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2008 Idea House Offers Fresh Shades of Green On Eastern Long Island

Hunting for antiques on the East End of Long Island can be a tiring, time-consuming task. On the South Fork, even the most determined collector must fight heavy traffic from Southampton to Amagansett to scout the galleries.

A more entertaining approach is to visit the 2008 Idea House in Sagaponack, presented by Hamptons Cottages & Gardens magazine. Nearly two dozen designers have decorated ecologically inspired rooms, many incorporating antiques, recycled materials and vintage pieces. (The house is open through Aug. 24, Thursday through Sunday, 151 Sagg Main Street, Sagaponack, N.Y., 646-723-7501 or hcadng.com/ideahouse; \$30.)

Even the house, on one-and-a-half acres halfway between Southampton and East Hampton, is recycled. Instead of razing the old one and building new, the organizers chose to apply "green" design strategies to a Victorian farmhouse once owned by the novelist James Jones, the author of "From Here to Eternity," and his wife, Gloria.

Peter Sabbeth, a Sag Harbor developer and owner of the company ModernGreenHome, has built a contemporary two-story addition in the rear, doubling the structure's size to 6,300 square feet and including five bedrooms and nine bathrooms. It is on the market for \$12.9 million, without the furniture.

"Even though the idea is all about ecological design, the house pays homage to the past in the way the designers have reinterpreted and reused different materials and design styles," said Barbara Dixon, editorial director of the magazine, who chose the decorators. "Using antiques to decorate a room may not be thought of as green, but that's really what antiques are all about."

Mark Epstein, a Manhattan de-

Antiques

Wendy Moonan



JEFF BARD PHOTOGRAPHY

A chair, made of 1,500 Kennedy half dollars, from the Obsessive Furniture line of Johnny Swing, a Vermont craftsman.

signer, transformed a small living room in the old part of the house with painted walls of trompe l'oeil damask in chartreuse. Then he added an 18th-century English walnut tea table, an 18th-century northern German oak secretary-bookcase, several charming dog portraits and the wood carcass of an 18th-century English wing chair that looks like a piece of sculpture.

"Antiques add an amazing depth to a room that you can't get any other way," Mr. Epstein said. "Besides, if you shop carefully, 18th- and 19th-century antiques can be cheaper than new furniture."

For end tables he has used two weathered wooden factory rollers. "What could be more environmentally correct than these?" he said. They look like the thick wharf bollards used to secure a ship's ropes.

Erica Millar, a Manhattan designer, took her cue for her sleek, modern library from a leather-covered orange desk and chair that Jacques Adnet designed for Hermès in the 1950s.

"The vintage French pieces set me up for the whole room," Ms. Millar said. "I did oak bookcases the color of driftwood because the house is near the beach, and looked for objects appropriate for the time James Jones would have

been writing in this room."

She chose 1950s Italian lamps (a Claritas table lamp by Vico Magistretti and Mario Tedeschi, and an Arredoluce floor lamp), as well as a pair of '50s Danish chairs by Ole Wanscher.

"Antiques give a room a sense of texture, interest and warmth," Ms. Millar said. "I like a conversation between things created now and things that came before; one informs the other."

In the master bedroom S. Russell Groves of New York combined pieces from different eras. "It's eco-conscious to use vintage things because you save pieces from being wasted," he said. He pointed out that the carpet, which he borrowed from the Manhattan dealer F. J. Hakimian, is a patchwork of cut and sewn pieces of vintage kilims in various tones of beige and white.

The New York architect Campion Platt was also resourceful. For the family sitting room he created three rugs from discarded remnants of cowhide that have been spliced together. "This is not just about consuming newly made eco products," he said. "It's also about adaptive reuse of old products. The skins were scraps rescued from the cutting-room floor."

He has remounted a 1930s game board made by the Carron

Company of Ludington, Mich., for chess, checkers and other pursuits. And in one corner he has placed a large butterfly chair made with 1,500 old Kennedy half-dollar coins welded together. Mr. Platt borrowed it from Johnny Swing, a Vermont craftsman who created it for his Obsessive Furniture line.

In the screening room Joe Ginsberg, a painter, sculptor and set designer turned decorator, avoided Hollywood clichés. Instead of rows of plush seats, he built a three-tiered serpentine sofa in one corner. In front of it, placed like sculptures, are a '50s Bruno Mathsson lounge chair and a '60s leather-upholstered sling chair with matching ottoman.

"I design around spatial and light considerations," Mr. Ginsberg said, "then bring antiques in where you need history, so a space is grounded. I like Old World material applications in a contemporary site."

Even in his strictly modern décor, the Manhattan decorator Kerry Delrose has managed to incorporate an antique. Instead of a desk in the small upstairs guest room, he has added a long, Ming-style Chinese altar table. "I like to use large-scale antiques in unorthodox ways, especially in very small rooms," he said.

There are several good examples of repurposed materials in the house.

For the dining area, the New York designer Ellen Hanson commissioned a 10-foot-long table made from bits of weathered timber taken from a 1700s barn on the property that was being demolished. She surrounded the table with a set of Windsor chairs she rescued from a "Law & Order" set and then lacquered bright orange.

A year ago, while visiting Ball, John Bjornsen, a Sag Harbor designer, saw a dressing table and matching mirror frame that a local craftsman had carved out of teak root. Mr. Bjornsen had the man retool the surfaces to look like brain coral and whitewash them. Now, fitted into a niche on the second-floor landing, the unusual combo steals the show in this particular show house.

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