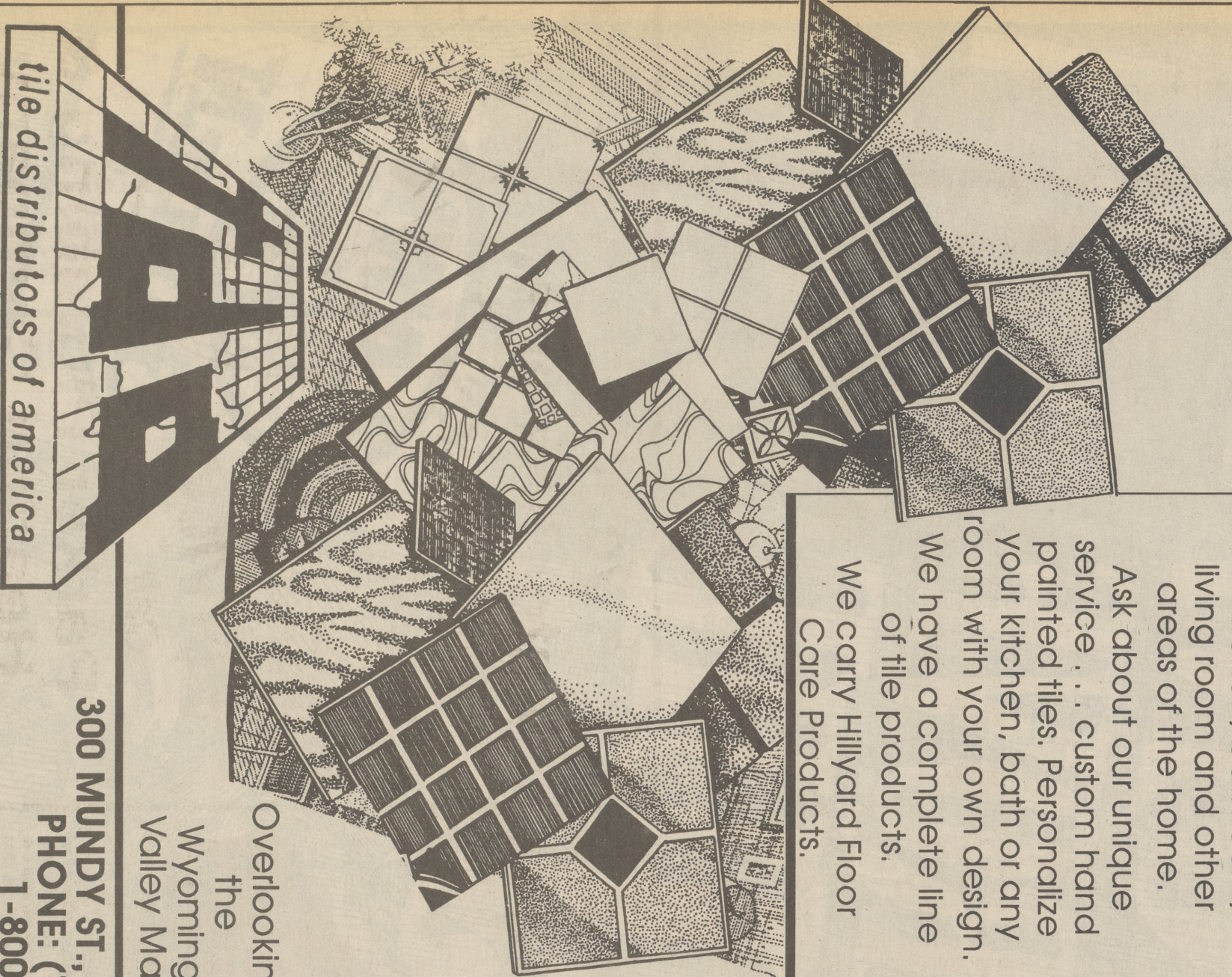


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Art, antiques and some other ornamentation

By Mike Dale
Copley News Service

Home is where the hearth is — along with the collectibles, lace, candles, mirrors, linens, rugs, art, antiques and photographs.

