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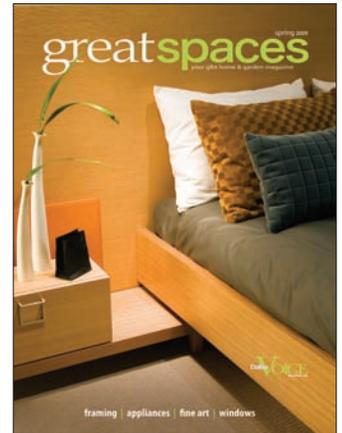
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Suitable for framing

Framing isn't just for pictures. You can preserve all kinds of memories and turn your passions into lovely decor

By David Taffet

Unique framing options, such as art floating between two panes of glass (pictured), can add value and style to a piece of art, according to Kyle King with Art & Frame Expo.

As almost everyone knows, professional framing can preserve a piece of art, keep a canvas properly stretched and enhance the beauty of the work.

But Kyle King's efforts don't begin and end at photos and watercolors. Almost *anything* can be framed. King points to four antique marionettes hanging in a shadow box on the floor of Art & Frame Expo as just one example. Musical instruments and signed sports jerseys are other items King commonly frames. And it goes on.

The oddest pieces King has worked on recently were a doggie tutu (which he fluffed and preserved in a box) and a canvas of actual penguin tracks. That work was created by birds that stepped in paint and then walked across a canvas, he says.

"The basic essence of framing is to preserve and conserve what someone has created, to protect it from the outside world," says Caroline Berlangier of Pan American Art Projects. "Lots of artists are making the decision not to frame and particularly in a home, that's an issue."

Berlangier recommends a professional framer to offer a variety of options from floating to matting and to use the proper materials.

Some customers come into King's store knowing exactly what they want. But he often takes their pulse, interviewing those without a definite idea of what they want — and for what purpose.

"Some people want it framed for the piece. Some people want it framed for the room it will go in. 'What's your decor? What's your wall color?'" he asks.

For more contemporary art, he usually begins with a modern design. King's personal preference is a black frame with clean lines. Ornate framing, usually in gold or wood tones, may better accent more traditional works.

He might recommend a selection of elaborately carved white frames for a baby's room to contrast with a darker wall or simply as a compliment to the particular work. A selection of colorful metal frames, he says, works well for posters, for a playroom or for a child's artistic creation.

Art & Frame's Christine Chan says some people who are having items professionally framed for the first time tend to overdo it. She warns, "Don't make it too busy."

King agrees. "I don't like more than two mattes."

Matting serves a number of functions. The matte may pull out a color in the piece you would not have noticed or it may serve as an accent. They serve as a transition from the frame to the art and may create a relationship between your home and the work.

Some framers, King says, like layers upon layers of matting separating the frame from the art. But he likes to keep it simple.

"I try not to design anything I wouldn't want to look at myself."

There are some tricks to make a display stand out. Several pieces of similar but not identical size may work together well on a wall if they were all placed in frames that are the same size. Adjusting the interior dimensions of the matte fixes the problem.

Chan frames a surprisingly large number of mirrors for customers. While stores offer a good variety of sizes in an assortment of frames, she finds that many people spend quite a bit of time going from store to store to find the right size mirror in the right frame. For little more than retail, she says, a framer will match the other pieces in the room or the decor and cut the mirror to just right size.

It's hard to generalize about pricing, which varies depending on the materials, size and other

features. Wooden frames range from \$1 to \$20 per two inches. The type of wood and finish, and mattes (which can be made from linen, velvet, cardboard and other materials) can also affect price.

One thing that probably is worth the cost are materials that



genuinely preserve the piece.

"It's important to go to a framer who knows the importance of acid-free materials," Berlinger advises. She says that in addition to preservation, a talented framer will give the best advice on the many creative ways to display the

work.

Chan says proper materials are essential. Even pH-neutral materials are not necessarily acid-free and can yellow the work. "With archival materials, it should last a generation or two," she says. "To go archival doesn't cost much

more."

