

# Lady



## AND THE

Homeowner Jen Auerbach sits surrounded by photos of loved ones in tramp art frames. The one-of-a-kind art form is crafted from pieces of old cigar boxes, and its detail and complexity is what appeals most to husband Dan, a folk art enthusiast.

# TRAMP ART

What do you get when a stylish, “maximalist” British expat and a rock star with a passed-down passion for antiques live under one roof? A harmonious medley of velvety finishes and vintage finds that hits a perfectly soulful and storied note. Let ‘em show you around.



### “THAT FLAG SHOULD BE IN A MUSEUM.”

Found in New England, an 1870s American flag (hung this way to protect the delicate hand-stitching on the other side) greets all who enter the Nashville home. The 38 stars are a telltale sign of its age and rarity. “It should absolutely be in a museum,” says Jen of the star-spangled showpiece that remained relevant for only 13 years (when Colorado became the 38th state and just before the Dakotas were added). It’s flanked by a pair of Stars of David—more 1920s tramp art (see caption; left). The animal bench came from a 1930s western Pennsylvania dance school, and the antique ship light provides a pop of patina overhead. Most of the antique rugs in the house were sourced from Nashville’s Relic Home ([relic-home.com](http://relic-home.com)). “Our aesthetic, with all the wood and metals, can be harsh,” says Jen. “To give rooms a lived-in feeling, you need soft fabrics and texture.” While not vintage, son Early’s toy car ([arcade-nashville.com](http://arcade-nashville.com)) has retro charm.

# A

visit to the Nashville home of Jen and Dan Auerbach is a bit like touring a museum full of highly sought-after folk art and furniture—but instead of velvet ropes, you'll find velvet curtains. "We've very much rebelled against a buttoned-up, hands-

off environment," says Jen, co-founder of Clary Collection ([clarycollection.com](http://clarycollection.com)), an organic skin-care line. As the mother of 3½-year-old Early, she shirks all pretense, though many of the items in the Auerbach home could, in fact, be in a museum. Her husband, Dan, one half of the rock duo The Black Keys, is a huge collector of tramp art (a subgenre of folk art that includes pieces large and small made from old cigar boxes and shipping crates). He also has a soft spot for unique rustic furniture and primitive Adirondack pieces. These passions predate fame and fortune. As the son of two Akron, Ohio,

antiques dealers, Dan spent his summers learning the trade at big-time shows in Brimfield, MA, and Springfield, OH (about three hours from Akron).

When the couple purchased an early 20th-century Georgian Revival in 2014, they spent a year on renovations. (Fun fact: Minnie Pearl honed her signature tennis serve—"The Pearl Drop"—on the home's tennis court.) The new backdrop set the stage for Dan's personal treasure trove. But Jen, also the daughter of antiques collectors, added her spin to the interiors, too. "I love old things as well, but I lean toward a plush European look with a smidge of industrial and mid-century for good measure," she says. Velvet curtains, along with feminine furniture, faded rugs, and textured wallpapers, add softness to the assortment.

While the decor is ever-evolving (picks and paint colors are on constant rotation), a simple rule keeps their design scheme in harmony: "Everything in our house has to be something that no one else has," says Jen. "We like unique, and we like eccentric. It's maybe a bit nutty, but it's a look that is ours and only ours."

## “

*on the dining room*  
**"THE CABINET IS A 1900s COUNTRY STORE DISPLAY."**

Boasting its original beveled-glass fronts, the impressive piece is home to all manner of treasures—both his and hers. Dan fell in love with the circa 1890s leather medical bag at the Brimfield Antique Show. The 1920 fishing creel, crafted from birch and twigs, is another Dan find. The late 1800s gold-framed landscape is a Jen favorite, as it reminds her of the time she lived in Paris. The folk art painted boat, carved from cedar, is marked "January 11, 1941." Its maker is unknown. "Most folk art is anonymous, made by people with an honest impulse to create," says Jen. Striped Lindqvist Motala chairs (found on [1stdibs.com](http://1stdibs.com)) lend midcentury charm to the warm wood table.



Reseda Green  
 Sherwin-Williams

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*on the kitchen*  
**"THE 1920s PENDANTS WERE SOURCED FROM FOUR STATES."**

Dan searched far and wide for the 1920s pendant lights. "He found each one separately on the internet, and they match beautifully," says Jen. The couple unearthed the room's original brick during the renovation. While the marble-topped island is new, the couple asked architect Nick Dryden ([daad-group.com](http://daad-group.com)) to think "old-country style" for the custom base. Dan found the green barstools while on tour. In lieu of upper cabinets, a pair of old signs—"Chicken Dinners," sourced from noted folk art dealer Elizabeth Schaaf ([folkartisans.com](http://folkartisans.com)) and 1930s cantaloupe art advertising an Iowa fruit store—adorn the walls.



