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OLD GLORY ANTIQUES
urban home
+ DESIGN

Creative Thinking

In a Denver shop, a proprietress combines antique and urban furnishings, creating a comfortable, yet sophisticated, aesthetic.

BY JUSTINE LOPEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CANDY RICE

Holly Kuhn considers herself a practical person. In college she sensibly majored in accounting. After graduation she quickly obtained a secure job as a CPA. And when she was married and had her first child, she promptly retired to focus on her family.

However, all it took was one decorating book to steer Holly in an unexpected direction. On a quest to beautify her first family home, she happened upon Alexandra Stoddard's *Living a Beautiful Life*. The book acted as a creative muse that ultimately inspired the former stay-at-home-mom to open her shop, Old Glory Antiques.

"The book describes 500 ways to add elegance, order, beauty and joy to the little things that make up every day of your life," she says. "With an 18 month old and a new baby, I was in need of order. I tried a few of the ideas, and I was hooked." Holly devoured every decorating book and magazine she could find, turning her newfound zeal for home décor into an unrelenting career interest. However, she deemed the



(Right) A vintage scale finds new purpose balancing fresh oranges.

(Below) A glimpse inside Old Glory reveals an eclectic mix of vintage and contemporary finds.



shopkeeping

idea of opening her own business too impractical to pursue.

But decorating was always in the back of the budding entrepreneur's mind. As she cared for her young children, Holly experimented on her Denver, Colorado home. She endlessly rearranged furniture and found innovative uses for each piece—transforming a bedroom dresser into a dining room sideboard and an antique bench into a coffee table. "My own home was like my laboratory," she recalls. "I was having so much fun re-creating and restyling my own home, I eventually decided to open my own store where I could grow and share my collection of ideas."

Eight years after she read Stoddard's book, Holly managed to incorporate her pragmatic instincts and artistic talents into a thriving business. Inside the welcoming shop, the scents of citrus and cinnamon emanate from a silver bin of dried rose hips and hand-painted wood signs express sentiments such as 'Love is All You Need' and 'Life is Beautiful.' Holly's practical style is evident in Old Glory's merchandise, which consists of functional and comfortable antiques and home décor. However, her creative influence is found in her ability to meld historic items with urban accessories.

"I like to combine old and new pieces in unexpected ways," she says. "I love real well-worn furniture that's been used and has a sense of history and adds a sense of charm to the home. I don't want to be predictable, and that's where I

(Top right) Decorative rugs, fresh sprigs and contemporary accessories bring new life to antique furnishings.

(Right) Tin hearts rest atop a pillow of fragrant dried rose hips.

(Far right) Old wooden toolboxes can be used to tote drinks or display decorative items.



were in more modern things to give it a fresh look."

Holly's talent for finding useful purposes for antique and vintage items is displayed throughout the 1,700-square-foot space: Speckled with rust, worn scales balance oranges and pears; elongated wooden dough bowls display pinecones or gourds, depending on the season; and old wooden tool boxes, originally used by carpenters to carry their tools, hold condiments on a kitchen table.

Holly's knack for discovering creative and innovative ways to use everyday objects is also illustrated by Old Glory's inventory of one-of-a-kind items, including reclaimed pieces.

