

New Nostalgia

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN. When it comes to creating unique looks for their events, planners and designers pull from the past, adding vintage touches to the décor.

BY AMANDA FRETHEIM GATES



PROPS BY ANTIQUE DOOR VINTAGE RENTALS, PHOTOS BY KENDRA ELIZABETH PHOTOGRAPHY



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SARAH DREHER HAS ALWAYS LOVED THE VINTAGE LOOK. It started with vintage clothing, but then as she got older, moved into her own home, the love expanded to vintage accessories and furniture. When it was time to plan her wedding, Dreher started collecting vintage place settings, metal tins, blue Mason jars and other prop items to help decorate her special day. “I wanted to channel the wedding my grandparents had or my ancestors had and how they celebrated it,” she says.

After their wedding, Dreher and her husband, a local photographer, discovered they could take this collection and open a business, and On Solid Ground Vintage Rentals was born. Now Dreher spends her free time (she’s in fashion design by day) perusing flea markets and Craigslist for vintage items to add to her growing inventory, so she can be a great resource to planners, brides and stylists who are looking for some vintage flare. “I try not to purchase anything for my inventory that I wouldn’t put into my own home, so it truly reflects my style, which I think differentiates me from others in town,” she says.



WHAT’S VINTAGE?

Vintage can mean many things to many people. Is it antique? Is it retro? From the ‘40s or the ‘80s? Turns out, there’s no wrong answer. It can be different things to different people. “To me it’s something with character that you can’t just go to Target or the mall and find,” says Caitlin Parker, owner of Antique Door Vintage Rentals. Parker came into the business similar to Dreher, by planning her own vintage-style nuptials. “Vintage is something that has quality, because a lot of time and dedication was put into building it. That’s why I like it for events, because it’s something you’re not going to see everywhere; it’s not going to be the cookie cutter centerpieces or chair. It has character and stands out.”



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Diane Storevik Holetz, The Vintage Type

And while it can mean different things, vintage also continues to evolve as time moves on. While Dreher is drawn to pieces from the ‘40s and earlier (and that look and feel seems to be what many planners are after at the moment), she knows it will change. “With the way vintage events are going, people will start looking for new ways to go vintage and I think the ‘60s will come back around and it’ll be like diner vinyl and things like that,” she says.

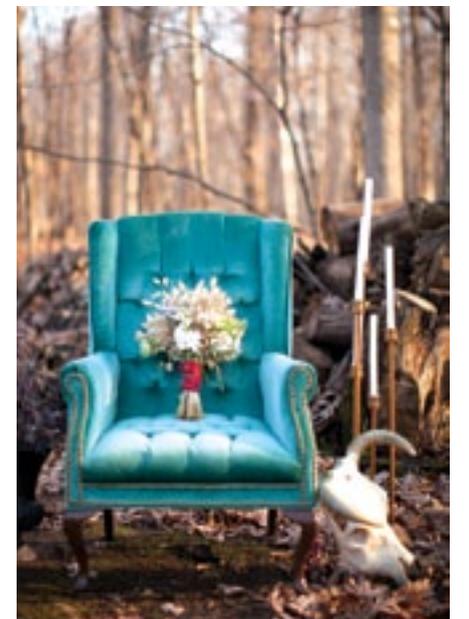
Personally, Dreher loves color and quirky pieces, which may not be what everyone pictures when they think of the vintage look. A wooden Viking sled? Check. Old-time Band-Aid tins? Yep. Colorful furniture? Absolutely. “I’m really drawn to a bright colored upholstery and really graphic labels or tins,” she says. “It’s not to say I don’t have neutral pieces because my white sofa is probably the most rented thing I have.” And if a planner meshes with her style, but just can’t figure out how to make it work, she can help demonstrate a setup that would sing.