They can lend an air of coziness or "make a statement." But where to start refurbishing?

Should a hardwood floor be carpeted? Could the carpeting be scrapped altogether? Would a throw rug, room divider and stem-ling on the wall make a better statement?

Where should collectibles be displayed? How does one find them? What about original art? How can seemingly innocuous items such as candles and flowers lend ambience to a room?

When it comes to ornamentation questions, personal style plays as big a part as practical, day-to-day considerations.

Helpful ideas can be found in home decorating, art or antique magazines. Flip through the illustrations and articles. Make a list of items that you can do without — like starter furniture, hand-me-downs or gifts no longer being utilized.

COLLECTIBLES

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And so it goes with collectibles such as figurines, pop culture mementos, silver goods, china, crystal and the like.

A room can recall an era — the 1950s, for example — when chairs looked like potato chips, coffee tables resembled amoebas and sofas twisted like Italian sausages.

Or the contents of a five-and-dime store can be emptied into a room: a Batman and Robin talking alarm clock, plastic fruits, an Empire State building statue and ceramic cacti.

Those with "Americana" on their mind would revel in pewter pots, wooden tables, colonial chairs, duck figurines, flowery stencil at cornice level and an oriental rug.

For an eye-catching display, group pieces by maker, theme and artist. But don't be afraid to mix different types of items (it's OK to put a figurine next to a plate).

FURNITURE

An easy way to spice up rooms? Reupholster couches and sofas. Move furniture around to create a new "flow." Get furniture away from the wall.

For the "library" touch, dark woods such as mahogany and brown leathers reflect a studious demeanor. Furniture in game rooms would be fun and frivolous, almost toylike. Apartment dwellers might opt for a simple arrangement of couch, window seat and two coffee tables.

ART/ANTIQUES

It's another personal touch — whether you have framed your favorite David Bowie rock poster, a Matisse print or your buddy's watercolor of swans at sunset. Prints,

folios, paintings, sculptures and antiques can be employed as the centerpiece of a room or its accent.

A special painting, for instance, could be highlighted on a white wall with other smaller prints and photos surrounding them.

PHOTOGRAPHS

With special photographs (of family and friends), the art of display lies in eliminating a visual hedgepodge — not an easy task.

Home galleries can have impact. Consider grouping photos together, choosing one frame style for those groups, hanging multiple rows so all bottoms and tops align, and using white/gray mats or black or white frames for black-and-white photos; very dark mats for color shots.

MOLDINGS

Moldings, or fragments, provide walls and ceilings with texture, which helps frame doors and windows to bring the room together.

Molding can be the perfect answer to large plain ceiling expanses. Existing ornamental plasterwork, woodwork and moldings can be highlighted with paint, reinforcing a room's traditions (such as a Victorian home).

Molding mixed with wall paneling can give a casual country look. Moldings with shutters eliminate the need for curtains. In entryways, panel moldings can be trussed up as picture frames to give plain doors a decorative touch. And they can be used to outline wall opening where cabinets used to be located.

WALLS/CEILINGS

Walls and ceilings shouldn't be treated as non-existent potted plants.

The wall, even though it separates space, can be designed as a piece of sculpture. A wall made of glass, for instance, gives a strong definition of a room but makes its own statement, as well. Glass block now comes in a large selection of patterns — from starbursts to grids to ripples.

Walls also can be textured for the Southwest look, they can shimmer by using metallic flakes and they can be wallpapered into an art form.

Ceilings also have come out of the closet. Wooden beams have been the standby for centuries. Now come ceiling interiors fashioned in industrial-strength metal grids.

Other innovative ceiling designs: overhead beams plastered as Renaissance frescoes; false beams that create a sculptural effect overhead, and simple ceiling paneling painted in two or more tones.

LINENS/LACE

High-quality linens and lace, available in many patterns and sizes, can be purchased in department stores, specialty shops, estate sales and even flea markets.

They can be invaluable in spicing up some of your prized possessions. Dress up a table with a lace tablecloth. Or place a dolly under a favorite vase or lamp. Both add a sensual touch.

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