"We've seen pieces that have been ruined," says King, referring to art that was improperly mounted or framed without using archival materials.

But when it leaves the store, you still have to take care with the

work. Humidity shouldn't be a problem with properly framed items, King says, unless water gets directly in it. But King's final advice is simple: "Keep it out of direct sunlight."

Art & Frame Expo, 5620 Mockingbird Lane. 214-824-1214.



Photo by ARNOLD WAYNE JONES



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Floral rainbow

Rainbow Garden Club holds Earth Day plant sale to benefit ASD garden

Earth Day falls on April 22 every year, but Dallas' Rainbow Garden Club is getting a head-start with a plant sale on Sunday.

The event will feature members and other vendors offering many "tried and true" plants that grow especially well in the Texas climate, from shrubs to succulents, grasses to pond plants, perennials to herbs.

"Many of these are unique plants that are not available at most nurseries," according to Todd Smith with the RGC. Smith and other members will be on hand to offer free gardening advice.

But more than mere beautification, the sale is also a fundraiser for AIDS Services of Dallas.

ASD's campus includes the Don Ritz Memorial Garden, named after the late co-founder of



Dallas Voice. Ritz's co-founder, publisher Robert Moore, will match all plant sales dollar-for-dollar to help finance the renovation of the garden.

"Don visited ASD many times before his death and saw the great work they were doing," says Moore. Maintaining the garden is

a tribute not just to Ritz, "but to how providing a nice environment for people living with AIDS goes to the heart of client services."

Lake Cliff Park at Colorado and Zang boulevards. April 19, 11 a.m.—5 p.m. 214-803-0955. Rainbowgardenclub.com.

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Sun, sun go away

Window tinting can save on utilities, preserve furnishings and deliver a great look to a home

By Howard Lewis Russell

Dan Palya, co-owner of Alta Mere/Atwood Window Films on Lemmon, stands in front of outside windows tinted with a nano-ceramic reflective film, a cutting-edge technology that preserves views while it keeps the sun from blinding the home's occupants during the brightest part of the day.

In our sobering new economic downturn, residential window tinting, like hand-woven wool carpets or swag curtains with silk tassels, may rank as one of God's ways of saying you're making too much money. (To quote Maurice Sendak, "There must be more to life than having everything.")

However, in a sun-drenched city like Dallas, window tinting comes closer to the category of necessity than it does to last year's superfluous luxury. Furniture, carpets, draperies and artwork can all be severely compromised by sunlight, causing untold solar damage to fabrics and furnishings every year.

But it's not just protection from damaging rays. Myriad new window films available in the market today offer every conceivable benefit, from purely decorative to reinforcement protection from break-ins and even bomb blasts.

Minimally, a good tinting will keep both the heat out in the summer and add insulation in the winter, providing one's home with a moderate and consistent climate year-round — in the long run saving both energy *and* money.

Alta Mere Window Tinting/Atwood Window Films offers multiple brands of residential window films to choose from. According to Alta Mere's co-owners, Mike Gleason and Dan Palya, the top selling films "exceed expectations of discerning consumers who are increasingly concerned about comfort, aesthetics, safety and security in the home."

Security? Really? Yes. Of course tinting can control fading, reduce heat, glare and UV radiation. But products are available including "18mm-thick safety/security commercial films, specifically designed for reducing glass mitigation in the event of such destructive forces as hurricanes, tornadoes and even explosions,"

says Rick Dietel, owner and president of Amersol Commercial and Residential Window Films.

"For residential window films, the no. 1 issue is usually fading; the no. 2 issue is increased comfort level; and no. 3 is glare reduction," according to Dietel.

Ordinary window glass lets in about 70 percent of the sun's ultraviolet radiation, and though new varieties of high-performance window glass (commonly called "low-e" glazings) provide some protection, even the best of these still transmit 26 percent of damaging UV rays — still too much for sensitive silks and satins.

