

# AT HOME

## AN OPRAH MAGAZINE

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# Spring!

HOW TO BRING YOUR HOUSE INTO BLOOM



COLLECTING

# Where'd You Find That?

Renée Snyder had a big space to fill. Luckily, **Eric Chen** reports, she also had time—and a longtime friend, designer Francine Gardner, who helped turn an old sugar factory into a home.

**'It would be boring to do everything at once and keep it the same forever.'**

RENÉE SNYDER

AS BOTH A MUSICIAN and what she describes as a “songstress for advertising—or what you used to call jingles,” Renée Snyder knows how to be quick and snappy. But when she asked her friend Francine Gardner—a designer and owner of the chic Manhattan store Intérieurs—to help decorate her family’s New York loft, the process dragged on. For about eight years.

However, this is not one of those nightmare stories about a never-ending renovation. Most of the work was done at the outset, and the rest simply evolved over time. “It would be boring to do everything at once and then keep it the same forever,” says Renée, who, as part of a husband-and-wife team, has a musical range that ▶

An ARMOIRE bought at an antiques fair in France helps to define the dining area.

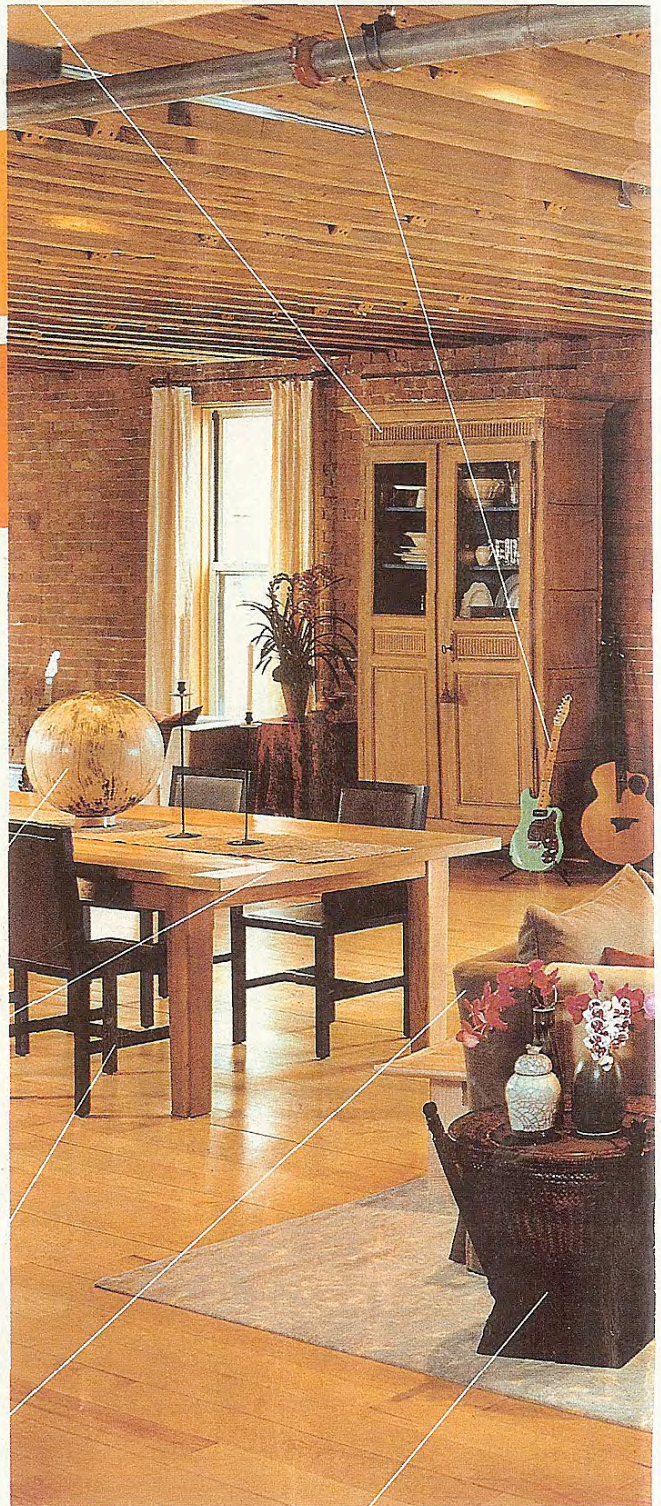
A sea green DANNY FERRINGTON ELECTRIC GUITAR and a TAYLOR ACOUSTIC BASS GUITAR are both part of the Snyders’ 50-plus-piece collection.

