



confessions of a garage

WRITTEN BY SAXON HENRY PHOTOGRAPHED BY KING AU



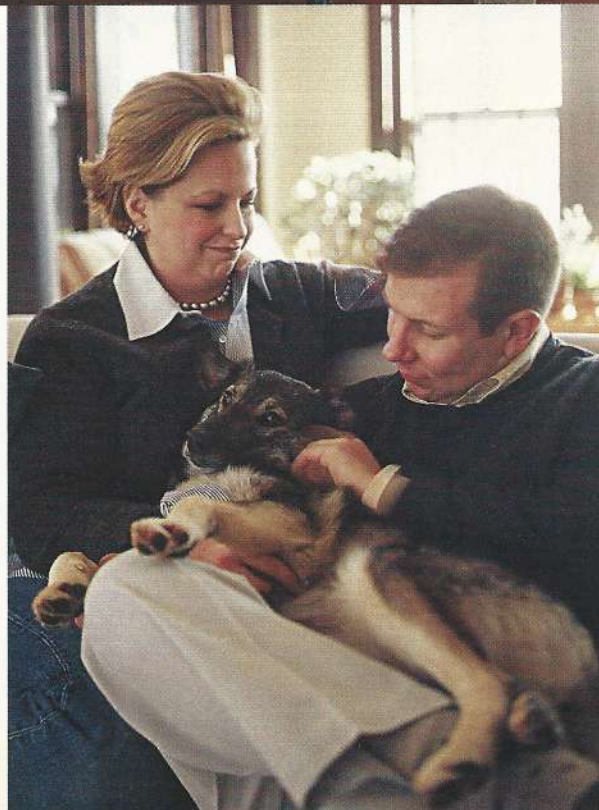
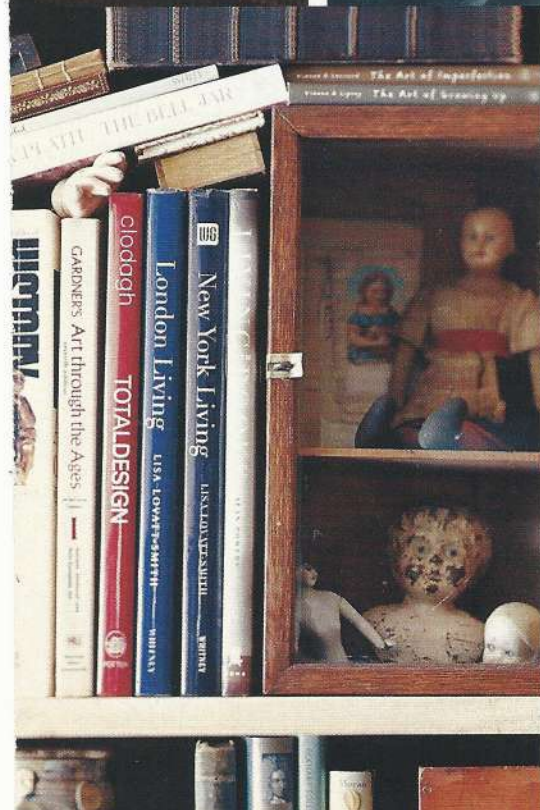
sale junkie

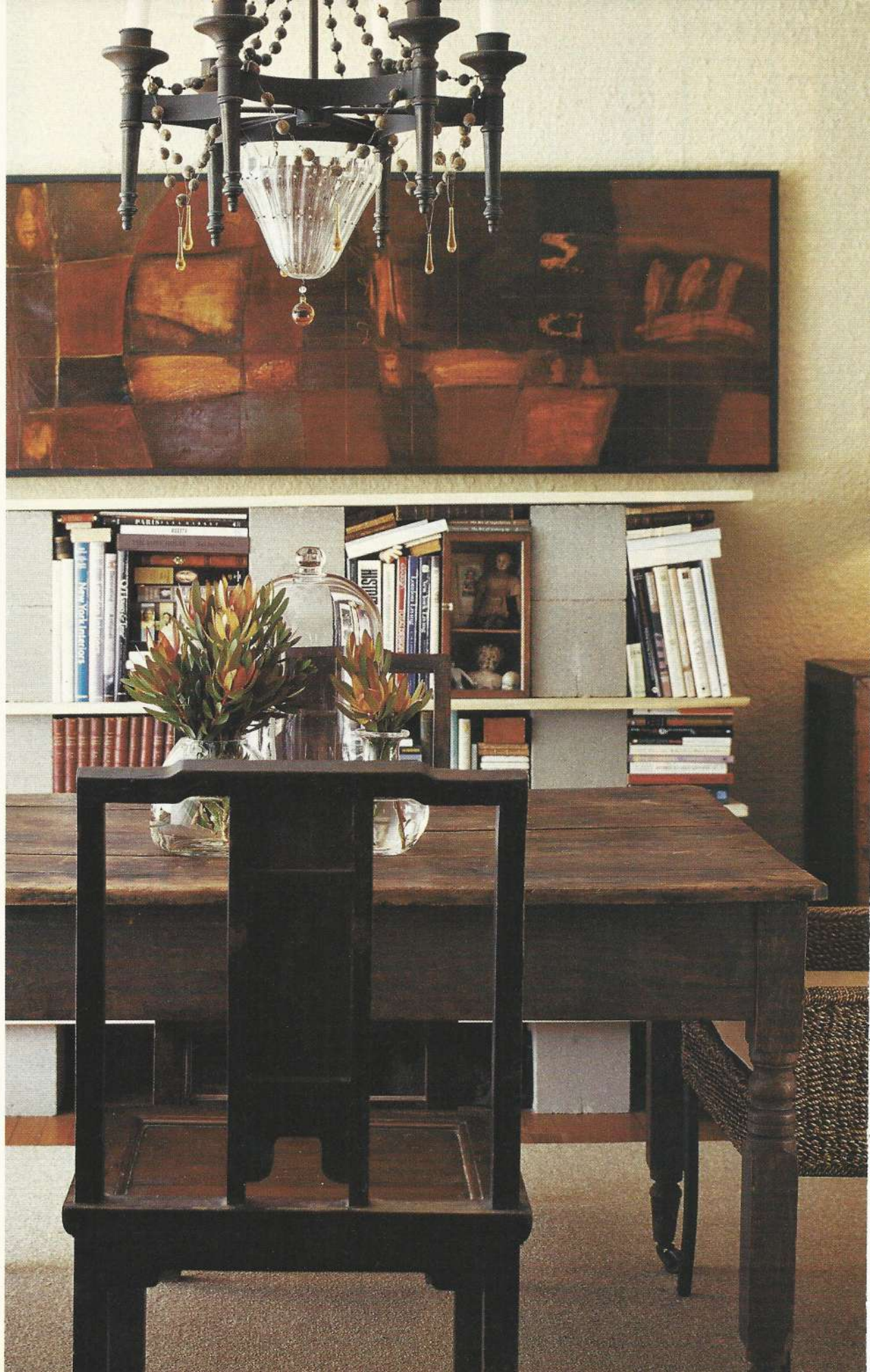
In homeowner Lynn Steely's living room, a comfy sofa covered in cotton duck was nabbed at a friend's yard sale for \$100. Lynn heightens the textural appeal of the room with a carved Oriental coffee table, a rye basket, distressed paint on the farm table, and an animal pelt on the stool.



