

# FOCUSED ON DESIGN

*Furnished with antiques, artifacts, and contemporary pieces, this in-town apartment reflects its owner's unique approach to design.*

Emily Minton is almost always on the go. When she's not traveling around the South photographing gracious homes for our magazine, she loves to vacation in faraway places.

When she returns to Birmingham, however, she wants her home to be a quiet and comfortable retreat. "Because I travel so much, I need a haven," says Emily. "But I wanted a home where I would be excited about walking in the front door, and yet where I could put my feet up and really relax."

With these goals in mind, Emily embarked on decorating her 1,000-square-foot apartment. She understood the potential of artistic collaborations, so she turned to her father, Fort Worth designer Joseph Minton. "My dad has a great mind for spatial concepts," says Emily proudly. "I sent him a floor plan, and he suggested the basic configuration and the placement of the sofa."

She also credits him with instilling design aesthetics during her formative years. In particular she remembers his saying that rugs should anchor a room first and wall color should continue the theme.

To give the walls visual impact, Emily consulted her friend Bryan Carter, an Atlanta artist who painted dramatic faux-finish



*(Above) Pine columns subtly divide the living and dining areas. To visually increase the living room's dimensions, Emily set a large, gilded, framed mirror above a pine sideboard. (Left) The massive 19th-century view camera under the wrought iron table was a gift from Emily's father.*

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PHOTOGRAPHY EMILY MINTON



wall surfaces throughout the apartment. He created a large diamond pattern beneath the chair rail that enlivens the dining room. The living area features leopard-yellow walls with a matte, terra-cotta finish.

Once the background was in place, Emily was ready to furnish her new abode. She started with a few major pieces. The sofa was a holdover from her college days. A slipcover in a celadon green cotton with pull cords and grommets gives the old standby a new look.

But the apartment definitely needed more furnishings. Again, Emily turned to her father. As the owner of a thriving interior design practice, he offered significantly more possibilities than the typical attic or basement collection of one's parents. "He let me go through his warehouse and 'borrow' a number of choice pieces," Emily explains.

She culled an eclectic mix of contemporary pieces and antiques, ranging from a pair of ball chairs from her father to a wicker chaise lounge from France. It's not surprising that Emily's home reflects the many cultures she has experienced. Nearly every wall and table surface displays artifacts and photographs from exotic destinations.

An Indian tapestry hangs on one wall; colorful Turkish rugs are placed throughout. Portraits of family and friends sit comfortably next to Thai pottery and antique cameras. "I grew up surrounded by lots of 'organized clutter,'" says Emily, "so it's only natural my own home would be filled with things I've collected over the years." ◇

*(Right) An old tobacco crate serves as the backdrop for Emily's antique cameras—many purchased at flea markets and yard sales.*



*(Left) Rather than using a traditional dining arrangement, Emily combined wicker chairs with a leather settee placed against one wall.*

*(Above) A secondary seating arrangement, comprised of antique French wicker, is tucked along the front of the apartment. Unlined muslin drapes provide a light and airy background.*