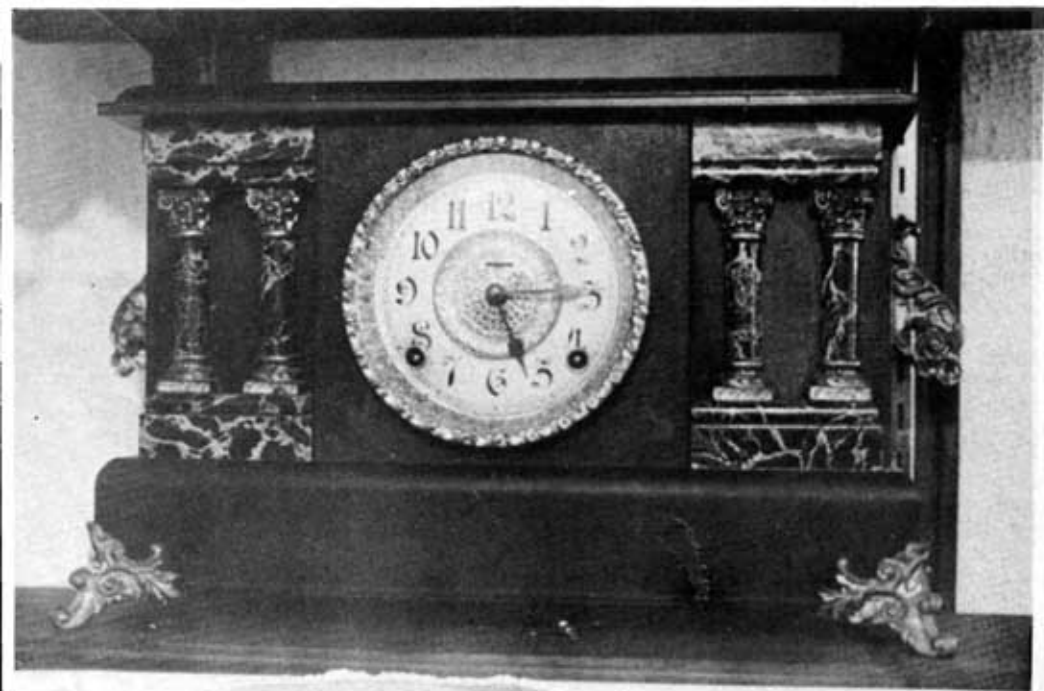


GREAT HOMES

# DECORATING WITH MEANING (AND FUN!)



Ornate mantel clock comes from Cleo Boschee's family, his great-grandfather, George Bohle, who lived in Artas, South Dakota. The Boschee home incorporates many pieces of older furniture from this area, giving each room interesting sentimental and artistic meaning.

**T**HE CLEO AND JOAN BOSCHEE HOME IN WISHEK, NORTH DAKOTA, IS THE once colorful house which was earlier a showplace—on the outside. Every single board of the house's exterior was painted a different color!

The house was so striking that it was not altogether uncommon for a person who had not been to Wishek for a couple of weeks to take extra time just to drive by the "rainbow house" to see if something new had been painted.

When the Boschees bought the colorful house in 1975, they painted it a respectable white.

Nevertheless, it remains a showpiece.

This time, however, it is the interior which brings admiring comments of approval.

The intriguing quality about the house now is that it is a fascinating repository of antiques from North and South Dakota.

Both Joan and Cleo prefer antiques which have a particular meaning from the Dakotas, or from a trip the Boschees have made.

Joan says she loves to see a table or chair, for example, and think to herself that she received it from Mrs. So-and-so. In that way, her furniture acquires a special meaning for them. Many of their antiques were purchased from relatives or former neighbors—and Joan particularly savors this identification with people she has known well in the past.

By her kitchen wall, a plaque summarizes her well: WARNING—ANTIQUÉ POX! VERY CONTAGIOUS!

"That's my philosophy," laughed Joan, pointing to the sign.

Cleo caught the antique pox somewhat later. His typical response to something Joan would haul home was "What do you want with this old junk?!"

Now he is as enthusiastic about collecting just as much as Joan is.

"I like the wood," he explains.

One of their prize possessions extols the exquisite beauty which fine wood offers. It is a writing table which the Boschees bought in Sorrento, Italy. The desk stands in



Elaborately carved oak china cupboard was purchased at the Jacob Schlecht auction in Kulm, North Dakota. Mirror at top reflects some of Joan's porcelain and crystal collection. On the shelves below are her many fine pieces of Normandie depression china.



