

## **Quick Tip Series: Accessories and Accents**

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### **Keep collections together!**

Any collection from fine porcelain pieces like lladro, to friends and family in photo frames, to ceramic rabbits, to art glass is always best displayed en masse. A collection loses its importance when scattered on several tabletops or around a room or home.

### **Use the dynamic of three!**

Particularly when dressing a cocktail/coffee table or console table, it is always best to consider using three elements. In the case of a cocktail/coffee table, a pair of books, a tall object, and a low round bowl, tray or arrangement provides good balance. On a console table consider a lamp on one end, greenery, and an art object or pair of them.

### **Know your proportions!**

Be sure to mix heights and sizes of elements. It creates visual interest to have tall paired with shorter, and wider, paired with slimmer objects. For example, a decorative box, paired with two bottles answers this design tenet well.

### **Fun with photo frames!**

Keep candid shots in color in either gold, black or colorful frames. Keep your black and whites in silver or black. Group like frames together so that it is the pictures that get truly noticed, not the frames.

### **Bookends are essential!**

Bookends serve not only a useful function of holding up books, but also a decorative function and attention needs to be given as to the size, proportion, finish, and style. It may be easy to get those L shaped pieces from Office Depot, but certainly not very interesting. Also consider using one end on one shelf and the other several shelves apart. Mixing will allow a more collected, less staged look.

### **Don't layer!**

In book cases particularly, bring the edge of the book spines to the front edge of the shelf. Do not push them back and put collectibles in front of the book spines. In addition, when you have a low piece of artwork, don't place candles, collectibles and more in front of it, it becomes visually overwhelming.

### **Clutter is chaos!**

It isn't necessary to display everything you own! Be selective, and group like items together. Clutter only means you are not discerning and nothing is special. Negative space is critical to be able to enjoy the positive inspiration of pieces we love.

### **Make it meaningful!**

If you don't like it, don't showcase it. It doesn't matter if it was a gift from your mother-in-law, sister, spouse, best friend, or neighbor. Displaying what you don't like will only serve to bother you regularly. Give away the white elephants and explain that you shared it because it meant so much! Free yourself of things without positive meaning.

### **Shadowbox for miniatures!**

When you have a collection of many tiny objects, such as thimbles, teaspoons, golf balls or the like, it is most effective to shadowbox these elements. There are resources that supply custom shadow boxes just for these collectibles. This will enable you to showcase the collection without it being lost in a bookcase or tabletop.

### **Dress kitchen cabinet tops!**

Do dress kitchen cabinet tops with accessories and greenery. Certainly one of the best to use is a collection of decorative pottery, ceramics, or plates and bowls. These need to be large enough to be seen and often can be propped with easels and stands. Be sure to create an interesting visual balance with tall bottle type shapes and rounder or oblong platters. These items are for decoration and not use as it would be too troublesome to climb up and down when dishware is needed. Other easy collections for the top of cabinets includes cookie jars, masks on stands, ceramic fruit, glass bottles with herbs and peppers, majolica, and such.

### **Greenery adds life!**

Greenery is essential in every room and really adds interest, texture and life to bookcases, on top of cabinets, and in dead corners. The permanent silk variety is often easiest and can be cleaned by monthly spraying with silk plant cleaner, no wiping needed. If you want to use live, be sure to take good care of it. There is nothing sadder than a house full of dead or dying plants. Greenery is meant to mean greenery, not necessarily florals. One floral per room or a pair is fine, but multiple simply looks overdone and cluttered.

### **Light it up!**

Add lighting to your bookcases, above kitchen cabinets, below kitchen cabinets, in display niches and to highlight collections and artwork. The best light source is halogen as it is the purest and whitest. If on a budget consider holiday lights or rope lighting tacked out of view but providing a soft glow.

### **Mix elements and texture!**

While it is easy to get enamored with a single material, such as porcelain, or glass, it is infinitely more interesting if you mix your elements. Juxtaposing a sleek glass piece with a coarser textured hand crafted ceramic boosts visual and tactile texture and intrigue.

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