

Fort Worth Treasures

Hold Happy Memories for Owner

Text by Kay Crosby Ellis

Each accessory and every piece of furniture in the Charles L. Rowan home of Fort Worth, Texas, holds special happy memories for Mrs. Rowan. She and her late husband, a well-known oilman, traveled throughout the world collecting their priceless possessions.

Now these treasures keep her husband's spirit very much alive for Merle Rowan. As she walks through the house, she sees the sofa they selected in London in 1938, the handsome pair of chests the couple discov-

Interior design by Joseph Minton and David Corley
Photography by Max Eckert



ered in Paris, a beautiful crystal candelabrum they carried carefully home from Caracas, Venezuela, and many other very special pieces. "Charley is so very much a part of this house," she says. "I can look around at all these things we collected and feel his happy presence here."

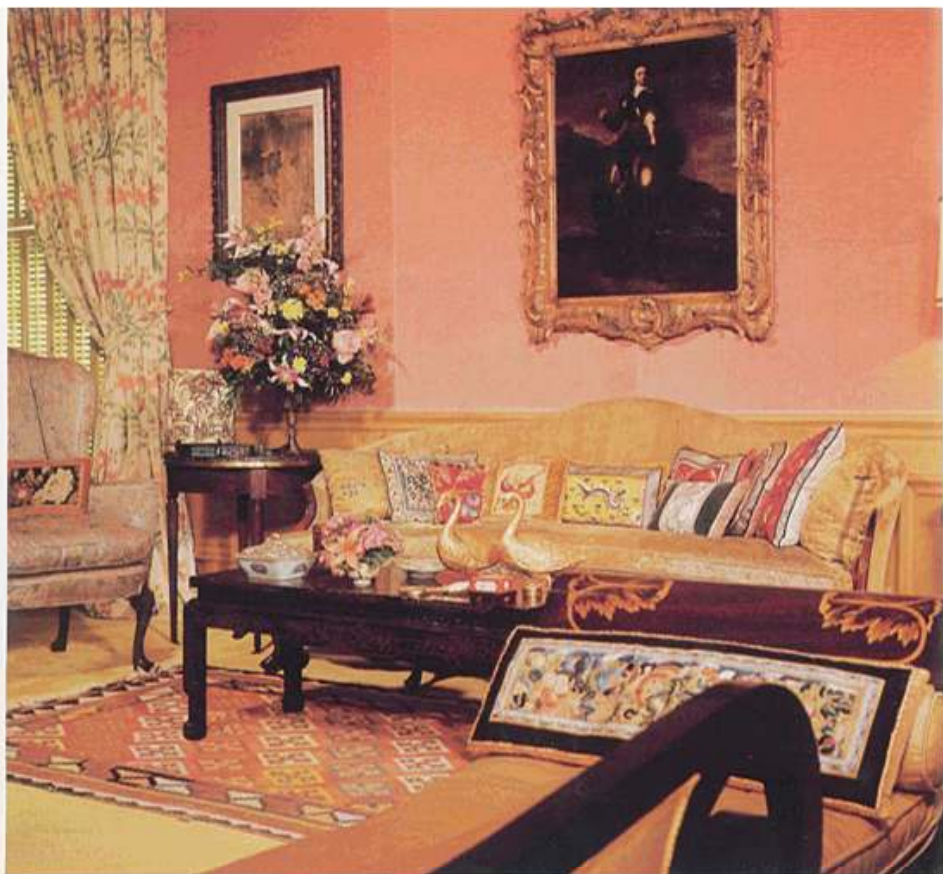
It was quite natural, then, that she chose to refurbish these beloved items when she decided to redecorate several years ago, rather than buy new furnishings.

Joseph Minton and David Corley,

partners in the Fort Worth design firm Minton-Corley which redecorated the house, concurred enthusiastically. "John Astin Perkins of Dallas worked with the Rowans when they first bought the house," said Mr. Minton. "They had already collected a great many beautiful pieces by that time, and Mr. Perkins helped them acquire some other very lovely things. It was a pleasure for us to work with such beautiful antiques and collectibles. All we needed to do was update fabrics, colors and wall treat-

An 18th century English gilt table and stool highlight one end of the living room. The leopard-look covering on the stool is a velvet from Brunswick & Fils.

Dissonant drapery headings are a Minton-Corley trademark. These living room draperies use delicate smocking all across the top. The fabric is a printed moiré from Old World Weavers.



ments for a fresh look."

