

FOCUS

# Second time lucky

There's a lot to be gained by choosing second-hand furniture and homewares over new, from the savings you'll make to the lived-in beauty it can bring, writes Kirsten Craze

**C**all it recycling, up cycling or simply finding a home for grandma's old wares, but having preloved items with personality around your place can make a house a home.

According to a recent study by online trading site Gumtree, the second-hand home decor market is booming, with 90 per cent of Australians having purchased used household items in the past 12 months, with furniture making up 31 per cent of that share.

Kirsty Dunn, from Gumtree Australia, says by choosing to not buy new, people can find a gem while saving money — and the environment.

"We're all becoming more eco-conscious and savvy with how we spend our money," Kirsty says. "So it makes sense to look for something on Gumtree in your local area first before going to the shops."

As the collection and rehoming manager for The Bower Reuse and Repair Centre in Marrickville, Louise Grace says we should also consider upcycling household items.

"Australians are very good at donating, but not so good at buying second-hand and that's something we need to change," Louise says. "It needs to become the new norm because there's such a glut of stuff out there — more than The Bower or any charity can keep up with."

### A LIGHT TOUCH

"These are one of my favourite things to find in charity stores, or to have passed on from friends and family," says Tiffany Benn, founder of Hart Home Decor.

"A new lampshade and the right bulb can transform what was once a tired-looking lamp into your new favourite item."

And with home makeovers on the rise, The Bower has decades of donated styles.

"We get a lot of good quality light fittings," Louise says. "Art deco is quite popular and we have quite a few '60s and '70s ones around that are either wall sconces or ceilings fixtures."

### GREAT LOOKING GLASS

Tiffany says it's clear that second-hand glassware adds a personal touch from inexpensive coloured vases to coloured vintage wine glasses or pricier cut crystal.

"They give a wonderfully luxurious vibe to your home," she says. "My friends are always commenting on my collection."



probably would have paid about \$600 for it brand new," says Kirsty. "I love it, but I also love the thrill that I've saved a lot of money — and still got just what I wanted."

As well as finding preloved pieces for clients, Tiffany bought herself six dining chairs on eBay.

"I painted them myself and had them reupholstered in velvet," she says. "If I'd bought something similar from a shop it probably would have cost me close to \$1000 a chair, but second-hand is nicer because you get something that's so original," she says.

Louise says reclaimed timber is easy to find and can be reused in any number of ways.

"Older timber that has been pulled out of a house has had time to breathe and season and as it's often old growth with tighter grain," she says. "Old growth Australian hardwood is also a finite resource and when they demolish houses in the future it will be plantation pine they pull out, as opposed to the beautiful jarrah, oaks, cedar, kauri that are currently available."

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### FUN WITH COLOUR

Paint can completely transform a second-hand table, especially if you go for a bold colour. Look for furniture in good condition that is still fit for purpose before you put the time into repainting.

**"I BOUGHT A LOVELY GREEN CORNER CHAIR FOR \$100, BUT I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE PAID ABOUT \$600 FOR IT BRAND NEW"**

"My current favourite is a cut glass vintage ice bucket I put some tiny fairy lights in to give some serious sparkle when the lights are down low."

### TAKE A SEAT

Solid timber dining and lounge chairs are ideal second-hand buys because they were made to last.

"I bought a lovely green corner chair on Gumtree for \$100, but I



*better in brass*

**TABLE TALK**

Preloved pieces are an interior designer's secret weapon, says Tiffany from Hart Home Decor. "I love glass coffee tables, especially ones with gold or brass legs because they are classic and age beautifully."



*solid performer*

**WORKING WITH WOOD**

Timber tables or dressers are a solid choice, says Louise from The Bower, because they can easily be reborn, recycled or repaired. "Anything made from solid wood you can paint, stain, sand back or restore it fairly easily," she says. "With modern chip board or MDF furniture as soon as it's exposed to moisture or the veneer gets chipped it's ruined and shabby."



*add some polish*

**GOOD AS NEW**

If you don't like that worn look, paint really can give an old piece of furniture new life. This chest of drawers is transformed by Jolie Home paint and finishing wax. Make sure you have the right tools to hand and allow enough time to get the job done from start to finish. With a little thought, you can create something really striking by changing up the handles or drawer pulls.

**BRUSH IT UP WITH PAINT**



Jemma Wlasichuk and Fanny Clarsen from Shed Eleven, who are the painters in residence for Chalk Paint queen Annie Sloan, have some tips to help repaint old furniture.

- \* Think about the mood a colour will bring to the room and whether the piece is to be a focal point or to blend in.
- \* Work with the existing decor. If the exact desired shade isn't available, mix paint to make create an individual colour, or choose something to complement the room, fabrics or the artwork.
- \* Find colour and style inspiration online from YouTube, Pinterest or Facebook.
- \* Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Paint is quick and easy to change, so it's no drama to repaint.



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