

Something Vintage

by Gillian - Thursday, March 12, 2015

<http://3storymagazine.com/displaying-metal-ornaments/>

Metals can shine even more when they're paired with others. Francine Smith of [Hot Cool Vintage](#) explains how. *Photos courtesy of Francine Smith/Hot Cool Vintage.*

One of my favorite ways to add a bit of vintage style to my home decor is by layering in metals. Brass is my favorite but I have a fair amount of silver and some copper sprinkled in as well. There is a lot of vintage brass out there and a lot of it is not very good. Just because it's vintage does not mean it's not cheaply made or mass produced. Be patient and be picky. Good vintage brass is worth the wait.

Silver and brass

Candle holders are a great way to add a bit of interest to a table. Brass adds a bit of the warmth silver adds the sparkle. It's also handy when the candle holder doubles as a flower vase. These holders are different in metals and form but I think the general Scandinavian design aesthetic is what makes these two - the [silver](#) and the [brass](#) - work well together.

Bronze and brass

Some things just go together. A part of me thinks this shouldn't work - brass/glass, high/low - but I like it. This grouping of a bronze Baccarat snake and [a pair of vintage Saguario sculptures](#) reminds me of our local flora and fauna but not in the typical southwest fashion. The snake is a bit glam but the brass keeps it real.

Copper and brass

It's kind of ridiculous how excited I get when I find small vintage items that I can re-purpose for air plants. These vintage enamel and copper [salt cellars](#) fall into that category. They can also be used as ring/jewelry holders. The oh-so-happy [jumping-for-joy elephant](#) adds a nice touch of drama and movement to a space. The lamp (one of a pair) is a favorite find and will have to be pried from my cold dead hands.

What about upkeep?

Polishing metals can be a chore. Each piece is different and some brass has a varnish on it, which makes cleaning it even more difficult. My go-to cleaner is [Bar Keepers Friend](#). I prefer the liquid over the powder but both work well. When polishing, be careful not to take away all of the patina. In my opinion, some pieces should not be cleaned too deeply. The patina gives the piece age and dimension and once it's stripped it can change the look of the piece. When cleaning, go light and proceed only as much as needed. Polishing (and repolishing) is not fun but the results are well worth the effort.

* You can find more of Francine's collected items for sale at the [Hot Cool Vintage Etsy store](#).

* [Click here for more vintage stories and to sign up to our Vintage Friday newsletter.](#)