Parker stays up to date on trends by checking blogs and design news. Emerald is the Pantone color for 2013, so she’s on the search for more emerald pieces and complementary items. She also really appreciates the more rustic vintage look. “I look for chipped paint and worn and rusty pieces,” she says. “I also like the shabby chic, white, prettier stuff, which is great with weddings because it’s really girly, but parallel with that I like rustic. Antlers are a huge trend right now.”

WHY VINTAGE?

How did this trend come about? Because it doesn’t seem to be going away. Maybe it had to do with the recession, as Parker suggests, and people were either looking at ways to save money or to look like they were saving money. Maybe all the HGTV design shows have inspired planners to try to do it themselves. Or, everyone was just ready for something different, and vintage décor turned out to be quite versatile.

“You want people to walk away from your event or wedding or showroom booth and really remember it,” Dreher says. “If you have a beautiful lounge



PROPS BY ANTIQUE DOOR VINTAGE RENTALS, PHOTOS BY KENDRA ELIZABETH PHOTOGRAPHY

PROPS BY ANTIQUE DOOR VINTAGE RENTALS, EXCEPT BOTTOM CHAIR PHOTO BY ON SOLID GROUND. TOP PHOTOS BY ATHENA PELTON PHOTOGRAPHY, BOTTOM CHAIR PHOTO BY AMBER ENGEER PHOTOGRAPHY



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Sarah Dreher, On Solid Ground Vintage Rentals

area set up next to your coffee station area where people can sit and talk, and the next thing they’ll know it’s been three hours and they’ll go home the next day and talk about it. That’s why people have events. To impress people.”

Vintage rentals and décor can customize a room or an event in a way that typical styling can’t. “It does bring in a rich element of tradition and adds to the tapestry of an event,” says Diane Storevik Holetz, owner of The Vintage Type, a local event rental and event design company. “I think any space can be transformed. I think that’s also why it’s becoming so popular or embraced because it doesn’t have to be an old, beautiful mansion or rustic barn. Those are fun to work with, but you can really turn any space or any outdoor area into your own.”

HOW TO VINTAGE?

So, where to start? Most event planners come to vintage décor experts with an idea in their head. Either they have a particular piece they want to design their event around, or they bring inspiration from Pinterest or other design blogs and mesh the ideas together to create something new. The possibilities are pretty endless, considering you can use anything from big furnishings, doors or old pickup trucks to smaller accessories such as bikes, bins, dishes, globes, doors, easels, suitcases, milk jugs, old wine barrels and so much more.

And while some elements may seem overdone, Dreher, Parker and Holetz agree that many vintage items—including the tried and true favorites—can just be used in a different way. “Everybody does Mason jars now, but I’m the first to say that’s such an easy and cheap way to put vintage spin on your

event,” Dreher says. “Even if you just serve drinks out of Mason jars that you bought at Menards, it makes this homey, ‘We pulled this out of grandma’s pantry,’ feel. There’s been stuff overdone on the blogs but there’s nothing you can’t make into your own.”

It may just take perusing the options out there and seeing what feels right. And if you like a look or a particular item you find, but just aren’t quite sure how it’ll work for your event, just ask. Vintage items can be used any number of ways and the experts are here to help you. “I have a big teal green door that’s one of my favorite pieces,” Parker says. “It’s fun to see people use it for different things. It’s fun to see all the different possibilities that each item has that you maybe didn’t first think about.”

You can go big, with say a couple lounges set up throughout your venue or nestled up to a dance floor, or you can go as small as the flatware or linens you use. “I’m a collector of vintage linens,” Holetz says; she owns 275 vintage napkins, all of which she’s rented out for one event. “I’d like to see that happening more. Even that touch of bringing in vintage napkins—even if the rest of the linens are from another rental company—that can really be a sweet moment that has visual impact that every single guest can see.”

Whether you’re looking to make people feel at home, take them back to a simpler time, or just create an event look that attendees will remember, vintage décor is a step in the right direction. “Planners want to know they’re going to have this really unique event,” Dreher says. “And I think vintage rental is one of the newest and easiest ways of doing it.” **RSVP**

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