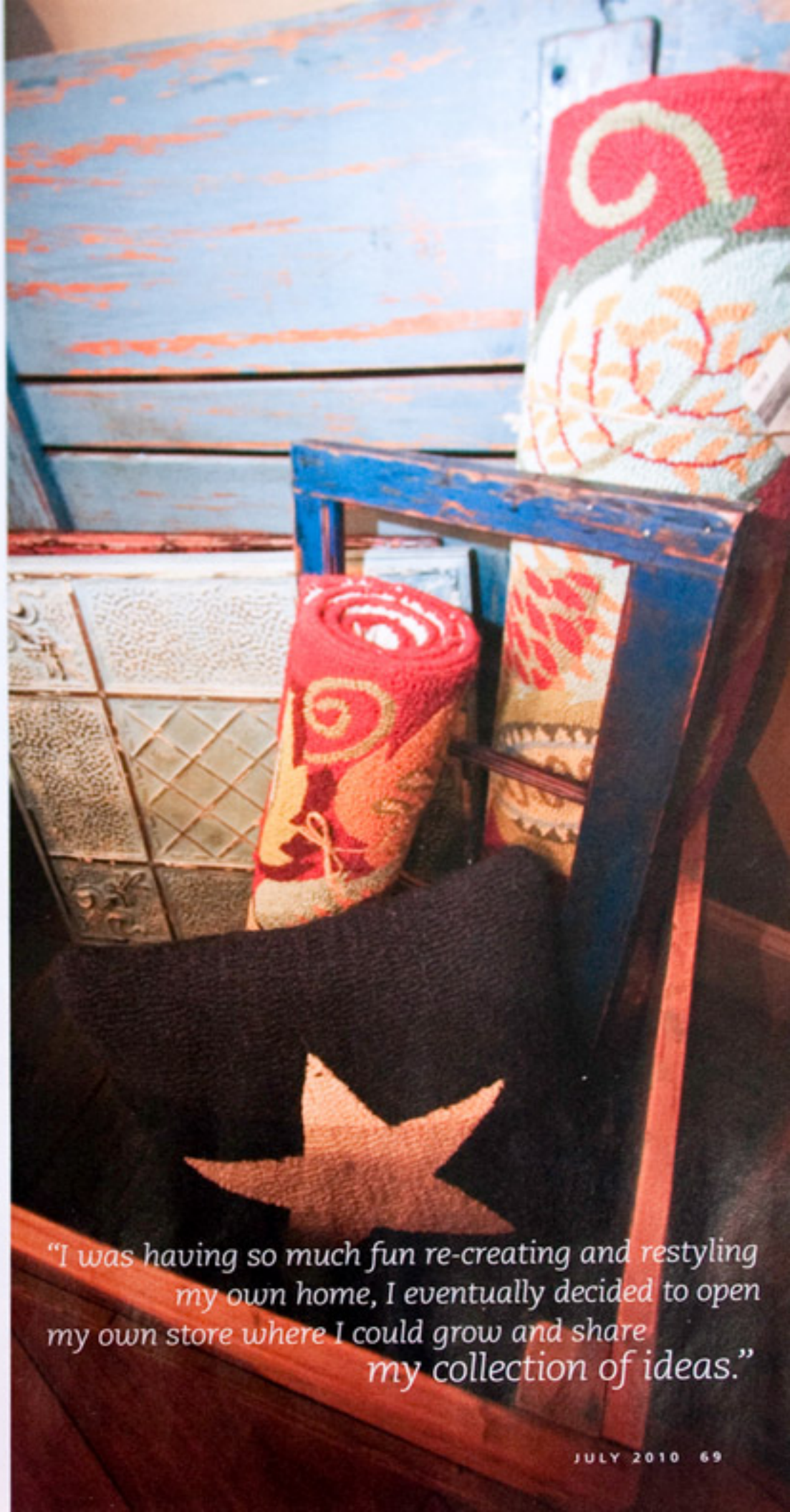
"A reclaimed object is an old piece of furniture or architectural piece that has been given new life and new purpose with a little imagination and a little—or a lot—of work," she says. "Reclaimed objects make beautiful, one-of-a-kind pieces that help my customers achieve a personal and unique look in their homes."

Here, a vintage store counter is creatively reemployed as a kitchen island and the paneling from a turn-of-the-century home is transformed into a seven-foot-long dining table. A side table created from a metal water meter and planters fashioned from old turkey feeders add to the shop's unique appeal.

Hanging from the ceiling of Old Glory is a handmade chandelier, which features three tiers of antique silver spoons. For Holly, this reclaimed accessory encapsulates her shop's motto: the uncommon, the unexpected, the beautiful.

"I am always looking for merchandise that is unusual and unique," she says. "That fixture fits what I strive for."

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twitter.com/oldgloryantique



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INSIDER TRADING

Holly shares a few practical tips on what to think about before starting a business.

- Do your homework, be prepared and know what you're getting into.
- Prepare a thorough and comprehensive business plan. This is especially important when you are just starting out and faced with so many choices, ranging from selection of merchandise to carry to how to market the business to what your store hours should be.
- Be realistic about what resources will be required to start and maintain the business. This, of course, will be a part of your business plan, but it is important enough to mention again!
- The amount of time required to run a business is often underestimated. When you have your own business, you are in charge of everything. Being realistic about what the demands on your time will be is essential in preparing to start a business.
- Be patient. A successful business does not sprout overnight. It may take several years to establish your business. Establishing and growing a business is a process, a process that requires a lot of hard work, constant observation and tweaking, the ability to be open-minded and flexible, a passion for what you do, perseverance and patience.
- Relax and enjoy the day-to-day tasks that make up your life as a shop owner: the "thrill of the hunt" for new merchandise, interaction with enthusiastic customers, the creative rush of making something from nothing as you build a new display, the satisfaction you feel as you lock the door each night and look back at a beautifully-displayed, tidy, well-cared-for shop, the joy of sharing the events of the day with your family each evening.



Bestsellers

Harvest tables
Jewelry made from reclaimed objects
Antique wooden dough bowls
Gracewords flatware
Vintage silver
Hand-painted wooden signs
Company C rugs
Vintage French grain-sack pillows
Antique ceiling tins
Scented dried rose hips



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