



Eclectic design combines the best of traditional and contemporary styles.

## It's all about you

Anything goes in eclectic decorating



Top: Designer Jackie Glisson assembled this room with Oriental wall art, traditional seating and a contemporary painting to reflect the personality of his client. Bottom: The coordinating tones in this room by Ethan Allen pull together the various textures and fabrics.

Adhering to a particular period or strict style in interior decorating is no longer the standard. Most designers try to shape a room based on the personalities and tastes of the homeowner, and those tastes rarely conform to textbook styles. Eclectic decorating is composed of furnishings and accessories from a variety of styles, from Art Deco to Victorian, all joined together in one room.

### Who's decorating eclectic?

"It's for a client who wants a room or home that looks like it was pulled together over time and not just purchased off a showroom floor," says Jackie Glisson, owner of Just A Decorator, based in Memphis, and recent guest on HGTV's "Designers' Challenge."

Eclectic is a highly individualized style that reflects each homeowner's unique personality. Those who favor this style typically have a strong idea of what they like and what they don't like, regardless of what current trends may be. An eclectic room is full of confidence, as it often melds together contrasting furnishings that could clash if the room is not pulled together well. Homeowners who decorate in the eclectic style often showcase furnishings and accessories they have collected during travels and found in flea markets. Ethnic or artisan pieces often anchor the room. Homeowners appreciate that no two rooms in the eclectic style look alike. They relish that their home looks nothing like their neighbor's home.

"Probably about seven of 10 clients I meet with want this look," says Glisson, "though they might not ask for it by name. Very few people really want a particular period unless they have a historically significant house or very contemporary."

### The look

A sample eclectic living room may have a curved modern leather sofa in a dark

chocolate color framed by two navy blue, textured French Louis XV arm chairs. The room might have one natural steel and glass coffee table and another Shaker-style end table. A neutral tone Greek Flokati rug may rest on the floor while Oriental artwork adorns the walls. All of these various pieces could be tied together with accessories in coordinating colors.

"There are no rules set in stone," says Farah Kathwari, director of style communications at Ethan Allen. "About 40 or 50 years ago most new homes were colonial, and everyone was filling those with colonial furniture. Now homes have various styles, and they can be decorated in whatever you want as long as it is done well."

In the eclectic style, pieces are not only drawn from a variety of fabrics, shapes, colors and textures, but furnishings are also given alternate uses. For example, a covered ottoman may be used as a cocktail table or an antique birdcage may function as a lamp.

### Unique touches

Because eclectic decorating is a mix of all other styles, consumers of all ages and lifestyles like it. For a family with children and pets, homeowners can simply choose to upholster furnishings in more durable fabrics.

When it comes to the eclectic style, the options are only limited by your imagination.



## Is eclectic design for you?

Some of the design quiz (page 1) answers that point to a preference for eclectic design:

- You might prefer to spend a free weekend with a trip to the hair salon, a stroll through a museum, then reading a book on historic British castles.
- You might store your home electronics equipment in a wall system of high-gloss lacquer.
- Your ideal wardrobe consists of jeans, midcalf denim skirts, soft cotton shirts, and handmade silver jewelry.
- To celebrate your latest big achievement you might go to a four-star restaurant.
- Your dream home could be an old mansion with a carriage house and a formal rose garden.

