

Do your homework when shopping for antiques

Question: How do you shop for antiques and incorporate them in to your designs? —*Kelly, Asheville*

Jean: Hi, Kelly! Antiques often play a role in our interiors and sometimes a pivotal one. With that in mind, our approach to incorporating them can vary. For example, some projects begin with an antique piece or collection, and we might actually be designing a room with an heirloom as the centerpiece. When we believe a design could benefit from an acquired antique, the shopping begins.

Richard: Jean, I think Kelly already assumed all that — otherwise, she wouldn't be asking the question. So let's start with some of the basics of what to look for. I suggest beginning by doing your homework. Establish the type, style and period you



**Richard
Fast**

HE SAID,



**Jean
Greeson**

SHE SAID

are looking for. As a source of information and comparison pricing, you might start by shopping on eBay.

Jean: I know a lot of people swear by eBay, but as antiques go, nothing beats seeing it — and buying it — in person. Buy locally if you can; chances are the item came from somewhere else anyway. Richard came from somewhere else. Mars, wasn't it?

Richard: No. I came from Fort Lauderdale where I OWNED

AN ANTIQUE STORE. So I do have a few suggestions for Kelly. For one, choose a piece either because you love it and it's well-priced, or buy a more expensive piece in great condition as an investment (and you know what your buying.) Don't always trust what you see on the price tag or hear from the salesman. There's a lot of guessing in the business.

Jean: I suggest that unless the furniture comes as a set, don't attempt to match pieces and periods. Contrasts will work much better along with unexpected combinations. Think grand to humble. But be careful — many antiques can be quite small in scale, so make sure that your purchase is not going to look ridiculous against that giant sofa you just bought.

Richard: Good advice. Also, Kelly, don't rule out reproduc-

tions. They can be a good direction to take these days. Tables can be made in sizes to suit your needs. It can be hard to tell the difference between a quality reproduction and a true antique. Dining chairs reproduced are a wonderful alternative to the real thing so you can be sure the construction will hold up.

Jean: If you can afford to buy a piece on your travels and have it shipped back it will be a wonderful reminder of getting away. Richard has some wonderful reminders of his trip to the moon.

Richard: It gives a whole new meaning to "space planning."

These are the opinions of nationally recognized interior design team Jean Greeson and Richard Fast, who offer advice and services from their studio in Asheville's River Arts District at 352 Depot St. Greeson & Fast Design can be reached at 252-0400 or www.GreesonAndFast.com.