The designers added a few new items, such as an antique Khilim rug in perfect colors for the living room and a trumeau mirror in stripped oak for the dining room. They kept the original birch paneling in the living room and dining room and upholstered the non-paneled walls in a striated linen velvet of apricot, one of Mrs. Rowan's favorite colors. They also selected moiré draperies with a flower print in shades of apricot, gold and lettuce green on a contrasting cream background.

The draperies are a Minton-Corley trademark — distinctive types of headings. "We like to avoid pleats whenever possible," explained Mr. Minton. "We think that other kinds of treatments give a prettier look."

The living room features draperies that are delicately snocked all across the top. On the lanai the designers shirred the draperies on a rod that was covered with the drapery fabric. In other jobs they have replaced the many small pleats usually seen on draperies with giant-sized loose pleats.

"When we do the big loose pleats we use no stiffening, so that the fabric looks as if it is just caught up. Draperies are one of the things with which we particularly enjoy working. We have our own workroom, which allows us to experiment with different headings," comments Mr. Minton.

In the two upstairs bedrooms the designers used apricot extensively, along with yellow and green. They added a creative touch to the upstairs by covering the doors in the same wallcovering that was

used in each room.

Though both the living room and dining room are used regularly for formal luncheons, dinners, teas, musical events and other parties, Mrs. Rowan concedes that her favorite living area — and the favorite of most of her guests — is the comfortable U-shaped lanai that was added when they bought the house. It features wide expanses of glass

Mrs. Rowan bought the sofa and wing chair shown at left years ago in London. She found the mate to the wing chair some time later at Lloyd-Paxton in Dallas. The apricot striated velvet used to upholster the walls is by Clarence House.

Antique Wedgwood Lustreware sets an elegant table in the dining room. The chandelier is from Italy, and the Rowans found the crystal candelabrum in Caracas, Venezuela.





that provide a view of the pool and patio, contains game tables that convert for dining, and has plenty of easy chairs. The sofas are covered in bright fabrics and the floors are of antique brick.

Some of the bricks were said to have come from a long-demolished courthouse in Nashville. The others were reputedly made by the slaves of Andrew Jackson.

The lanai shows off several collections gathered by Mr. Rowan, including antique daggers bought in all parts of the world, and unusual walking sticks and canes, some fancy with ivory or cloisonné handles and others lethal with built-in swords or pistols. A chest also displays a collection of antique guns once kept at the couple's Wade Plantation near Sylvania, Ga., where they raised Black Angus cattle.

"We loved to go to the plantation," recalls Mrs. Rowan. "It had a landing strip for our plane, and at the drop of a hat we would gather up a planeload of family and friends and head for Georgia."

The designers covered many pillows

Comfortable chairs and sofas, many with accents of Indian-embroidered pillows, make the lanai a pleasant place in which to relax. The glass walls let in light and showcase the patio, pool and cabana just outside. The colorful bird print fabric for the draperies is by Clarence House.

One corner of the lanai provides an ideal location for this country French desk. A collection of French faïence plates and a Toulouse-Lautrec poster adorn the wall. Accessories and collectibles on the desk include an African carving of an animal's head mounted on a lucite base.





with Indian embroidery for the sofas and chairs on the lanai. Masses of more formal pillows are used in the living room and master bedroom. The fancier ones feature antique lace, tapestry and embroidery.

Also found in the living room is one of

her favorite collections: an extensive set of Meissen monkey musicians, again collected during their travels.

This collection, incidentally, had an interesting start. The Rowans saw an entire set of the monkey musicians in a New York

A country French cabinet holds a collection of antique guns, while the lanai wall displays some of the old daggers collected by the late Charles L. Rowan. Some of Mr. Rowan's walking sticks and canes are in the stand beside the cabinet. The lucite-mounted mask is from New Guinea.

antique shop. They didn't buy it at the time but later decided to return for it. When they reached the shop they discovered that a Fort Worth friend, prominent oil man, civic leader and art museum benefactor Amon Carter, had been in a few hours earlier and bought the set.

"We were so mad!" Mrs. Rowan said laughingly. "We knew we wanted a complete set of them, so we had to find them one at a time. It took years, but I suppose we had more fun than if we had bought the whole set at once." ♦

One of Mrs. Rowan's favorite areas at night is around the swimming pool with all the reflections of the lights throughout the garden dancing on the water. Moonlighting by John Watson Landscape Illumination, Inc.

An inviting fireplace decorated with copper cooking utensils serves as a focal point for the alcove sitting area at one end of the lanai. The woven sofa fabric is by Brunswick & Fils, and the print chair fabric is from Old World Weavers.

