

the collected home
darryl carter

the collected home

ROOMS WITH STYLE, GRACE, AND HISTORY

darryl carter

WITH TRISH DONNALLY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GORDON BEALL



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NEW YORK

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JACKET IMAGE: Artwork by Edward Finnegan hangs above my
client's coffee table that was enlarged to better suit the space through
an engineering marvel performed by Joe Wills. His work included
matching the cleft edge of the existing table—it is as if it was always
at its current size. The chair was found during one of my many travels.

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First Edition

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To my parents—and all parents—who
have found themselves with children prone
to unusual paths. Thank you for so much
belief and continued support.

JACKSON, FOUR, WAS HANDED A CHILDREN'S MENU TO COLOR
DURING DINNER. HE PROMPTLY FLIPPED IT OVER TO THE BLANK
SIDE DECLARING, "I WOULD RATHER DRAW THAN COLOR."

ROMAN, THREE, TAPPED HIS HAND AGAINST A NINETEENTH-CENTURY
CORINTHIAN COLUMN IN WASHINGTON, DC, AND PROCLAIMED, "NOT REAL."
HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE HAD BEEN, OF COURSE,
THE TROPHÉE DES ALPES, BUILT IN 6 BC FOR EMPEROR AUGUSTUS.



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PROLOGUE

The horse sculpture in the foyer of my Washington home is my most prized possession. It profoundly speaks to the essence of my work and the concept of this book. The horse greets you upon entering, and so begins the story of my collected home.

In collecting your own home, you are sharing the story of your life. The furniture, art, colors, textures, sounds, and scents all convey details about your character, sense of humor, and experiences. Ironically, while our homes hold so much promise to be our sanctuaries, they have somehow progressively become an aside in our daily lives. The making of a home seems to be increasingly thought of as a chore that is managed through common catalog offerings and compulsive purchases informed by immediate need.





COLLECTIONS
SHOULD SPEAK TO
YOU OR OF YOU.

As I see it, the home should be a collected assemblage of treasures meaningful to the homeowner. I believe it is better to have an empty room than an instant room. Forgo the immediate, and embrace the lasting. This is the guiding principle for collecting a home.

My home speaks to me. It is a gathering of all things personal—each with its own story, not because of its worth, but because of its interest. I enjoy playing docent, walking guests through this view into my life. It is a veritable unfolding tale of journeys, passions, and cherished gifts. Each object captured my attention because of its humor, complexity, utility, innovation, or sentimentality. Some rare, some common—ready for reinvention through a coat of paint or reupholstery, each acquired from antiques dealers, architectural reclamation, flea markets, or artisans' studios. These overall collections have become quite a gathering, evoking fond memories and providing a view into just how my mind works. So many stories, so much reinvention. I love sharing these anecdotes with my guests, hearing their laughter and seeing their surprise.

The horse sculpture exemplifies this philosophy and represents a culmination of an odyssey of events that somehow landed it in my foyer. I was in Venice for a design summit, where I met a host of brilliant people, including Steve and Brooke Giannetti. We were on a boat bound for the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, now home to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Through the course of our conversation, Steve mentioned that I might appreciate a visit to Giannetti's Studio, which is just outside of Washington, near where my firm is based. As it turns out, his family owns a highly regarded ornamental plaster works studio spanning three generations.

On my return, a visit ensued, and thus began the pilgrimage to the horse. The studio was a warren of beautiful objects. It is one of the few remaining studios that practices bygone plaster methods, having restored many of the most important buildings in Washington. There I was overcome with architectural models and prototypical miniatures of familiar monuments, fragments of buildings, columns, cornices, and the horse. This sculpture is said to be the infrastructure reference for a bronze by Paul Wayland Bartlett, an American sculptor who worked on several of the equestrian statues that grace the traffic circles of Washington, as well as many public spaces worldwide.

The tale of the craft involved in the making of a bronze so struck me that this noble creature eventually found a home in my foyer. The Giannettis' final parting with the horse was more inspired by their want for it to fall into kindred stewardship than by a desire for monetary return. This magnificent object, which I am so fortunate to have in my home, speaks to me in every possible way. It defines the making of an object with exacting care, which should be the foundation when collecting your home and one we will explore throughout this book.

As for the horse, yes, it does have an equally extraordinary head, which I keep safely sequestered. Displaying the horse in its full context would be far too obvious.



RECLAIMED FOUNTAIN IN MY
WASHINGTON, DC, FOYER.



INTRODUCTION

Collecting all of the furnishings, finishings, and art to decorate your home should be fun, and this book is written in that spirit. Embrace and enjoy the process. The objects you collect, both expected and otherwise, are what will distinguish and define your home as an expression of you. After so much positive response to my book *The New Traditional*, I wanted to explore in more depth the essence of what brings a home to life.

For me, the key to this process is in how all of the design elements are brought together to create a harmonious whole. The home should be your refuge, a place of tranquillity. Just as you may curate a small group of prized belongings, look at your whole home and its design as a collection of objects and stories. When making design decisions, select things that are dear and personally impactful. This should be the guiding principle for all aspects of the home, from an antique door knocker to a distinctive armoire that may hide the high-tech equipment of modern life.