



with Melinda Oliver

## Trial and era

Mixing antiques from different periods updates traditional image

To the uninitiated, antique furniture can seem exclusive, expensive and conservative. But Liz Capocchi thinks this view is outdated, so along with the revamp of Capocchi – her family's 31-year-old antique business, formerly named Harlequin Antiques – she is keen to refresh the image of antiques, making them accessible and appealing to the next generation.

"People often think you need a large mansion or manor to have antiques, but you don't," she says. "It's not often you have a house full of antiques these days ... now people will choose one or two beautiful pieces for a room, which act as a feature or sculptural piece."

Capocchi says mixing and matching pieces from different eras is a great way to give a home a stylish yet lived-in feel.

"One of our settings in the store has a beautiful 1940s buffet, put together with 1800s

Chinese Chippendale sofas that work beautifully with it. Tying the whole look together is a fairly modern coffee table from the 1970s, and on the buffet we've put a beautiful Burmese Buddha from the 18th century."

Mixing pieces from different eras may sound artistically challenging, but Capocchi says you can't go wrong if you use your instinct. "I tell my clients to choose what they like with their hearts," she says. "When you buy things you love, you will find that you develop a common thread."

Capocchi believes Australians have always been interested in antiques, as they create a sense of heritage. "There are so many Australians from European and English backgrounds, and they look for something to remind them of their past."

However, 18th and 19th-century pieces aren't the hottest property right now – much more recent designs are stealing the limelight.

"At the moment people are particularly wild about anything from 1950 to 1970," Capocchi says. "Some of the lines are a lot simpler and cleaner than people usually perceive with antiques."

Adding a dash of history to a home doesn't have to be expensive, and you can find many pieces that won't break the bank.

"Australians are very price conscious and we try to be very careful that they can get a really good look for their money," Capocchi says.

For those who invest in antiques, she says it's nice to know the pieces may stay in the family for generations to come.

"We are all just custodians," she says. "When you look at some of the older pieces, we are giving them another lease of life and they will last another 50 years until the next person looks after them."

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