Not all fabrics fade at the same rate; depending upon the type of dye, method of application, fiber, finish and even color, one pillow may show wear much faster than its neighbor on your sofa. Unless you're a scientist who knows the molecular structure of dye molecules, the main thing to remember when purchasing fabrics — whether for upholstery, draperies or rugs — is that compared to manmade dyes, natural dyes fade very easily. Even in artificial light, all fabrics (no matter what their dye) fade eventually.

Artwork is also affected by UV to different degrees, depending on the media used. Watercolors, for example, are highly susceptible to UV degradation. Natural wood, when exposed to sunlight filtered through ordinary window glass, typically bleaches completely if unfinished, and wood varnishes become either yellow or darken.

Even diffused light coming in through windows facing north contains more than 60 percent of the damaging UV radiation coming in through windows facing direct sun exposure. (In fact, about the *only* home décor materials that won't noticeably fade in sunlight are wicker, driftwood,

polyresin and Plexiglas: the four interior design elements of the apocalypse.)

You could prevent fading by closing heavy curtains, of course, but tinting is meant to accent visibility. The top products installed by Alta Mere — HanitaTek, Llumar and Huper Optik — offer surprisingly effective protection. Huper Optik nanotechnology films cut out more than 99.9 percent of UV rays, and also provide "the added feature of low reflection at night so that views are not obscured," as well as affording the additional safety of reducing glass fragmentation in the event of accidental breakage, according to Palya.

In addition to light, tinting "increases up to 70 percent of the total solar heat energy rejected," Dietel says. "Best of all, the new generation of window films is only 1 to 2 percent more reflective than clear glass, making them virtually unnoticeable. Indoor houseplants thrive better as well, the reason being that window film cuts out so *much* Dallas heat. Most plants require very little sun for photosynthesis."

And for those customers desiring privacy — whether it be for a shower door application or for a garage door, or anything in between — Alta Mere offers what is known as "frost" films: decorative films with a white tint that, while allowing in light, furnish an opaque surface that adds an element of privacy.

"Any Dallas resident with an east, west or southern exposure will benefit from some sort of window tinting," Palya says. Free estimates are available, with an average cost range from \$4 per square foot of film up to \$10. Additionally, customers receive a 2009 tax credit up to 30 percent of what is spent on materials, with

See TINTING on PAGE 13



Photo by ARNOLD WAYNE JONES

Color my world... smartly

Forget avocado and beige. From fiery primary colors to classic stainless, striking appliances can make a style statement *and* add value

by Howard Lewis Russell

Stainless steel appliances, like those in the background, are timeless, but bold primary colors like a fire-engine-red dryer, are all the rage right now, says Suzie Williford.



Photo by ARNOLD WAYNE JONES

"A kitchen is the greatest investment you can make in your home," Suzie Williford says.

She should know. As the current president of the National Kitchen and Bath Association, Williford spends her career following the trends in the home décor and renovation industries.

"You make 102 percent back on any investment made in your kitchen," says Williford, who also serves as vice president of sales at Dallas' gleaming KIVA Kitchen & Bath/Jarrell Appliance Gallery showroom just north of Mockingbird at Central. "Hypothetically speaking, in a

neighborhood with 15 houses up for sale, you've automatically put yourself at the very top of the heap with a great kitchen. You elevate your home in a crowded housing market. A new stainless steel glistening kitchen makes the selling of your old home a stainless steal."

Around 2000 — just at the start of the shiny new millennium — stainless appliances really took hold of the real estate psyche and have never let go.

“Far and away, steel is now the biggest seller in kitchen appliance remodels. Following a close second comes matching panels — the trend to camouflage built-in appliances and make them disappear behind wooden panels matching your cabinetry,” Williford says.

A little further down the current evolutionary appliance trend ladder, come bright new colors: fire engine red, cobalt blue, empire green — “really strong, almost primary colors — Viking colors,” Williford calls them. “And for those who want something less monochromatic than stainless, but not so bold as fire engine, there’s graphite and biscuit; cream is still popular, too, but not as much as in the ‘90s, and not as much as steel today.”

When asked if there are any colors to avoid in new kitchens, Williford doesn’t skip a beat: “Avocado green,” she winces laughingly. “Anything retro, or evocative of the ‘70s especially, is *not* going to be a market asset when it comes to reselling your home: harvest gold, chocolate brown, turquoise, almond, white & black, even, from the ‘80s — they all had their glory days, and the glory is over.”

