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# FOUND IN OLD BRAESWOOD

STORY BY JONI WEBB

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK THOMPSON

Old Braeswood, the classic Houston neighborhood where Ruth Davis lives, is distinguished by its graceful curving streets, tall Live Oak trees, and gracious mansions built by some of the finest architects such as Paul Lusk, Howard Barnstone, Carl Malrey, and Joseph Finger. Originally planned as a country club district in rural River Oaks, the houses range from Tudors and Colonial Revivals to Georgians and Ranches.

Davis (who grew up on a Mississippi farm) and her husband Neil live in one of the original 1990s houses, built with a traditional facade. One expects the interiors will also be traditional. But upon entering the house, all such assumptions fly out the window. Instead, an industrial style round table greets you at the door, along with a modern interior flanked by an array of contemporary art work. Davis, the co-owner of *Found for the Home*, is joined today by her business partner, Aaron Rambo.

The two are adorable together, holding each other's sentences while laughing and reminiscing. When one doesn't know the answer to a question, they look to the other for clarification. Davis and Rambo's friendship is honest and warm and it's obvious how close they are when Davis calls Rambo her adopted son. Rambo calls himself her interior designer.

The two met when Rambo, then a florist/event planner, arranged the flowers for a party Davis was hosting.

She had just moved into her Old Braeswood home and was contemplating buying more framed antique prints to add to her collection.

Rambo stopped by before the event to bluff up the house and the rest, as they say, is history. He refused to let Davis buy more of the antique prints. Instead, he gently, but firmly, introduced her to the world of contemporary art.

Catching the bug, Ruth found herself taking a course in art history at Glassell, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston art school. Hungry for more knowledge, she bought all the books on modern art she could by her hands on, and with Rambo's guidance, started a serious collection of contemporary art. Rambo then helped Davis furnish her house to showcase the new art to its best advantage — the interiors are a quiet canvas, monochromatic and heavy on linen slipcovers and seagrass.

Soon after Rambo became Davis' interior designer and best friend, they decided to open a design shop. Davis would be business brains, while Rambo would handle the creative side. Davis' husband Neil would be a third, silent partner. *Found for the Home* was launched after the two discovered a former factory on Barlett that was undergoing renovation. The space's industrial history was a perfect match for their inventory. *Found* is filled with an eclectic collection of antique and period furniture along with the more contemporary and industrial pieces, many of which Rambo has designed. >



This elegant "Reau" chair is made of solid wood. It has a classic wingback design with a high back and a deep seat. The chair is upholstered in a light beige fabric and features a white fur pillow and a dark red throw blanket. The chair is shown in a living room setting with a glass coffee table and a side table. The word "REAU" is mounted on the wall in a stylized font.



Metal chest from Found For The Home, Tolomeo lighting, and bedding from Ralph Lauren.



Artwork by Elton Gomez, 1986 (artist's gift to owner from 1988). For The Home, with rug from Carol Pappi Rug. Sculpture by Ettore D'Arco.



Panache light arches come from Brno, while the Edison bulbs are from Found For the Home. The mirror is an antique Louis Philippe from Carl Moser Antiques.



Customs with iron Castles' Creams and coffee table from *Found for the Home*. Danish Chair by the Campana Brothers from *Rubi Livingside*. Photograph by Donald Sutton reprinted by *Rubi Livingside*.

The living room is found for the Home brought to life – a juxtaposition of the antique and the modern. A gorgeous, 19th century Swedish settee shares space with a pair of shelves created out of cardboard. An overstuffed wing chair with dramatic lace sits in front of an antique French buffet. *Randi's* based in the decor is everywhere, from the mirrored coffee table he designed, to the innovative hanging of the infamous set of antique prints. An ingenious, large contemporary mirror *Randi's* created has a right glass, such as an 18th century period antique would have.

On one wall hangs a curtain of the word *REALLY* – a college art project of Danish daughter, Emily. Scattered throughout the room is a mix of accessories – some antique, such as a collection of 19th century Danish silver sticks, some new, such as the various modern vases. Above the sofa is the art of NYC artist *All Moser*.

The adjoining dining room overlooks the large backyard with its lush landscaping and its rigorous swimming pool. The dining room table and chairs are traditionally French, yet the antique vintage lab benches gracing the table come from *Found*.

Throughout the home, the art work is the focal point. But, in the study, the furniture becomes the art with the *David Chair* made by the Campana Brothers. *Randi's* combined architectural ingenuity with iron bones to make a pair of coffee tables. Again, linen and seagrass makes a quiet backdrop for the vibrant art: a photograph of smoke rings by Donald Sutton hangs next to pieces by *Gauthier* and *Lance Leisner*. Lining the eye opened is a 60s style Sputnik light fixture.

As throughout, it's all about the mix of the high and the low, the new and the old, a design philosophy that extends to *Found for the Home*.

Upstairs are more treasures. The landing is highlighted by a colorful canvas by Houston artist *Theo Gomez*.

Underneath, a 19th century French gilt chair from *Found* sits atop an antique rug from *Carol Piper Hugs*. The simple white mist *Swedish* cocktail table finishes the vignette. Next, the master bedroom has dark khaki walls along with silk curtains and cotton khaki and white bedding. The nightstand – the room's heart of piece – is a perforated metal chest of drawers, once probably used in a factory office. The lighting is by *Tobacco* and comes from *Rubi Livingside*.

Together *Davis* and *Randi's* have created a warm yet very sophisticated home with its mixture of antique and industrial furniture along with the contemporary art work. Now that their two daughters are in college, *Davis* and her husband are thinking of possibly moving. She wistfully presents a photograph of a home she admires. It's much more contemporary, more streamlined, certainly not an original 1900s Old Housenoid home. *Davis* and *Randi's* discuss the possibility, describing how the rooms will be more open to each other, more modern, more in keeping with *Davis'* art collection. One thinks about the gorgeous antique Swedish settee that now sits in the living room and wonders how it will look in such a setting surrounded by all the contemporary architecture and art work. The verdict: amazing.

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