**TOP PHOTO, LEFT:**

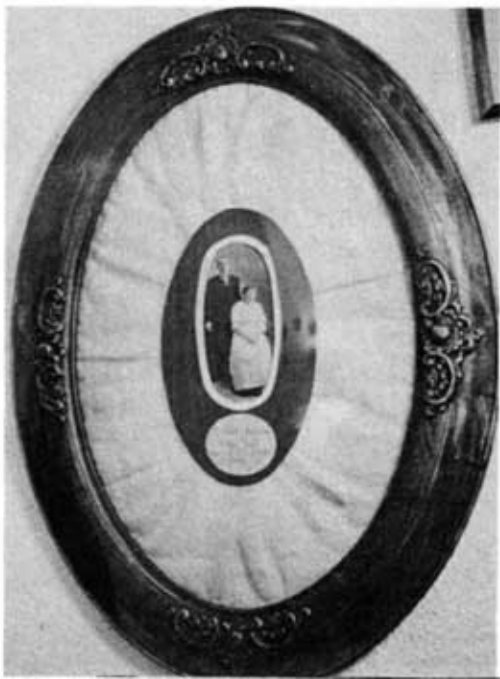
Cleo points out the combination dresser and writing desk made by his great-grandfather, George Bohle. Bohle, who came from Russia, was an esteemed cabinet-maker in this area, noted for the artistic precision work he could produce with a minimum of tools. Intricate prairie flower designs and trim enhance this desk. Everything was done without electric tools. Bohle probably used hand tools to get the grooves, and turning lathes for the trim. Great-Grandmother Bohle's blue coffee-pot graces the top of the cupboard (at left).

**TOP PHOTO, RIGHT:**

Wood icebox now stores Joan's linens and other materials for the dining room. When students from the Wishek school visit her house, Joan tells them to find new uses for old family keepsakes when they decorate their own homes.

**BOTTOM PHOTO:**

Wedding picture of Cleo's grandparents, Edward and Hilda Koeplin, has the bride's lace from her wedding gown framing the portrait.



the living room. A lustrous sheen glows from its many coats of lacquer. Delicately cut pieces of inlaid fruitwood form intricate patterns of scrolls and other designs, which cover all the desk's surfaces, even the back side. The writing table has a matching chair too.

Both the living room and dining room walls are enhanced by prints of Bismarck artist, Gary Miller.

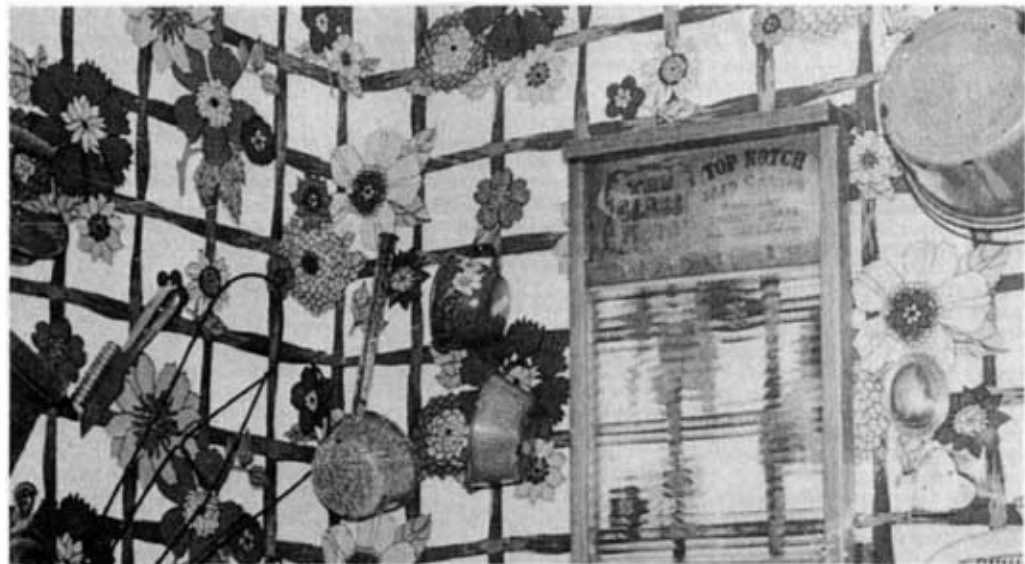
The Boschees already own five Miller prints. They especially like Miller's North Dakota topics—and the precision and accuracy with which he paints his subject-matter.

"You can take a magnifying glass, and see the detail Miller has put into the painting. He is that precise," said Joan.

The Miller paintings blend exceptionally well with the interesting variety of Dakota furniture.

In the living room, for instance, is a 100-year-old mantel clock which once belonged to Cleo's

Bright, cheerful, boldly patterned wallpaper sparkles in the kitchen. Walls are decorated with six different kinds of rolling pins and an extensive variety of old kitchen utensils like cabbage cutters and corn-from-corncob removers. A fascinating room!





Most of the antiques the Bosches own are left in their original condition, like this old oak dresser. Wash basin and pitcher (holding dried hydrangeas) was Cleo's grandmother's. Joan is re-finishing a chair which once belonged to her grandmother.

Some of Joan's collection of gray granite strainers are novel decorations on one of the den rooms in the basement. The old sewing machine once belonged to Cleo's grandmother; Joan plans to restore it.

great-grandfather, George Bohle, from Artas, South Dakota. The clock has bells, and dongs every one-half hour. It needs only to be wound up every seven days.