Doubtlessly, Williford seldom gets any argument that the 21st century has, permanently and forever, ushered in futuristic blends of bold color and metallic shades reaching far beyond pre-

vious decades’ short-lived, fickle trends for fleeting fashions and their almost built-in obsolescence guarantee.

As the majority of big-ticket-item consumers age (i.e., Baby Boomers), preferences and tastes in housewares’ colors tend to become, ironically, less conservative, not more — particularly so for appliances small enough to carry home in a box. Kitchen mixers alone now come in a phantasmagoric rainbow of such in-your-face shades as majestic yellow, satin copper, tangerine, pistachio, lavender and periwinkle, platinum pink and even baby blue. . . of all appliance color trends, blue (in any hue) is the one reliable that never goes completely out style. It is a marketplace perennial in a market changing annually.

After all, to say we’re currently in a “sluggish” housing crisis would only be selling spin on the speechless — “Aside from that, how was the play Mrs. Lincoln?” It is not remotely business as usual in the built-in appliance industry. Any home seller’s leg up is one that can’t be afforded to let slip down. In an economy hobbled, if not outright mortally maimed, it is one of the paradoxes of consumer physics that demand for top-end appliances (skyrocketing steel prices be damned) becomes ever higher a priority.

Stainless steel, premium and more expensive as it is, grows only more astonishingly popular by the day; not less.

KIVA Kitchen & Bath, 2651 Fondren Drive. 214-363-7211.

times, that sounds more and more like a darned good investment.

Alta Mere Window Tinting/ Atwood Window Films, 4302 Lemmon Ave. 214-521-7477. Altamedallas.com.

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TINTING

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a cap of \$1,500.” “The average 2009 customer will save anywhere from at least \$200 to \$500,” he says.

