

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for August ...read on page D10

*Stylish Solutions*

## Finding the Proverbial Vintage “Little Black Dress” for Your Décor

By Ann McDonald



Wing Chairs are classics. I especially like this frame because it has a curved side flange and a curved front leading edge.

It's summer and that means people all over are cleaning out, dusting off and remodeling. Even businesses take time during the slower summer months to clear out storage areas, and tidy up. How do I know? We get called for design solutions during the summer months. It finally dawned on me: People



Photos courtesy Couture Chateau LLC

are clearing the decks and then our phone rings! Garage sales, tag sales and all manner of scouting takes place as clients and friends look for vintage, antique and unique pieces to either streamline from, or infuse into, their interior designs from homes to offices.

This month's stylish suburbanite tip? Pick up

pieces that work into an already established look in our homes: I call it “the little black dress” approach.

Just like building a wardrobe, designing a home takes forethought. One of the best preparations is to have a good understanding of what you need and why, especially if you find yourself out and about. If not, you will end up selling next summer what you picked on a whim this summer.

My favorite tip? Go vintage.

There are perfect well-made furniture frames out there sitting under an old pieces of upholstery. My team and I are constantly on the lookout for these beauties and they come in all shapes and sizes. They can be chairs, sofas, settees, ottomans, stools ... anything that has old upholstery on it. Here's how to change that vintage find into a showstopper:

**1) Identify the type of furniture and look for classic styling and good lines, not too many squeaks or tilts.** (Note: Some squeaking and tilting may be OK and fixable with smaller repairs and pegs/screws).

Take the example of a chair. Many people like chairs that work in guest rooms and that migrate into an office for clients then move into the family room for a party. Three uses, one piece. I love that. This fits into the “Little Black Dress” type.

One example was a wing chair frame with hideous upholstery. We knew from testing for squeaks and tilts that the frame was solid and well constructed, so \$275 later, the chair was ours.

... continued on page D4