

## A Touch of Europe

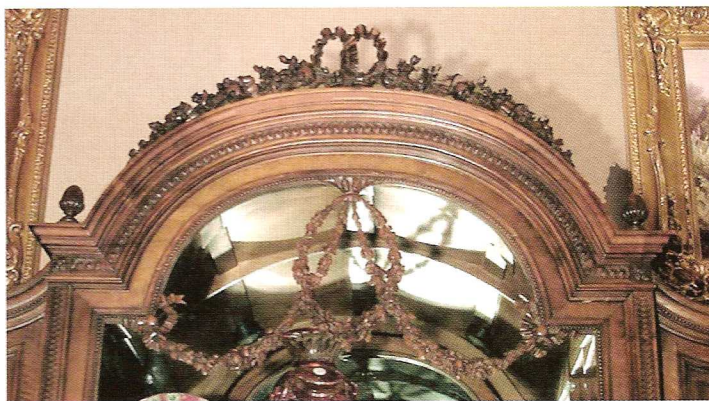
Increase the interest quotient of your kitchen with an elegant antique

### A FABULOUS ANTIQUE CAN PROVIDE A DRAMATIC FOCAL POINT

even in the most modern of kitchens.

Mixing styles and contexts is what is interesting today in home design, but when adding antiques, "it's the quality of the pieces that's most important," says furniture and accessories dealer Inessa Stewart. Stewart makes this observation as she leads a tour through her Lovers Lane at Inwood store, one of the three area showrooms that bear her name. Here, she highlights a giant *armoire* ideal for the generously large kitchens now popular in new homes being built in the suburbs, and there, she calls attention to a much smaller *confiturier*—a jelly and jam cabinet—perfectly proportioned to draw the eye in a smaller space, such as a breakfast nook in a new Uptown condo.

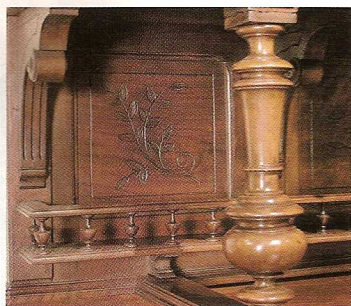
To ensure quality, Stewart personally does all of the scouting and purchasing of the French antique and European accessories she imports to the store. Stewart also operates another store in Plano, a recently-opened operation in the Design District, and a fourth locale in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. What distinguishes their offerings, she says of the work she and husband, John Stewart, put into their retail, restoration, and custom business, is their thoroughness and attention to detail as well as the wide variety of high-end furniture and accessories they carry. Their antique furniture ranges from Gothic to Second Empire in time and from Empire formal to French Provincial casual in genre, while accessories include everything from architectural, art, and florals to lighting, pottery, and tapestries.



This triple-display armoire from the 1880s epitomizes Louis XVI styling. Ribbon, laurel sprays, and floral garland overlays on the beveled full-length glazing define the arched step-front center section. It is flanked by artfully carved side panels depicting floral baskets, ribbon, and musical instruments. Bundles of wheat adorn the lower side panels, and quatrefoil gadrooning and Greek wave motifs add a special touch. \$12,596. From Inessa Stewart's

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF INESSA STEWART'S



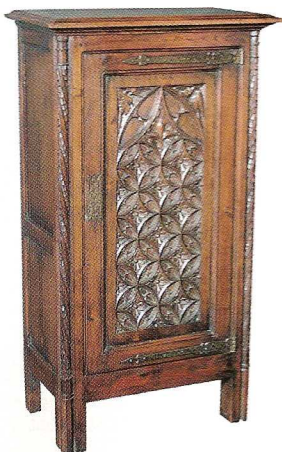


Standing 10 feet high, this Louis XVI-style buffet *a deux corps* from the 1880s is crowned by a heraldic crest set upon an arched and molded crown. Five intricately carved panels above and below depict gardening and the grape and wheat harvests. They signify both the bounty of the earth and the Last Supper. Eight tapered and fluted columns define the panels and provide support for the upper tier. The buffet surface between the top and bottom sections features a spindle-railed backsplash. \$4,496. From Inessa Stewart's



**ABOVE:** Unique Gothic hall benches like this pair don't come along very often, Inessa Stewart says. Hand-crafted from dense, old-growth French white oak, circa 1830, each boasts pierce-carved seat-backs with quatrefoils and Moorish arches. Unusual armrests resemble the flying buttresses seen on various Gothic-era buildings, and they have been newly upholstered at Inessa Stewart's. \$2,495 each.

**RIGHT:** Four feet tall, this cabinet was probably designed as a *confiturier*. Carved in the 1850s from select, old-growth French white oak, it features Gothic styling on the door facade, which is embellished with forged iron strap hinges and an escutcheon around the keyhole. The façade is flanked by spiraled corner posts. \$1,975. From Inessa Stewart's



## RESOURCES:

Inessa Stewart's, Oak Lawn at Dragon, 214-742-5800; Lovers at Inwood, 214-366-2660; Legacy at Bishop (Plano), 972-378-5100 or [www.inessa.com](http://www.inessa.com)

## Tips for Buying Antiques

**1** When building a dream home or renovating a kitchen, avoid the temptation to overdo the built-ins, which can limit your design vision. Save yourself a corner, a wall, or some space in every room where change is possible. "If you fill every square foot of a room with permanent shelves or cabinetry, there is no space left to move in a wonderful *vaisselier* to show off your pottery collection or a drop-lid desk that might be perfect for stashing shopping lists and other kitchen business," Stewart notes.

**2** Permit yourself to think in pairs again. Antique shoppers sometimes settle into the mindset that because whatever they are buying is old and rare, there can only be one of that item. "That's not necessarily so," says Stewart, who routinely scouts for and furnishes rare paired pieces for clients with special requests.

**3** Consider using an armoire or a buffet *a deux corps* (a sideboard with a top and bottom section) as a dish or pottery storage cabinet in the kitchen. It's often possible to unhinge and trade out the doors on old armoires and other pieces so that the beautifully carved or embellished exteriors can be on display along with the china and crockery.



Inessa Stewart, owner  
Inessa Stewart's  
Antiques and Interiors