And during tough economic



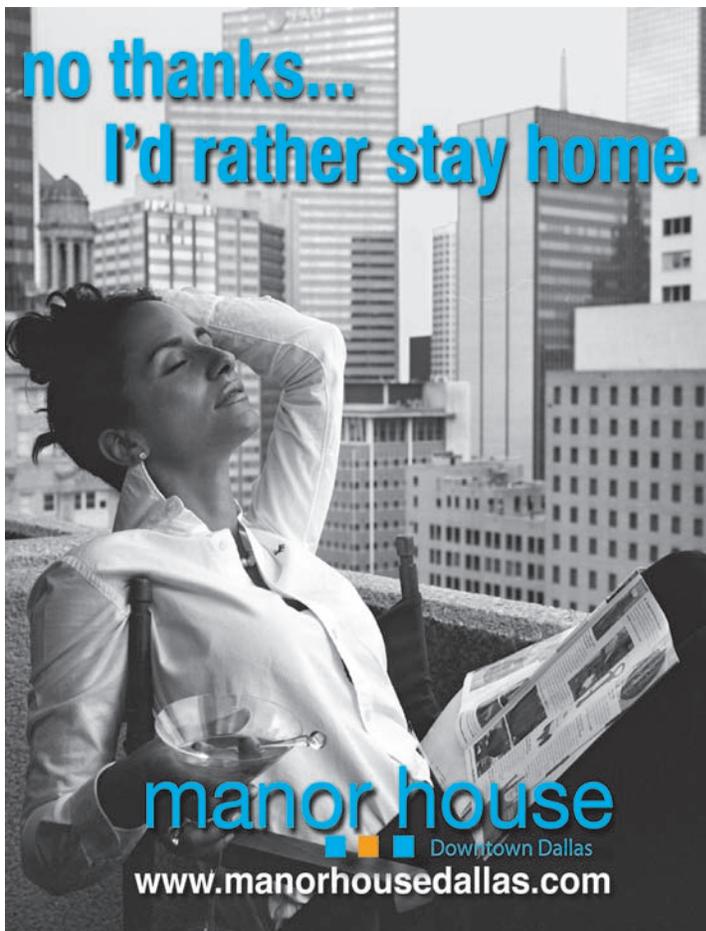
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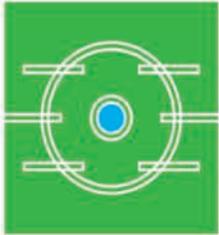
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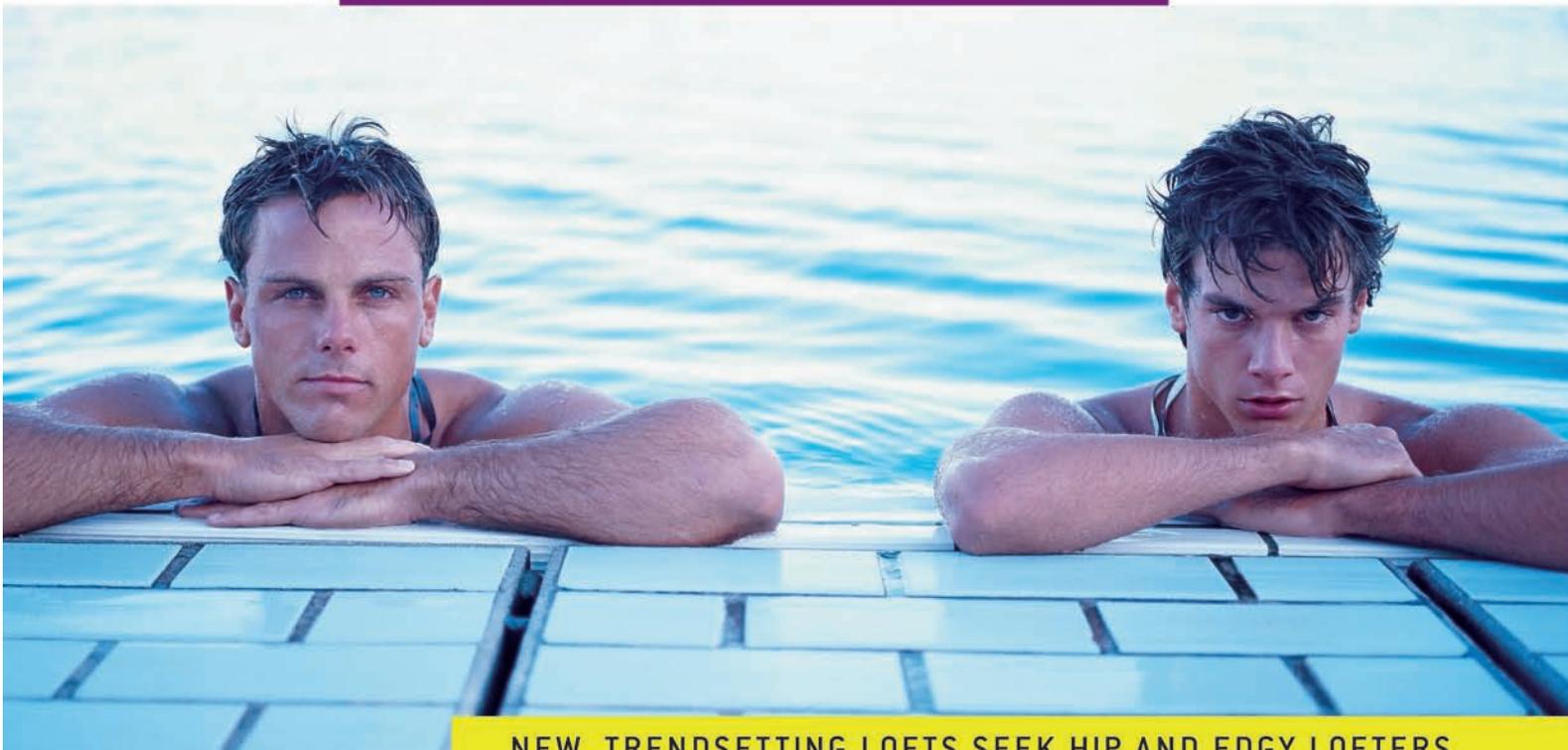
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Art for art's sake? Hardly

There has never been a better time to buy fine art for the home — both for its decorative value and as an investment

By David Taffet



In less than a decade, Dragon Street has become gallery central in Dallas. Scot Presley with Craighead Green Gallery says this is an ideal time to invest in decorative art, from paintings to sculptures.

