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Winter Wonderland

Exquisite Swedish antiques evoke the perfect winter interior, as Annie Prior discovers.

Jo and Madeleine Lee's Hove apartment on the sea front is quite unique. As you climb the stairs of the 1886 building, built for King Edward VII and his friends, and cross the threshold, you enter a different world; one of fairytale dreams, enchanted woods and magical mystery. "And yet it works for contemporary living," explains Madeleine, whose Swedish roots are behind the couple's treasure trove of bespoke and handcrafted Swedish antique furniture.



Surrounded by Gustavian, Rococo, Empire, Art-Deco, Swedish Louis XVI, Kurbitz and Haga folk art, Mora Clocks, and Country Rustic pieces, it is here that Jo and Madeleine choose to show off their exquisite collection. "This is more than furniture," explains Jo. "It's about lifestyle, serenity and beauty which you can't get in a showroom, which is why we invite potential clients into our home to see what we do and the range of furniture we offer."

Jo and Madeleine travel to Sweden about 6 times a year to source antiques and bring them back. "Usually we find them in pristine condition and just reupholster where necessary, but sometimes there are pieces that need some extra love. We have a team of exceptional specialists, who bring them that special care," says Jo. "Our stock includes antique gilt formal couches and handcarved country rustic sofas, chaise longues, Gustavian dining tables, chairs and beds, cabinets and dressers, mora Grandfather Clocks and vintage chandeliers. In addition, we also specialise in turning early 1900's Swedish working sleighs into couches, beds and baths and our handmade rugs are very popular."

With today's appreciation of all things beautiful, Swedish antiques sit well within a modern context. "We believe they are very well matched for contemporary living -handcrafted, full of life, comfortable and visually exciting," enthuses Jo. "Often when people visit us, they say 'I've got this corner in my living room, if only I could have a



piece like that but I don't think it would fit,' and it's wonderful to be able to explain that they can have what they want. Our bespoke service means that we can create completely unique pieces to fit anywhere - not replica's or reproductions, but individual. The client is very much involved with the process, and by coming here and actually seeing the period furniture, they are able to explain whether they want curves or gilt or hand painted folk art. The creative process usually starts with an item such as a beautiful mirror and then grows organically. Interpretation is what it's about. Drawings are then done and agreed, and 6-8 weeks later they have the finished piece. Just in time for Christmas!"

Open Weekend for Absolute Readers

Jo Lee and Madeleine Lee are offering Absolute readers the opportunity to visit their flat and bespoke/antique furniture on the weekend of 17th November. A discount of 10% will be given for items ordered during the weekend. There will be 5 slots each day available each day from 11.00am - 4.00pm, so call 07958 788555 or email sales@swedishinteriordesign.co.uk to book your appointment.

