

# A Lively Mix

Affordable finds and a sense of fun dominate this designer's Melrose home. **By ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK**

**FOR INTERIOR DESIGNER ANA DONOHUE,**

beauty lurks in myriad places, waiting for discovery by a discerning and patient eye. Her own hunting grounds run the gamut from the Boston Design Center to Brimfield, as well as estate sales, Target, IKEA, and their ilk, and online sources. Her method is to relentlessly rout up vintage and new treasures at the right price, both high- and low-end. "I'm all about color, texture, and pattern," she says. "A little exuberance can go a long way in design."

Donohue considers her own home, a 1,950-square-foot Victorian in Melrose, an evolving work. "I have a wonderful and very frugal husband, and I always respect his budget in my quest for beauty," she says. "It's a challenge that indirectly benefits clients, too, because I've learned a lot about creative problem solving." With twin sons who are 6 and a 2-year-old daughter, she's also interested in things that can withstand some wear and tear. "We use every room in the house to the max," she says, "so everything is chosen for durability as well as looks."

Donohue's upbeat personality is in full view in her home. Her wall colors resemble an artist's palette: misty gray in the foyer, orange in the living room, lime green in the dining room, warm caramel in the master bedroom. "People are afraid to use bold colors," she says, pointing out that many shades are more versatile than you might think.



**HIGH/LOW** In the master bedroom, designer Ana Donohue hung an inexpensive wall sculpture from Jordan's Furniture above a custom headboard upholstered in fabric from the Boston Design Center.

A fan of the lived-in look, Donohue also loves layering fabrics, patterns, styles, and even rugs. She keeps a shag rug in the living room, topped with a second rug that she switches out now and then "just for change." For dining, she screwed steel industrial-style legs to a zinc slab, all from the Brimfield antiques show, and bought four Eames-inspired chairs for \$200. "But it's important to know

when to splurge, too," she says. "Every room needs some indulgences."

Donohue says she loves every piece in her house, and she wants clients to feel that way about their own homes. She likes to create one underlying theme that ties everything together, bringing some lightheartedness to each space, whether in art, color, or accessories. "Every room should have a sense of humor," she says.



**LAYERED EFFECT** In the living room, a pricier Stark rug tops an inexpensive shag one from HomeGoods.



**TOP THIS** The dining room table is fashioned from a zinc slab and steel legs, both found at Brimfield.



**DIY** Donohue's husband did a lot of the work in the kitchen, allowing them to splurge on materials.