If you want to do your part to get the economy rolling again but don't want to blow your money, there is a practical solution — even though it may not sound too practical.

Now may just be the best time to buy fine art for your home.

"People are home more. They're nesting more, not spending as much for entertainment," says Scot Presley of gay-owned Craighead Green Gallery along Dragon Street, a bastion of fine art purveyors. "This happened after 9/11, too — the home becomes a more important place to be. [People] want to make their home a happier place with art and design."

Caroline Berlinger of Pan

American Art Projects agrees. As evidence, she notes that while many print media are struggling in the economy, "home and garden magazines are doing well."

Buying art for the home begins with finding an artist you particularly like or an art gallery you find particularly appealing. Andrew Sie of Light & Sie Gallery on Leslie Street says he notices a fear factor when people come into a gallery. "People for the most part are intimidated by it," he says. There's no reason to feel that way, if you do just a little research.

Presley advises new collectors to begin by wandering through the Dallas Museum of Art or spending time at the Nasher Sculpture Center. Raymond

Nasher's collection began in the early 1950s with a few pieces he bought for his home, and most of the items there started as household decor. Explore the three art museums in Fort Worth and make note of works that particularly catch your eye.

Once you arrive upon a style you find appealing, head over to Dallas' *other* art districts. Over the last few years, more than 50 galleries have opened or relocated to Dragon Street and along and on the side streets off the Industrial Boulevard corridor. Deep Ellum also boasts a concentration of galleries.

Most galleries specialize. Banks Fine Art features representational art; the Craighead Green,



Photo by ARNOLD WAYNE JONES

Conduit and Holly Johnson galleries represent contemporary artists; Barry Whistler focuses on Texas artists while Pan American Art Projects targets art of the Americas.

Video art is one of Light & Sie's specialties. "The collector who buys video is adventurous and sees no boundaries. They don't have to have a trophy hanging on the wall," says Sie, calling video "the final frontier" in art.

Presley says a gallery gives a collector "a place to learn what they like." He says he often walks through Craighead Green with a first-time art buyer to see what interests them. He asks what their house is like, if they like representational or abstract work, what

colors attract them, if they've considered wall sculpture. While most new buyers gravitate toward more traditional forms of art such as painting on canvas or framed works on paper, Presley says, "three-dimensional work is a great surprise for people. People begin to think out of the box when they see wall sculpture."

Art is also a great investment and a gallery will help a collector invest wisely. Exhibits at Light & Sie, such as a show in March of "Vanity Fair" photographer Todd Eberle's large format prints, tend to feature artists with a history of museum exhibitions. Sie also addresses the price intimidation of shopping in a gallery. "Tell me

See FINE ART on PAGE 22

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Another man's treasures

At consignment stores like Dulce, budding style mavens can discover gently-used accessories at bargain prices

By Steven Lindsey

The current financial situation has many of us bending down to pick up pennies in the parking lot and ordering "water with lemon" on the rare occasions when go out to restaurants for the early-bird, buy-one-get-one special. But that doesn't mean we've all lost our sense of style and the inherent desire for something new. (As I always say when it comes time for the Scouts or nuns or three-legged goat children to pick up donations for their canned food drive, just because the recipients are needy doesn't mean they don't have taste buds. Opt for a nice hearty soup over the five-year-old can of sauerkraut that's been gathering dust on your pantry shelf.)

For those of us who are a little poorer this year than normal, or even for those who are riding this whole recession like a harmless kiddie ride in front of Wal-Mart, we can all praise that little one-stop shop where you can not only feed your redecorating needs but actually make a little extra money for more important things like, say, something to eat besides fermented cabbage in a can.

