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photography by Debi Treloar

simplehome

calm spaces for comfortable living





above left Hide the signs of overuse with a simple white linen throw, but don't cover up outstanding features of beauty such as clawed feet. The industrial-looking angular lighting has been given a more contemporary twist by removing the shade in favour of a bare curly-wurly filament light bulb.

above right Antique linen from Provence, recently dyed using natural vegetable dyes, shows the versatility of the recycled approach – adapt what you find to suit your needs.



DELIBERATELY MISMATCHING GIVES YOUR HOME INDIVIDUALITY AND A MORE RELAXED ELEGANCE.

oven or fridge, or when it's providing a resting place for an up-to-the-minute television or music player. Be creative; even a worn-out old door has its uses – try it as an unusual shelf. If you have a collection of postcards hidden away, old wooden rulers make amazing skinny shelving that is perfect for showing them off. Pieces of floorboard and architrave make beautiful patchwork frames for mirrors or paintings, or tabletops. Surprise yourself by turning an old

French brioche tin or jelly mould into an unusual lampshade – just get someone who knows what they're doing with electricity to help you! The list is endless once you have thrown out pre-conceived ideas and learned to see the potential in absolutely everything.

The simple home is not about feeling stressed out because you can't find the right set of dining chairs or cutlery. Deliberately mismatching gives your home individuality and a more relaxed form



this page An extra-long table with a beautifully scuffed painted surface stands elegantly in a sunny kitchen. A pair of simple wooden benches provides ample seating for hungry hoards.





A WELL-CHOSEN COLLECTION OF FURNITURE ADDS COLOUR AND DETAIL TO YOUR HOME, AS WELL AS PROVIDING TEXTURAL CONTRAST.

rejects are a good place to start if you can track one down. Their slightly bashed wooden frames are ideal for all the rooms in your house. They'll hold everything, from neatly labelled boxes of stationery in your home office to wonky piles of plates and glasses in your kitchen or a host of stuffed toys in the nursery. Even better news is that they're usually set on wheels, making them even more flexible. For fixed shelves, get a friendly carpenter to make you some bespoke ones out of abandoned pieces of wood; weathered railway sleepers or old reclaimed floorboards are ideal for this job. If you want to close the door on your piles of paperwork or eco-friendly canvas shopper collection (you know you've got one), then freestanding cupboards are the answer. Don't feel restricted by their previous employment. Formerly glamorous wardrobes and armoires take on the challenge of kitchen storage. Sturdy wooden beasts previously used as storage for hammers and nails, covered in all manner of historical paint splodges and splashes, look at ease in more elegant surroundings.

above left This sturdy glazed dresser from the 1800s was discovered in an antique shop in Provence. It provides ample storage space in its many drawers, while the faded charm and original blue paintwork easily stands up to the grandeur of the carved marble fireplace.

above right An old decorative 1800s French armoire has a lovely feeling of faded elegance with its original, worn painted surface. The linen loose cover on the chair and lightly creased tablecloth add to the relaxed atmosphere of the room.

We all want to make a good impression, and that goes for your home as well. Wading through piles of newspapers and mounds of unwanted junk mail waiting to be recycled is not going to put your home in a good light with visitors, neither is tripping over discarded shoes and boots.

For an inviting entrance and clear hallway, all it takes is some care, organization and considered storage. Hooks keep hats, coats, scarves and bags out of the way and off the floor. They don't have to be conventional – there are all sorts of quirky hooks out there. But get creative; all manner of things could work if you're feeling a little bit experimental. Try a row of wooden spoons or thick twigs. Alternatively, a curvy classic Café Daum coat stand,



above This busy entrance brings you straight into the heart of a hard-working kitchen. Baskets stand ready for more fruit and veg collecting.

below left Glass panels in the front door allow light to flood this narrow hallway. A white floor adds to the sunny feel.

below right The walls in this entrance have been painted in gradients of soft grey, which give a feeling of light flowing into the furthest reaches of the space. The geometric lines add to the graphic feel of the tiles.