This JACKFRUIT-WOOD GLOBE was carved by Jerome Abel Seguin, a French artist living in Indonesia.

Renée had this OAK DINING TABLE custom made by the workshop Brooklyn Design and Fabrication.

Modénature OAK AND LEATHER DINING CHAIRS were a recent birthday present to Renée from her husband.

Replacing Renée’s clubby leather couch, this BELGIAN SOFA upholstered in linen is modern yet comfortable.



Set on a wooden stand, this WOVEN-RATTAN BASKET from Thailand makes a perfect side table.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHEL ARNAUD  
STYLING BY CARLOS MOTA



stretches from jingles for Charmin and American Express to a sultry new solo album, *Once in a Lifetime*.

Housed in a former sugar factory built in the late 19th century—with the high ceilings and exposed brick and beams to prove it—Renée’s TriBeCa loft has industrial proportions yet feels anything but cold. The clean lines of its furniture, arranged in comfortable seating and dining groups, are softened by dark and earthy tones. Contemporary pieces stand alongside antique, ethnographic, and craft objects, with the Snyders’ proudly displayed guitar collection providing an extra personal touch. “We wanted to reflect that they’re musicians,” says the French-born Francine, “and create an interior that’s as warm as they are.”

The two women first met ten years ago at Intérieurs, which, as it happens, recently moved into a space just a few doors from Renée’s building. (“She wanted to get closer to me,” Renée jokes.) It didn’t take long before the designer’s far-flung buying trips for the store became shopping excursions for her client’s home as well. For example, a visit to the south of France produced just the armoire Renée was looking for, while Indonesia yielded wooden rice-grinding wheels that, once mounted on stands, work just as well as sculpture.

Besides adding new pieces, Francine and Renée have gradually retired a number of old ones. Three years ago, the pair decided it was time to swap the clubby leather couches (which had been brought from Renée’s previous home) for more modern-looking sofas upholstered in linen. When Renée’s husband, Craig, stopped by Intérieurs last year to buy his wife a birthday present, Francine suggested unloading their drab French Provincial dining chairs and replacing them with contemporary ones in dark oak and leather.

What’s next? “I think we’re basically done, which is kind of upsetting,” Renée says with a wince. “I don’t want it to end.”

A wrought-iron and pine furniture ensemble, above, from the Lieux Collection, makes music with a custom mandolin and an *lola* lamp from Artemide.

## Francine Gardner's Design Notes

Five rules for decorating like a pro.

**Think Big Picture.** Before you do anything, try to envision the space as you would an Impressionist painting, with its mood imparted by different shades and colors. Then select objects and finishes that will make your imagined room a reality.

**Have a Plan.** Use a floor plan to lay everything out. Make sure the space will function well—that the traffic flow works and that the furnishings’ proportions are comfortable.

**Surprise Yourself.** Don’t stick with what’s expected. Find objects that are special and that you really love. Don’t be afraid to simply display them and let them be what they are, even if they serve no real purpose.

**Hold Back.** Accessories and art should be things you treasure. Don’t just accumulate “stuff.” It’s better to leave a space empty until you’ve found exactly the right piece to fill it.

**Go for Timeless.** Choose things that won’t date quickly and that you won’t get tired of. But remember that *timeless* doesn’t mean *boring*.

For eight years, Francine has helped Renée assemble a collection of disparate pieces.

