

Reproduction early Australian Hoop Pine Four Door Bookcase. This bookcase is one of a twin and features English brass fittings, timber saw tooth shelf supports and reversible shelves.



Custom built-in Cedar Desk with two reproduction Cedar Filing Drawers underneath, all done in the early Australian style. Note the pullout computer keyboard drawer, the traditional backboard and high shelf. This reproduction 1910 Cedar Desk Chair features antiqued English reproduction brass castors, a spindle back and deep buttoned English leather upholstery.

## Tomorrow's antiques available today

ANYONE who has decorated their home or office will know the frustration when things are left incomplete for a period of time. Sometimes the ideal piece of furniture for a particular spot is nowhere to be found. It is usually a case of the 'eighty twenty rule', 80 percent of your desired antique furniture is probably found in 20 percent of the time allocated. However, the quest for the remaining 20 percent of your furniture seems to take 80 percent of your precious time. There comes a point in time

when you may seriously think about considering alternatives to the originally desired antique furniture. A couple of case studies are outlined in this article, which explains what some people have decided to do when they've reached this point.

**Case 1** – Isobel and Mark recently had a beautiful, architect designed home built on bush land acreage. A small alcove was included in the formal lounge perfect for a feature piece of furniture to sit comfortably inside. Their library also looked great, except for the glaring lack of bookcases.

The small empty alcove had the ability to make the whole room look incomplete and off balance. In such a large room, one wouldn't have expected such a seemingly minor gap to have such an obvious negative impact, yet it did. Isobel had never really worried about the gap, feeling confident that just the right piece of antique furniture, possibly a whatnot, would be found.

Time marched on and the gap simply annoyed and frustrated them more and more. Finally, she decided to have a whatnot custom made. She wanted it to match the style, colour and shine of other furniture in the room, yet because of its prominence in the alcove, it had to be quite special in its own right.

The final design was a four tier, bow front, mahogany whatnot with a dovetailed myrtle burr veneered drawer, feature panels and medallions. Carvings featured subtly on each of the corinthian columns and encircled each of the myrtle medallions. The top shelf was crowned with an elegant fretwork gallery, highlighted again with the myrtle burr veneer. Quite the perfect piece! Now all that remained was the process of choosing which of her delightful possessions to display.

Next they needed to turn their attention to the library bookcases. Two long walls were waiting for the bookcases required to store their huge literature collection. The antique bookcases they had looked at were either too heavy or overbearing for the room, and more often than not were found to have insufficient space in them. The walls of the library were a rich teal colour and needed to be balanced with lighter pieces of furniture. The reading table and seating furniture could not be chosen until the character of the bookcases was determined. Finally it was decided to make twin eight door bookcases in A grade hoop pine. They were French polished to an olde pine shade to complement the rich olive green walls. Given the dominance of these pieces a simple yet classic design was chosen. The reading table,

chair, lounge, and soft furnishings would later accentuate the desired character and highlights for the library.

**Case 2** – David and Sharon were restoring their delightful inner city suburb lowset Queensland, room by room. Though they were required to be away from home for work, they still required a home office to be built. They used a small room, previously a child's bedroom for this purpose.

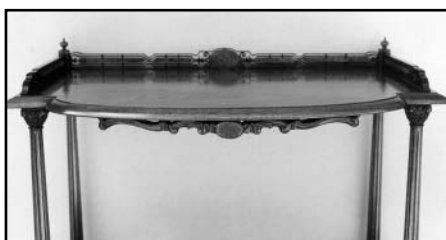
In the course of their travels they had come across some beautifully etched glass Queensland cedar door frames from the now demolished Rockhampton Commercial Bank. They fell in love with these doors, seeing them as perfect for their custom built office bookcase. David thought that some discreetly hidden internal downlights would highlight the etchings and provide warmth and atmosphere at the same time.

The room, though quite small, needed to accommodate a desk and chair for both Sharon and David. Sharon already had an early 1900 American Cutler rolltop desk and chair, but because of the space issue, David was still looking. To keep in line with the style of Sharon's desk and the bookcase, David's desk was built in. The desktop went over a two-drawer solid timber filing cabinet and featured a computer keyboard drawer and had a small shelf above it.

Unfortunately David could not find a suitable chair in his searches. However he did come across an old revolving chair base mechanism. A cedar, spindle backed, deep buttoned upholstery English leather desk chair



Reproduction Mahogany Regency Whatnot with four tiers including a dovetailed, burr myrtle veneered drawer and feature panels. The whatnot is supported by Corinthian tapered fluted columns and each burr myrtle veneer medallion is accompanied by subtle decorative carving.



Top shelf of a reproduction Mahogany Regency Whatnot. Burr myrtle veneer and soft carvings are featured in the elegant Network gallery.



Custom Cedar Bookcase featuring original doors from the Rockhampton Commercial Bank. The ornate etched glass is complemented by the reproduction antiqued English brass handles.

was then made to comfortably seat him at the correct height for his desk. The desired height of desks and tables has increased over the years, so chairs can require some adjustment.

These case studies show that you are not alone in your search for the perfect piece, but should this piece elude you there are excellent alternatives available ■

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