opposite Panels of sheer fabric suspended from cables add softness to this narrow entrance with its solid stone floor. An industrial wall light adds to the contrast of textures.



this page A series of interconnecting rooms in this French apartment shows the different functions of floors, as you step from roughly hewn stone flooring through to glazed floor tiles.



opposite A well-appointed wooden shed has been turned into an understatedly glamorous dining space. The white painted wooden boards give a feeling of extra space and light. Their sleek surface is in contrast to the flaky French bistro table stand and the well-scrubbed wooden shelves, which sit solidly under the window. The table has been covered with a plain antique French linen table cloth, while sewing machinists' stools have been made more comfortable with pastel soft Welsh woollen blankets. A rusty brioche tin acts as a suitably themed light shade.

top left A collection of well-used wooden utensils sits in an old brown ceramic jug.

top right Earthy brown salt-glazed pottery contrasts with a shelf of frilly-edged porcelain.

centre left Antique cutlery is ingeniously displayed on a flattened dressing table mirror.

centre right Very plain wooden shelves allow the decorative fluted-edged plates and serving dishes to take the spotlight.

below right Traditional glazed jugs hailing from Apt in the south of France create a still life with some green tomatoes.

deliberately wobbly plates and bowls). What you need to do is decide what things you want to hide away behind cupboard doors and what is going to be out on display. In this case, it's not just down to a matter of taste but one of practicality too – certain items need to be close at hand – knives, for example, are stored perfectly on a professional kitchen-style strong magnetic strip. Track down beautiful old earthenware jugs, creamware pots or old chemists jars in which to store your essential utensils and tomato sauce-stained wooden spoons. They definitely need to be on show, as they're a badge of honour; a sign that you actually do cook in your kitchen! Easily installed slatted metal shelves lend an industrial edge to your kitchen and are great because not only can you stack pots, pans or plates on them but, with the addition of some butcher's-style 'S' hooks, you can suspend things too. Indeed, any hooks that you can fit in your kitchen are sure to be used at some stage. They make the most of the space and work well both in and out of cupboards.



this page A simple steel-framed four-poster with buttery linen curtains and layers of feather-filled quilts creates the ultimate classic comfort zone. Draw the curtains and enjoy a quiet, undisturbed night's sleep.





above left This comfortable-looking bed boasts layers of soft brown-coloured quilt covers and sheets, as well as a variety of pleasingly tactile textures, including an extra-chunky hand-knitted blanket in soft porridgey hues. Unusual Perspex shutters allow soft light to filter gently in.


above right The calming stripes of the ticking mattress and softly crumpled linen give an added feeling of relaxation. The stripes on the mattress cover are picked up in the piped cushion edge.



By keeping the walls plain and painting them in pale chalky colours that match your choice of bedding, you are sure to fall asleep quickly.

Windows do need the addition of curtains, but don't choose anything too heavy. It's all the more relaxing to have a little light gently filtering into the room and it keeps us in touch with the rhythms of the seasons. Sheer blinds or panels of muslin draped easily over a curtain pole are the ideal solution if your home is overlooked. To light your way at night, unobtrusive bedside lights set on low tables are just the ticket, especially if they can be angled to the perfect reading position. Make sure that your bedside

table has room for a book at bedtime and your morning cup of tea – if you happen to be lucky enough to have one delivered to your bed! In an ideal world, this would be all the furniture you would have in your cosy bedroom. In this perfect world, you would also have a separate room dedicated to your clothes. However, not many of us are that fortunate, so to house your garments in the style they undoubtedly deserve, look out for an antique French armoire or old shop fittings that have preferably seen slightly better days and are therefore imbued with relaxed grandeur. Your bedroom should now be a beautifully calm haven for a good night's sleep.

A photograph of a draughtsman's table in a workshop. The table is a complex piece of machinery with a wooden top and a metal frame. It has three articulated lamps: one silver, one green, and one black. To the left is a wooden ladder with five steps. In the foreground, there is a black metal stool with a curved seat. The floor is made of red tiles.

this page This extravagantly articulated draughtsman's table was found in an antique shop in L'Isle sur la Sorgue, Provence.