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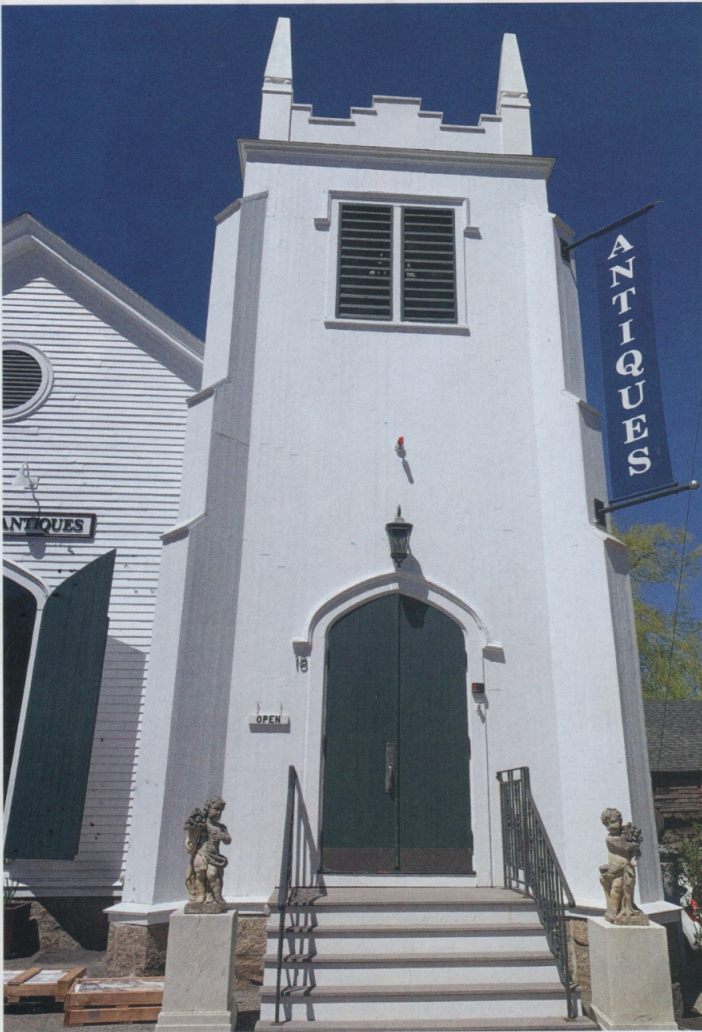


## TREASURE HUNT

SUMMER ANTIQUING IS THE PERFECT PASTIME ON THE NORTH SHORE. WE SPEAK TO THREE LOCAL EXPERTS FOR ADVICE ON ADDING PATINA TO OUR HOMES.

By Sarah Shemkus

Andrew Spindler  
Antiques offers  
a selection of  
period pieces.



Perim Lang Antiques is a 4,500-square-foot shop in Essex.

**F**OR MANY HOMEOWNERS LOOKING TO REFRESH their space right now, the best new furniture is old furniture. Antiques are booming in popularity, say North Shore dealers, as buyers snap up everything from French provincial furniture to crystal chandeliers.

"The foot traffic is nonstop," says Thomas Lang, owner of Perim Lang Antiques in Essex, a 4,500-square-foot shop housed in a historical former church. "People are hungry for the pieces right now."

When COVID-19 quarantines forced people to spend more time in their homes, many decided to renovate or upgrade the rooms they were suddenly using so intensively. At the same time, the pandemic shifted the perspectives of many homeowners, Lang says. Following trends became less important, and choosing pieces for their character and their personal resonance became paramount.

"People are looking inward," Lang says. "They're filling their lives with things that matter—they're putting things in their houses that really make them happy."

If the pandemic started nudging people toward vintage furnishings and decor, the soaring real estate sector is helping drive the antiques market to even greater heights. Buyers are out to furnish their new homes, while sellers are offloading pieces, keeping antiques dealers well supplied with new pieces, explains Andrew Spindler, owner of Andrew Spindler Antiques and Design in Essex.

The resurgent interest in antiques, however, is decidedly not about finding exquisite pieces that are to be admired but never touched. David Neligan, owner of David Neligan Antiques in Essex, finds himself selling a lot of dining tables and writing desks, he says. His customers want furnishings they can actually use in their homes.

