



▲ **Before:** The dining room had nice furniture, including an armoire, but lacked the vibrancy and personality the client wanted.

► **After:** Same furniture and accessories, but the room gained a fun new vibe after a look through the client's existing photos, cookbooks and other objects. The only purchases were shelves and fabric lining for the armoire and fresh flowers.



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## SEE YOUR BELONGINGS IN A NEW LIGHT

**W**hether starting from scratch with the design of an entire house or just revamping existing rooms, it is the finishing touches that reflect the lifestyle of those who live inside.

Luckily, many of my clients have great collections, whether it is artwork, books or mementos from traveling. Often, these items just need to be rearranged and displayed in a careful manner to best highlight the objects and the rooms.

### Step 1: Client goals

This client is an artist and has a beautiful home filled with high-quality furniture with a classic feel. We reviewed her home and the furniture, arrangements and accessories. The home reflected her mature side, but she felt the house did not necessarily reflect her artistic, creative personality. She needed some funk! Some vibrancy!

We exchanged lively conversation and bounced ideas around. She embraced the ideas and changes and had her own input.



I stuck with her desire to keep existing furniture, not make expensive changes, and to rearrange and display what she had in a new way.

### Step 2: Rearrange the furniture

An armoire was originally in the living room, but its location consumed a wall perfect for an enormous painting, and the lower ceilings made the armoire seem too large. But the armoire was the perfect scale and mass to anchor the dining area, with its high vaulted ceilings. When closed, the beautiful carved doors showed. When they're open, the armoire fills the volume of the room and allows for display of colorful art and often-used serving pieces.

The orange chairs, which were in the corners of the room, were brought to the table to add a punch of color at the ends of the table. Being larger and colorful, the chairs add variety. But we still needed more color! More life! So we got to work on modifications.

### Step 3: Modifications

We left the original armoire shell intact, even the chalk marks on the inside walls, patina from long ago. The shelves were not square and flat and were not original. So we replaced them with new shelves made from reclaimed lumber, blending in with the original wood.

New shelf liners of white linen with printed big orange mums cover each shelf. A backer board is wrapped with lime green stripes and dots. These two fabrics, with their color and texture, add life to a traditional piece.

### Step 4: Purging and pulling

We ransacked her cabinets and garage, gathering items that had sentimental value or were of visual interest. She kept finding colorful pieces that had been hidden — original artwork of her own or that she had collected. Glossy cookbooks, pretty serving pieces and colorful linens were all pulled out of cabinets and drawers.

Once these pieces were assembled, we realized the consistencies, which helped unify the display. Clear glass vases, decan-

ters and wine glasses sparkled, while folksy artwork, patterned linens and framed art add color and pattern.

The center of the table needed a punch, too, and incredibly, she had these grassy placemats stored away. We brought those babies out and ran them down the table. Top them with beautiful orange roses from Beco Flowers in her own carved wooden bowl and voila! The room has a totally new vibe, and the only things that had to be purchased were fabrics and flowers.

Sometimes we get stuck in a rut, living with our own objects for a long time and not seeing new potential through simple arrangement. I am guilty of that in my own home.

Taking photographs from different views throughout the house puts things in new light and makes me see things differently, like comparing it to magazine spreads. This has inspired me to wander through my home to try to look at things in a new way. I might need some new funk myself!

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