Another family heirloom is from Joan's grandmother, Katherina Brosy, who lived in Wishek. It is a table once used to display houseplants. One of the table's interesting features is its claw legs. Claw-leg tables are becoming increasingly rare, making it doubly special to the Boschees besides its family importance.

Their cheerful living room, decorated in golds and rusts, also boasts other family mementos.

Hanging on one of the corner

walls is an old wedding photograph of Cleo's grandparents, Edward and Hilda Koepplin, who farmed in the Lehr, North Dakota, area. Framing the photo are pieces of lace from Hilda's wedding gown.

Another conversation piece in the living room is an old spinning wheel, still in working condition. One of the pegs was broken, but Ida Schultz of Wishek cleverly whittled a new one. Raw wool (from Ida Schultz's sheep) hangs on one of the spinning wheel's parts.

Displayed in a beautiful china cupboard bought at the Jacob Schlecht auction in Kulm, North

Dakota, is Joan's collection of depression glassware.

There are more than 40 different kinds of depression china in existence, Joan explains. Her pattern is the rare Normandie (or sometimes labeled Bouquet and Lattice). It is a lovely pink—and very difficult to find.

Normandie used to be a common pattern in the Wishek area. People here usually bought it as a grocery store premium, relates Joan.

But the pattern has, for the most part, disappeared in this region—and Joan has spent many hours trying to trace it down elsewhere through dealers in other parts of the nation.

Joan's original depression china

collection began when she bought a six-place setting which once belonged to Cleo's grandmother. Joan remembers paying only 15 cents per plate (a price she would dearly love to repeat for some of her recent purchases)!

She now has a 10-place setting consisting of luncheon plates, cups and saucers, sherbert dishes, salad plates, and others.

To show how prices have skyrocketed, a glass with no or few flaws can cost as much as \$25, depending on the pattern.

The steep prices for depression glassware is ironic, adds Joan. It was originally designed for lower- and middle-income families. The china was made of cheap colored glass, which was pressed in special molds and which could be manufactured inexpensively in large numbers.

But since the glass was of poor quality, it could be broken easily, hence its rarity today.

Depression glassware caught on as a nostalgia item about 30 years ago, and collectors have been combing auctions and small antique shops ever since.

Another difficult-to-obtain pattern is a parrot design, adds Joan. "It was made only for one year, and is very rare," she said.

Some patterns are being reproduced, and so one has to be careful to distinguish between newer copies, she cautioned.

Additional interesting glassware is a Shirley Temple pitcher from the 1930s. Like the depression china, Joan said, the Shirley Temple glassware was originally intended to be an inexpensive item, but its demand and sentimental attachment have increased its value.

"The better quality of the [child actress's] facial expression, the more costly it is," said Joan.

Some of the pictures of Shirley Temple are easily washed off, again indicating that the manufacturers never intended their products to be popular over an extended period of time.

It is fascinating to view other parts of the Boschee house. Clever



This room in the basement is being made into a charming, warm den. Two walls were recently done over with rocks from South Dakota. The china cupboard with fancy mirrors adds elegant touch. In other parts of the room, Cleo has Indian hammerheads sitting by wood-burning stove. Old metal signs like "Wishek News Downstairs" (the name of an early newspaper in Wishek) and "Wishek Cleaners" provide further local history to the furnishings.



Joan particularly appreciates the spinning wheel which stands in a corner of her living room because it was once regularly used in the Wishek area. One part of it was broken, but a friend, Ida Schultz, repaired it herself by whittling a new piece of wood so that the spinning wheel now works as good as ever. Raw wool (from Ida Schultz's sheep) hangs from one of the wheel's parts.



Writing desk was made in Italy when Boschees were on a European trip. The desk's delicate scroll patterns are all designed from miniature pieces of inlaid wood of various hues. Many layers of lacquer give the wood a lustrous sheen.

The Boschees have been remodeling their house in different stages, not all at one time. It takes years to collect antiques, but it is interesting, educational—and fun, they say.

## Old Galvanized Tin Breadboxes Find New Uses As Quaint Storage Places



Dining room is enhanced by Gary Miller prints and numerous ingenious wall arrangements. Tablecloth with gold wheat pattern was made by Joan herself.

arrangements from the simplest of materials prove that good taste and smart decorating savvy need not be expensive.

For example, one of the hallway walls is decorated with a rustic arrangement of three or four short strands of old barbed wire!

Other innovative uses:

- Old crocks, some found in junk yards, now serve as efficient, charming places to hold magazines and newspapers.

- Some weathered corraling (left in its original beautiful gray) functions admirably as shelving in Cleo's office. (Joan obtained the discarded weathered lumber from her mother's farm.)

- Two battered 1942 license plates (the years both Cleo and Joan were born) are part of an interesting wall arrangement.

The important thing to remember in decorating, Joan seems to say, is to be original, be yourself—and let your sense of humor show.

Guests visiting the Boschee home quickly surmise that Cleo and Joan's personalities, interests, and talents are integral parts of their furnishings. It is a delight to let one's eyes rove through the rooms, each more unique and stimulating than the last.

That is what makes the Boschee house one of the great homes of this region. □