 928 3444).

■ **Jamie Hemsall, BIID, is an award-winning interior designer. Visit him at www.jamiehemsall.com or call him on 0800 032 1180.**



FIREPLACES STOVES & FIRES WORKTOPS & TILES

*Stunning live displays of
fires, fireplaces and stoves...*



**Multifuel Stoves
from £399**

**Kirkstead
Fireplace and
Chamber £1,295**

...to bring your room to life

stonehouse fireplaces
tiles & worktops

WWW.STONEHOUSEHARROGATE.CO.UK

Unit 5 Hydro Retail Park Ripon Road Harrogate HG1 2BF

T: 01423 503892

OPENING TIMES: Monday - Saturday 10am - 5:30pm, Sunday 11am - 3pm