

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

SHOPPING TRIP



Rose Uniacke
Designer Rose Uniacke's Pimlico Road shop is a mix of contemporary and antique furniture.



Few & Far
From Few & Far: Old Harrods knives and Reichenbach plates, above, and vintage French linen napkins, right.



Guinevere Antiques
Indian dhurrie carpets, above, and French 19th-century linen at Guinevere Antiques. Christopher Howe, left, on the Pimlico Road, sells antiques as well as new furniture, like this glossy, handpainted Windsor chair.



Christophe Edwards & Andrew Webb
Christophe Edwards & Andrew Webb's stall at Core One, above, sells pieces from the 16th century to the 1980s. Items on offer at the triannual Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair include, clockwise from right, painted shelves from Jackdaw Antiques, a purple velvet sofa from Jess Graham Vintage Design and a red ceramic dish from Kiki Design.

LONDON'S BEST-KEPT DECORATING SECRETS

Shopper extraordinaire and city native Rita König takes us into her favorite places for antiques. Even factoring in shipping, buying here can be much less expensive than at home

WHEN I'M WORKING on design projects in New York, one of the things I miss most about London is the shopping. I long to be able to nip down to the antiques market Core One and look for a pedestal end table, or to Robert Kime's shop for one of his lampshades made up in a beautiful vintage textile. Strangely, considering London is so incredibly expensive in all other areas, you can find some great deals. Being older than America, Europe naturally has a far greater source of old stuff. (Personally, I have exhausted my interest in mid-century furniture.) In London, one has the chance to find things at the prices American dealers pay before they bring pieces state-side, which puts consumers way ahead of the game. Sometimes my eyes nearly drop out of my head when I glimpse New York price tags that are four times what one would pay in London.

London is a rich source for the sort of storied antiques that make your house the comfortable, stylish and varied space. There are really three areas that I scour. There is the New Kings Road, which is lined with antiques shops, with Core One market nearby. The Pimlico Road, which is not far, has been one of the best antiques shopping streets since the '60s. For real bargains (because the Pimlico is not exactly known for its bargains), I love going to Alfie's Antique Market on Church Street, which is a quick cab ride from the Pimlico Road. Finally, there is a smattering of shops, some in Notting Hill and others in Chelsea, that are great to drop by. There is so much from the 19th century there. In America, much is 20th century and imported. I also love the unpretentiousness of these shops here, most of which are manned by their passionate owners, rather than hired salespeople. They actually help you, unlike

sales associates who can be a little snooty and more interested in their dinner plans than your purchases.

NEW KINGS ROAD
Core One market (coreoneantiques.com) is still a pretty good secret, mostly because it is hidden behind the gasworks at the kink in the New Kings Road. Being an industrial shed, it doesn't

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look like much from the outside but inside there are a handful of antiques dealers, too numerous to mention all by name. Inside the complex, **DNA Antiques** is the first stop. They always have a good selection of delightfully peeling silver gilt mirrors and drippy chandeliers and I have found good sofas there in the past. **Christophe Edwards & Andrew Webb** (christopheedwards.com) specializes in early 20th century, with an Arts and Crafts bent. Upstairs, **James Graham-Stewart** (jamesgraham-stewart.com) carries pieces

found at auction and house sales. His prices are quite serious, but nothing compared with what they would be in New York—Mr. Graham-Stewart is the dealer big New York antique dealers go to. With him, you are likely to find a set of Georgian painted-cane dining chairs or a beautiful library. His taste is impeccable. **Christopher Hodson** (hodson.com) is also one of the more serious dealers, known for perfectly disheveled upholstery that's almost always from one of the grandest houses in England. If you want that English gentle-

man's country-house look, this is the place.

Heading back down the Kings Road toward Chelsea, I always stop at **Guinevere Antiques** (guinevere.co.uk). The shop has been here since the early '60s. The antiques are quite serious but what I love (and am more likely to be able to afford) are the dhurries from India and the vintage textiles at the back of the shop. There are quilts and linen sheets from France, marriage blankets from Asia and cotton saris, some of which are made into lamp-

shades. For a little sustenance, pop into **Megan's Deli** (011-44-20-7371-7837) for a quick coffee and a cookie. Further up the Kings Road on Parsons Green is **The French House** (thefrenchhouse.net), a fantastic place for 19th-century French beds and upholstery.

PIMLICO ROAD
Before heading up to Alfie's, my next stop would be **Christopher Howe** (howelondon.com) on the Pimlico Road. The shop is a good mixture of antiques, mostly seating and lighting, and pieces the shop owner makes himself. I especially love his Windsor chairs painted in fabulously glossy billiard ball colors. Further up the Pimlico Road, I love **Rose Uniacke** (roseuniacke.com). She always has delicate, impeccable chandeliers hanging in her shop—the only type I ever want.