Ladies and lady-like gentlemen, welcome to the joys of consignment shopping (or selling) for the home.

Simon Veeren and Jorge Fernandez, owners of Dulce Interior Consignment Showplace

on Oak Lawn Avenue, are seeing an increase in both buyers looking to get more banquette for their buck and consignors seeking out ways to bring in extra cash.

For people in the market for furniture, accessories and art, many of which are one-of-a-kind, a consignment store can be a bargain-hunter's dream come true. Items aren't necessarily inexpensive, but for the quality of the "gently owned" merchandise, the savings can be significant. In many cases, Fernandez says, customers can purchase items at 50 percent or more off regular retail.

"We carry an eclectic variety of items: antiques, mid-century modern, vintage and contemporary pieces, all carefully selected," Fernandez says. And you will definitely find items that aren't going to be on the floor at any of the big chain furniture stores.

Among the most unusual? "A sculpture made of nails welded together," he says. "Also a decapitated sculpture of a man on his knees with his hands back, in handcuffs, which is still available."

But if headless S&M *objets d'art* aren't your cup of tea, there are plenty of classic treasures to be found on consignment, especially if you're looking to find pieces from specific decades. Every time I walk into a place like Dulce, I

have fantasies of redoing everything in '60s mod because they always have so many great chairs, tables and those really cool standing ashtrays that make me actually consider taking up smoking. Then something else catches my eye and it's off to another section of the store, new vices to dream about.

If you find yourself on the other side of the consignment equation, then it's important to research stores before giving them your merchandise. Most operations, like Dulce, keep half of the sale price. But there are others who take more, so do your homework. Fernandez also advises never to do business with a consignment place that won't issue a written agreement detailing everything regarding the transaction of merchandise and money.

At Dulce, they're very selective about the merchandise they carry and consignors go through a process very similar to online dating. (*Ottomanhunt.net* anyone?)

"First thing is to send us a picture of the item with a description; especially if it is a large item," Fernandez says. "With the picture we will be able to determine if we have the right market for it. It is very important the pieces are cleaned, have no stains or pet hair," he adds.

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seat connection, it's put on the showroom floor for three months. Prices are discounted after the first month in a more aggressive attempt to move the merchandise, so the more unique or sought-after your items, the more likely you'll be able to get them sold in the first

month. To be sure, the cash isn't as immediate as throwing an item out on your front lawn for a quickie yard sale, but the payoff will most certainly be bigger if you have the time and patience to display your furnishings at a con-

ONE-STOP SHOPPING: Jorge Fernandez says a consignment store like Dulce Interior can offer everything from antiques to mid-century modern furnishings in a single showroom.

signment store. The only trick is not walking out with something different once you pick up your check. But that's the circle of life in the consignment

world. Two things out, three things back in. *Dulce Interior Consignment Showplace, 2914 Oak Lawn Ave. 214-219-5656.*

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FINE ART

Continued from Page 17

your price range and I'll show you things in your range," he says.

"Art is not like the stock market," Berlander says. "It doesn't go up and down. It might go to auction and not sell, but the art holds its value."

And while art retains value even during financial downturns, cashing in on that investment takes some creativity as well. Auctions, specialists in that artist or art consultants often must be employed to resell a work at its top value. Auction Web sites including eBay as well as sites that specialize in fine art have gained in popularity as ways to sell.

"Now isn't the best time to sell," Berlander warns, but soft markets are great times to buy.

For investors, she recommends emerging and mid-career artists

whose work will increase in worth as their careers develop as a great value.

Presley describes art for the home as an emotional investment as well — "an extension of your own personality and style. When you're living with art, you're living with ideas. It becomes part of the vocabulary of your life."

Whether the artist is represented in corporate or museum collections, buying art for the home is very personal. The right piece properly displayed in a room should always start a conversation among guests. Just seeing the work everyday, should give its owner joy — the best addition to any household, Presley says.

When he's helping choose a piece of art for himself, for a first-time buyer for a new home or a long-time collector, Presley says, "I want to love it first of all. Do you love it? Can you afford it? Then you should have it."

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