



French farmhouse 'Versailles' table in French oak



18th century poplar console conversion with 'Pulley' standard lamp

CLASSIC & CONTEMPORARY

harmony in fusion

Sometimes think that there is large confusion over what should be a small matter. What do I mean? Many think the bringing together of, what at first seem, foreign elements – the classical and the contemporary – will always be a tricky marriage. I don't believe it has to be. Why should the antique and the modern keep their distance when, if brought together sympathetically, they can prove the best of friends? It should not be necessary for the modern home to be devoid of antiques or classic furniture. For me, the key to achieving harmony and sympathy between classic and modern elements is to consider the task as one of adding an accent or a highlight, or providing a counterpoint to the prevailing decorative theme. In this light, it then becomes a simple thing of finding the right element(s) to serve this function(s) for the look of your home, room, or even a single corner or wall area.

CHOOSING WHAT WORKS

If you were to visit the new home of Sally Beresford/French Farmhouse on the Mount Ashby Estate Winery in Moss Vale and step into our historic showroom, you would find examples of the principles of which I've been talking.

One of our specialties is lighting: floor, table, pendant, and chandeliers. Our range extends across centuries and styles, from 18th century ornate chandeliers to repurposed cloche and industrial paraphernalia to contemporary table and standard lamps.

The key to styling our showroom is the same as that for styling your home: accent and counterpoint. If I am to pair one of our antique pieces with one of our modern table or standard lamps, first I consider which element is to provide the accent. A 17th century, William and Mary walnut chest of drawers is obviously going to be the feature element when paired with a lamp. But consider the piece as a whole; not simply the size, but the timber and the details of inlay, escutcheons, handles, mouldings, and so on.

Informed by these aspects of the feature piece, and thinking in terms of accenting or offsetting these, I would be inclined to avoid anything fussy or overly detailed, instead selecting a piece that gives balance by way of simplicity and strength of design. From our collection I would choose either the 'Button'

or 'Adelaide' table lamps; and for a standard lamp, I would be so bold as to select the 'Pulley' or 'Epinal'. You will see what I mean if you glance at the example image; and if you want to familiarise yourself with the other suggested lamps, drop by our website at www.sallyberesford.com.au.

If you take something away from this example, it should be the application of sympathetic evaluation and accenting/counterpointing the elements.

GUIDED BY TRADITION

On a larger scale, I think the blending of traditional furniture and decorative pieces with the design scheme of the modern home can be understood in a simpler way. All that is modern has been derived, in some way, from all that came before, from all of tradition. The same design principles found in early furniture, have been carried over and developed on by contemporary innovators; line, shape, tone, texture, etc. The best of these have survived, as is the case with raw materials. The durability, versatility, and beautiful grain structures of oak and walnut have seen both these timbers achieve a distinction above other varieties like cedar and mahogany. Their ability to carry a purer tone, without the intrusion of the overt red tint of both mahogany and cedar, makes them perfect for integration into the modern home.

Our bespoke range of hand-crafted French farmhouse tables is just such a synthesis of traditional aesthetics, design, and construction. Reproducing the style, construction, and authentic antique 'look' for our tables, is a modern devotion to tradition. But, this does not limit a French farmhouse table to a home filled only with 'brown' furniture. I am thinking, specifically, of one of our clients who wanted a grand dining table for her quintessentially modern home: hard edges and straight lines, white walls, glass and stainless steel.

The benefits of introducing one of our dining tables into her home were manifold. First, the table (our French oak 'Versailles' pedestal table) served as the most distinctive accent to the dominant design scheme, and in so doing, allowed for a better appreciation of the modern details. Second, the table lent a rustic warmth to an otherwise clean and precise environment and, moreover, softened the space, resulting in a

more welcoming setting for the client and her dinner guests. To me, that is the true measure of successful integration of modern and traditional elements: a welcoming home.

I hope these examples have gone some small way toward illustrating the ideas I introduced at the opening of this article.

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William & Mary chest with 'Adelaide Nickel' table lamp



Early Georgian low dresser with modern French painted clock