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on the music room  
“EVEN THE  
WALLPAPER IS PERIOD  
APPROPRIATE.”

Dan's music room (left) is awash in color thanks to a 1900s Art Nouveau tulip motif wallcovering (a reproduction printed on heavy-weight historic paper; *aestheticinteriors.com*). The vintage parasol light fixture and a bold antique rug reinforce the layered warmth. An 1890s Adirondack mirror complements the home's original fireplace mantel. Dan's antiques dealer father, Chuck, found the MLK painting (below) in the remains of a shuttered psychiatric hospital in northern Ohio. It hangs above an original 1960s Wurlitzer piano (complete with original red paint) found in an Ohio music shop (*mikesmusicohio.com*). Dan had a stipulation that all the paint colors in the house be "period correct," so after an exhaustive Pinterest search, they chose this soft blue shade.

A 1970s-era school project crafted from bubble-gum wrappers hangs above a prized folk art "twig table" by Rev. Ben Davis (born 1876), an ordained Southern Baptist minister and skilled carpenter.



Bluebird Feather  
Sherwin-Williams



Dan found the bean collage of the Statue of Liberty on eBay for \$30!



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on the sunroom  
“IT'S AN ODE TO THE  
ADIRONDACKS.”

Dan spent numerous summers in northeastern New York and has a real love for iconic woven Adirondack rockers, including his early 20th-century Lee Fountain-designed chairs made of yellow birch and woven ash-splint backs and seats. The sun-dappled space is also home to a large 19th-century tramp art washstand by Erastus Hanor, a milkman in Cherry Valley, New York, who collected empty cigar boxes on his delivery route. It's estimated that this piece is crafted from some 500 boxes! The mantel is lined with an assortment of early 1900s rustic chip-carved boxes, which Dan found at the Adirondack Mountains Antiques Show at Blue Mountain Lake. Chartreuse velvet draperies add a hint of English glamour.



*on the master bedroom*

**“DAN ASKED,  
‘WHERE ARE YOU  
PUTTING THAT?’ ”**

Jen joined Dan on four years ago and came across the 1930s window [above the bed] during an antiquing excursion. “Dan asked, ‘Where are you putting that thing?’ I said, ‘A wall.’ He shook his head, but once it was installed as a pass-through window on the wall separating the bedroom and bath, he apologized—kind of,” says Jen. She’s fond of a folk art shelf that’s perfect for flower displays. Dan found the trunk in South America. They also replaced a king-sized bed with a 1900s queen. Says Jen, “Unless you’re in the NBA, you don’t need a king.”



*on the master bath*

**“A FOLK ART  
ANGEL KEEPS WATCH  
OVER THE TUB.”**

Dan’s dad found the late 19th-century piece in Ohio. Many of the other old pieces, including the needlepoint chair and artwork, were sourced locally from Nashville’s GasLamp Antiques ([gaslampantiques.com](http://gaslampantiques.com)). Jen refers to the gold-footed vintage-inspired tub ([kennypipe.com](http://kennypipe.com)) as “Versace” because of “how fancy she is.” The graphic tile (Tulum; [cementtileshop.com](http://cementtileshop.com)) is one of several tiled floors in the home. A healthy array of plants adds life to the space. “The whole aesthetic of my [skin-care] company is about being green, so I’m also drawn to anything green,” says Jen, referencing both plants and paint.



*on the barn*

**“THE 1950s  
PINK SOFA WAS  
STILL WRAPPED  
IN PLASTIC!”**

The backyard barn once housed Dan’s extensive motorcycle collection...until entrepreneurial Jen cleverly concocted a plan to turn it into her own space. “I phoned the Lane Motor Museum in town and asked, ‘Do you want to do a Dan Auerbach exhibition?’ ” says Jen. Once the bikes were gone, she added feminine touches like a portrait by Nashville artist Buddy Jackson ([buddyjackson.co](http://buddyjackson.co)) and vintage seating, including a pristine pink sofa. Says Jen, “The lady who sold it to me received it as a wedding gift in the 1950s. She’d hated it, so she had never even removed the plastic.” The lamp is a converted 1920s antique movie camera tripod. Antique apothecary cabinets came from a New York university science lab.

Shamrock  
Sherwin-Williams