"GARAGE SALES ARE ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED PLEASURES I ALLOW MYSELF," says Lynn Steely, who can often be found on weekend mornings making the circuit in and around Kansas City, Missouri. "In fact, I've become an addict. It's a cheap thrill!" ¶ But the hunt is just the beginning of the design process for Lynn, who is an artist, owner of an estate-sale business, and a design editor. She loves the challenge of melding her eclectic finds at home as much as she does nabbing them, though she isn't of the finders-keepers persuasion. "I don't get too attached to what I buy because I have a tendency to change my interiors nearly every other day," she admits. "I'm also not a fan of clutter. I think an empty table can be just as beautiful as one with accessories on it." ¶ Lynn's artistic instincts make her a natural at composing a room, allowing her to naturally create balance and harmony. "I create still lifes with all the things I buy," she says. "I compose not only in shadow boxes, but also on tables and with furniture." ¶ Though she's a pro at finding a garage sale bargain, Lynn admits that she doesn't mind splurging on upholstery. "Buy good new pieces or have older pieces reupholstered in choice fabrics, and fill them with extra down for comfort and longevity," she advises. "Keep fabric designs fairly neutral in the event that you want to change your interiors. Because you're splurging on these pieces, you want them to last for a long time." ¶ When shopping, she also keeps an eye out for sumptuous linens and quality flatware. "Fine bed

ABOVE In the sunroom, a striped sofa (an engagement present from Lynn's husband, Chip) and coordinating chairs flank the cowboy coffee table that Lynn found at what she calls a "funky" antiques mall in Joplin, Missouri. OPPOSITE (clockwise from top) A painting that Lynn and Chip have dubbed "The Blue Lady" is one of Lynn's favorites. It hangs in the living room above an antique farm table, where Lynn composes natural still lifes. Lynn and Chip snuggle on the sofa with Lady. Lynn adds a bit of whimsy to a shelf in the dining room—an "impromptu assemblage" that she made using antique doll parts.







and table linens are to the home what shoes and a purse are to an outfit," Lynn remarks. "Flatware is the jewelry! You wouldn't settle on one pair of shoes or one purse for every outfit, so collect a variety of linens for your table and bed. This is an easy way to change the colors in a room when you want to change the mood." ¶ At home, Lynn shows off her collections against a backdrop of chocolate brown woodwork and warm neutral walls. "The colors helped to enhance the intimacy I was looking for, especially the dark trim," she says. Against this backdrop, Lynn introduces an array of textures—from mottled wood finishes to woven baskets and wicker chairs. ¶ In another nod toward creating warmth, Lynn has peppered rooms with lamps, which she prefers hands-down to overhead lighting for lamplight's inviting characteristics. She buys vintage lamps and fixtures—which she has refurbished—or creates her own because new lamps often have less personality and are expensive. "There are sixteen lamps to turn off each night before I go to bed," Lynn remarks. "But it's worth it because I love how I can highlight the things that I have collected with pools of warm light." ☼

LEFT In the dining room, which also serves as her library and studio, Lynn has paired an early 1800s dining table with a mix of wicker and 19th-century Chinese chairs. She refurbished the chandelier, adding crystals and hand-wiring beads from a broken rosary to the fixture. **ABOVE** In the master bedroom, an antique quilt behind the bed enlivens the room and determines the color combinations that Lynn uses on the bed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE THE SOURCE BEGINNING ON PAGE 116.