



Every Man His Castle

Interior designer David Richardson fashions a regal domain from an 18th-century St. Louis carriage house



“ONLY ONE PERSON COULD ever live here,” says interior designer David Richardson, shaking his head at the thought of sharing either space or design decisions at home. In 1992, he moved into what was to be temporary living and office quarters, an 18th-century carriage house in an old residential neighborhood of St. Louis known as Soulard.

The first floor was tagged for office space, leaving a mere 400 square-foot upstairs for home—not much room for a man who calls himself “one of the original pack rats.”

Basically, David shops for a living, and it’s one of the things he does best. With a sharp eye, he’s always after the next great thing for his residential clients, as well as for Rothschild’s, an antiques and home furnishings shop in the city’s Central West End neighborhood. Purchases



OPPOSITE AND ABOVE: With a Neoclassical engraving, bronze clock that “works on occasion,” 19th-century Italian table, a pair of English horn chalices, a heraldic drape of King Louis, French chairs, and acres of books, David’s quarters resemble those of “an Italian prince in exile.” BELOW: Flowers, antiques, and garden ornaments spill out onto the sidewalk of Rothschild’s Antiques in

are usually a matter of love at first sight. So what if drawers don’t open or a leg is missing? “I love three-legged chairs!” he insists. Comfort? It’s expendable. “Sometimes it’s more important to have a sore rear than a sore eye.” Besides, a chair makes a marvelous table for books or sweaters.

In a small space, though, dragging in even one piece of additional furniture can completely alter the existing arrangement. “You bring a chair home, and it doesn’t fit where you think it will. Next thing you know, it’s Pandora’s box. Everything has to move.”

Reconfiguring, however, is half the fun. “I’m a chameleon. Every four or five years I shed my skin.”



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Raw silk knotted over matchstick blinds graces the windows. An old velvet hunt chair, leather ottoman, and rare double French daybed surround a French armchair, one of David's favorites. Springs sagged beneath the chair's fraying corduroy and when the seat finally fell out, he re-upholstered it in cut velvet. "It's not some great antique, but it's got a kind of pretentious style—like a girl from the wrong side of town with a new dress that just isn't quite right."



ABOVE LEFT: Stepping into David's apartment, visitors are greeted by an assemblage of classical artworks that include a stone statue of Rebecca at the well, a bone frame encircling a painted portrait on ivory, one of David's many Italian engravings, and a sterling Georg Jensen candlestick that was converted long ago into a table lamp. ABOVE RIGHT: Elsewhere, a pair of vintage watches and cufflinks nestle in a silver cigar tray, "probably from a men's club." The jewelry only hints at the plethora of pieces David cherishes. Not that his collecting habits are limited to three-dimensions—other treasures include, BELOW, thousands of old periodicals, photographs, and newspaper clippings kept meticulously ordered.



The portrait? "I tell people that was me as a young boy." So what if it's dated 1900?



DAVID HAD HIS OWN PLANS for the nook originally designated as the bedroom. The closet was tiny, especially for a confirmed clotheshorse. So he turned the bedroom into a gentleman's walk-in closet/dressing room that rivals the finest English haberdasheries. "I'd never do without a dressing room again," the designer says. "It's the most personal place a man can have, sort of like a giant scrapbook."

David didn't feel limited by the small space—he furnished it with big, heavy pieces. An American Federal dresser and cheval mirror "lend a sense of grandness to this tiny area." As for the portrait above the lowboy, "I tell people it's me." 🐶



OPPOSITE: Designer suits, rarely worn, hang on two tiers in the closet. TOP: Belts by the dozen and campaign hats adorn hefty iron hooks. David pours his own toiletries into vintage cut-crystal and sterling perfume bottles: "Little luxuries bring big joy."