"People are buying things for the most part that are practical and functional," he says. Buyers interested in exploring the world of antiques need not be daunted, dealers say. Aspiring antiques owners should start by listening to their own sense of what is beautiful and



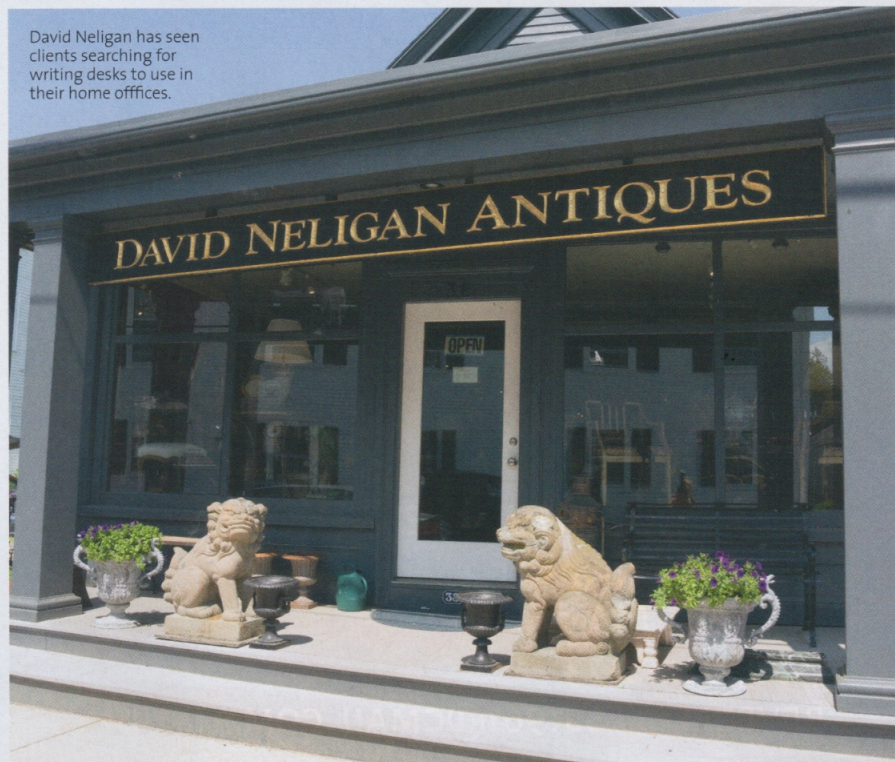
letting go of their preconceived ideas about what good design is supposed to be or what fashionable folks are doing right now.

"The trend is that people don't want to think about trends," Lang says.

Then start exploring, online and in the real world. Each antiques dealer has their own sensibility and style, so browsing several shops will help you develop a better sense of the full range of available options. Essex, with more than 20 antiques shops along about a mile of road, is a perfect spot to launch your antiques adventure.

Lang, for example, offers a range of high-end items from the 17th to 20th centuries, chosen, he says, because they are "pieces that really hit the heart and soul." Spindler sells an eclectic, curated selection of pieces from graphic posters to inlaid mahogany desks, aiming for quality without pretension, he says. Neligan, who focuses on English and European furnishings and decorative arts, prides himself on selling only high-quality originals that exemplify the period in which they were made.

David Neligan has seen clients searching for writing desks to use in their home offices.



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Approach your search with a willingness to ask questions, dealers advise. A sense of curiosity and a desire to learn more about antiques will help you find the right piece for your needs. Often, shop owners are so dedicated to finding clients the right items they will even refer you to other dealers who are more likely to have something that suits your needs, Spindler says.

"Most dealers are happy to educate people and share what they know," he says. "And if I don't have what you're looking for, I'll try to help you find it somewhere else."

Shoppers also shouldn't shy away from mixing and matching styles. Just because your living room is mostly a mid-century modern affair doesn't mean you can't add in a piece from a different era. Lang recalls a client who bought an 18th-century chandelier to hang in the soaring foyer of her modern home. The effect of the contrast, he says, was spectacular.

"There should not be a fight between pieces that have age and character, and a scaled-down, minimalist look," Lang says. "It shouldn't be one or the other."



Andrew Spindler loves to work with clients to find just the right treasure.

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—THOMAS LANG



Spindler advises clients mix and match styles and periods for a rich, layered look in the home.

When it comes to price, do your research, Neligan says. Online sites like Chairish and 1st Dibs can give you a sense of price ranges. And don’t be afraid to ask dealers if they can lower the price, Spindler says, though avoid complaining about high prices.

The search for the right piece will be worth it in the end, dealers say. Antiques add a sense of heart and depth that simply can’t be replicated by newer, mass-produced furnishings, they say.

“It just makes you feel warm, like you’re part of its history—you are now its guardian,” Lang says. “Antiques bring presence.” ■  
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