

DAILY SHOW

Why not put your pretties on display? Use glass dishes, lacquer trays, even ceramic animals to artfully array jewelry.



Gen Sohr hunts vintage sites and stores for clothing, jewelry, and furniture, choosing this curvaceous table for her closet. "Highlighting furniture in front of a window is unexpected," she says. "It adds a bit of privacy without blocking light." Accessories are arranged in tidy, artistic clusters. "I want things out where I can see them, so I can walk in there and 'shop' whenever I need to," she says.

Style
IS
EXUBERANT

MAKING her own RULES

THIS CREATIVE PRO
SHOWS THE PERKS OF NOT
BEING A WALLFLOWER.

BY SARAH EGGE
PHOTOS DAVID TSAY AND LESLEE MITCHELL
STYLING EDDIE ROSS



AT HOME WITH Design ace Gen Sohr in Nashville.

PERSONAL STYLE “Vintage meets modern. I’m not into reproducing an era. It’s about the mix and how elements come together.”

CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT

“Sunshine. Even in spaces that don’t get great light, I’ll fake it by painting the walls and ceiling white.”

BEST FIND “A pair of leather love seats at a San Francisco flea market. Every person who walks into our home wants to purchase them. They’re a great scale, work in any room, and are so beaten up they get better with age.”

MAKE YOUR MARK

Flea market art bought on a family trip makes a special souvenir.



Gen and her husband, Benjamin, built this house with input from Lucy, 15, and Oden, 9, left. The couple modeled classic Southern architecture and incorporated a reclaimed banister and mantel with other vintage finds, such as contemporary paintings and midcentury furniture, far left. Gen’s favorite color—a vibrant red-orange—appears in every room, including the kitchen, below.



Meet Gen Sohr—a mother, wife, and entrepreneur vintage items with chic retail finds is

With a background in merchandising for retailers such as Old Navy and Victoria’s Secret, Gen has unique insight about how people shop for style. That “insider knowledge” spills into her Nashville home, where she spends time with her family and guests, and works with clients through Pencil+Paper Development Co., the design

business she and husband Benjamin founded. “Our aesthetic, our home, is very, very personal,” she says.

Gen and Benjamin help clients with any creative endeavor from house renovations and interior design to retail development. After moving to Benjamin’s hometown of Nashville in 2003, they saw a spot for their modern

with style to spare. Her mix of not-too-precious accessible and fun. Here’s how she does it.

viewpoint amid the city’s Southern red-brick charms. They bought their first house and immediately remodeled. “I painted everything white, even the fireplace,” Gen says. “The painter thought I was crazy, but we had confidence that it would transform the space.”

Gen put the same practice into play in the house she and Benjamin then built, creating

a blank canvas for artwork. The dark-stained floor visually recedes, and neutral upholstery lets Gen play with the finishing layer, which includes sapphire blue and an orange-red, her signature hue. “I’m not scared of color and pattern,” she says. “But I like flexibility. I’m able to change accessories whenever I want. I might want to be more subtle in the

“To me, it’s the juxtaposition of new and old that’s most interesting and personal. It’s a vintage score brought back to life with a modern print or fun color.” **Gen Sohr**



HAPPY HOUR
Clothing designer Kayce Hughes (a 2013 BHG Stylemaker) and her husband, Scott, are frequent guests of the Sohrs.

SEE THROUGH
Wire Bertoia chairs and a glass top show off the painted bamboo table base.



CAN'T MISS
The writing was on the wall when Lucy and Oden left a surprise washi tape message for their father.

winter and layer in red for the summer.” Every accessory is an iteration of that palette, so pink and turquoise also crop up.

Gen believes in taking advantage of easy options. “Retail has great furniture that you can have in your house in a few days,” she says. “There’s a lot to be said for that.” What you pair with the basics, Gen says, makes the look personal. That’s where incorporating secondhand items comes in. She visits local thrift stores weekly and works antiquing into most of her travels. Fabric remnants and wallpaper samples become pillows and framed art, and old sofas and chairs are given new upholstery. “You can get a really sophisticated look with vintage,” Gen says, “and it’s a way to get something that feels special.”

Bold art and white-painted brick pavers make the covered courtyard, opposite, a happy spot for hosting. Gen takes advantage of a hallway, above, turning it into an easy-to-change memory wall. The Sohrs call friends who own the Crankees Pizzeria truck, above right, when they want easy entertaining. An old office-style table, right, pulls up to a banquette with pillows in vintage fabrics Gen buys online.



PILLOW PLAY
“The more patterns, the better,” Gen says. “They bring a layer of whimsy to a house.”



Signature Style Get Gen's vintage-modern look

Stepping inside Gen's closet is like walking into a boutique full of one-of-a-kind dresses and jewelry. Here's how she gets the look she loves:

FIND YOUR MUSE Gen's mother sewed clothes that emulated high-fashion magazines; Gen admired both her style and her can-do spirit. "Part of me imagined becoming a fashion designer," she says. "With vintage things, I can do that."

ZERO IN ON YOUR FAVES When she can't get to a thrift store, Gen scours etsy.com: "I try to source a particular color or fabric, so I search 'hot pink silk dress' or 'vintage brocade dress,'" she says. "It's also a great resource for jewelry and home accessories."

REIMAGINE, RECAST, REINVENT Gen restrings necklaces to current lengths. She has a tailor alter her dresses, scooping out backs or tapering waists. "I'm drawn to classic silhouettes," she says, "but I want to make them feel fresh and new."

"I don't ever want to dress head-to-toe vintage. It looks costumey. Just like I don't want a room to be top-to-bottom vintage." Gen Sohr



NIGHT LIGHT Gen loves the graphic nature of a single letter as wall art and the way it adds a custom touch. Sign companies sell letters—electrified or not.



NO SNOOZE Buy a bedside piece in a zippy color, like Gen did, or update one with glossy spray paint.



A linen-covered headboard, far left, is a neutral backdrop for bedding, and it doesn't compete with flea-market art and accessories. Containers for jewelry, left, reinforce Gen's home-decor palette. Her closet window, below, was a must-have. "I need natural light. It's my little escape," she says.





SHELVE IT

Take a cue from retail store displays: Create a unifying palette, and don't crowd shelves.

Gen found the retro sofa for the second-floor playroom, *above*, before there was a house. "It's from a local thrift store I hit every week to see what has come in," she says. Gen also shops while traveling: "I never enter an airplane cabin without a bulky, fragile, hard-to-carry flea market score!" Oden is similarly fond of unique finds. For his bedroom, *right*, he chose a graphic letter from an old sign. ■

Blend new with vintage
Gen Sohr gives the secrets to success on our Style Spotters blog. BHG.com/VintageTips

For buying information see page 208.



LIVEN IT UP

More than one material—a chrome-and-fabric sofa or glass-and-wood table—instantly makes a room more personal.