CHURCH STREET
Further north, near Marylebone, is **Alfie's Antique Market**, the place that I first started digging around for antiques when I was 18. It has changed a lot since then. Many of the stall holders have moved into shops on Church Street or even gone to the Kings Road. There are now a couple of Italian dealers, **Francesca Martire** (francesca-martire.com) and **Vincenzo Cafarella** (vinca.co.uk), on the ground floor. I always find things at **Lorna Lee Leslie** and **Paolo Bonino**. American **Louise Verber**'s stall on the second floor sells glass and mirror, including wonderful large mirrored coasters that are meant to support vases.

Outside, on Church Street, **Andrew Nebbett** (andrewnebbett.com) is a very good source for beautiful creamware, leather upholstery and long oak dining tables. From here, take yourself to a late lunch at **La Fromagerie** (lafromagerie.co.uk) off Marylebone High Street. Once reenergized, head out to **The Cloth Shop** (theclothshop.net) for antique linen sheets and vintage

Welsh blankets, at the top of Portobello Road.



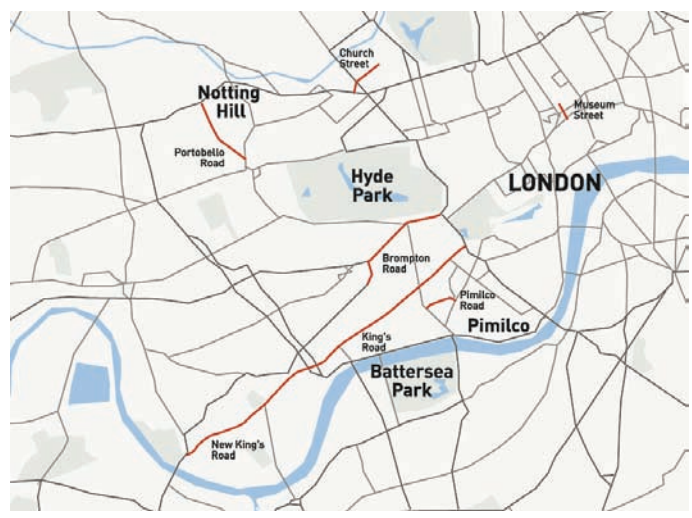
Photographs by Lisa Linder for The Wall Street Journal (Few & Far, Howe exterior, Uniacke, Guinevere, and Edwards & Webb)



Decorative Antiques and Textiles Fair (decorativefair.com) takes place in Battersea Park. The next one is in January and these are really worth going to if you happen to be in town. Dealers from all over London as well as the rest of the country set up stands stocked with 19th-century country furniture. Last year I bought a beautiful Irish mirror and a William and Mary hall chair upholstered in olive green felt. There is no fair like this in America.

Finally, if you have any money left and are sick of antiques, go to **Pippa Small** (pippasmall.com) on Colville Mews to try on some beautiful jewelry—organic shaped, candy-colored stones in delicate settings made in India. That is where I always end up—actually it's where I usually start.

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GETTING YOUR GOODS HOME

• **Cheaper by sea:** For shipping items back to the U.S., antiques dealer James Graham-Stewart recommends Hedley's Humpers (hedleysumpers.com). They collect and pack your piece in London, ship it "groupage" (in a container with other people's goods) and deliver it to your U.S. doorstep some four weeks later. Email them the dimensions of your piece and they'll give you a quote (prices are based on volume, and run to roughly \$1,010 per cubic meter). Insurance through Hedley's costs 1.75% of the value of the piece; there's a \$1,554 deductible, but if you're shipping a big-ticket item, they recom-

mend it. There's no duty on wooden furniture, but you'll have to pay a processing fee (a percentage of the declared value of your antique). This can only be done stateside: Upon arrival, Hedley's New York office will send you the bill.

• **Faster by air:** If time is of the essence, consider ponying up the extra cash to send your find by plane, especially if it's just one piece of furniture. Prices for air freight are generally based on volumetric weight; Hedley's can have the item delivered within 10 days; if you're in even more of a hurry, Mr. Graham-Stewart suggests Art Logistics Ltd. (011-44-20-8993-8811), which can have it

there in two. They generally deal with big-ticket items, which may require an export license that can take days or weeks to procure. The company can apply for the license on the client's behalf as part of the service.

• **Decide for me:** If you're not sure whether to ship or fly your find home, Rita König suggests calling The British Shop (thebritishshop.co.uk). It will assess your shipment and let you know which option is best. Generally if you're shipping multiple items, the seafaring method is best; if you have a small item like a painting, a plane ride would do the trick, possibly for as little as \$200.

—Christine Whitney



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