

# NYC & G

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# SPRING FEVER!



**One Piece At A Time**  
Rodney Lawrence has filled the living room of his 1890 brownstone in Bedford-Stuyvesant with mid-20th-century furnishings, artwork, and objects culled from flea markets and antiques shops. He found the statuette on the Jens Risom sideboard during an antiquing expedition in Hudson, New York. See Resources.



# The Collector's Eye

At home in Brooklyn, decorator Rodney Lawrence has amassed a treasure trove of curiosities

BY ALYSSA BIRD  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARILI FORASTIERI



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odney Lawrence likes stuff. Lots of stuff. "If there's a free surface,"

he says, "I'll put something there and hope it just fits in!" All joking aside, Lawrence isn't the type of decorator who plans everything to perfection, but rather lets "emotion and his attachment to objects" drive a decorating scheme. And there's no place where that philosophy is more apparent than in his own home in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. Since Lawrence moved into his 1890 brownstone a dozen years ago, he has been tweaking its design—adding and taking away pieces and moving furnishings around to accommodate his growing collections of everything from taxidermy to wooden canes to Kay Bojesen monkey figurines. "I love seeing slight variations among similar things," he explains, "so instead of having one starfish, I have 50. I don't limit myself to liking any particular style—it's about what I find interesting, and I often don't even know what I've got until years later." Case in point: Each of the virtually identical vintage floor lamps flanking the fireplace in the dining area was purchased at the Chelsea Flea Market, but two decades apart. And the Curtis Jeré owls perched on the mantel were also acquired at different times. "So much of the collecting process is about waiting," opines Lawrence, whose taxidermy room is already 25 years in the making. ("I had a deal with my partner that I would keep it to one room, but it's slowly creeping into other spaces in the brownstone.") Lawrence's patience also served him well while restoring the residence's original woodwork, which, in order to avoid stripping the surface, involved someone "coming every Friday for about a decade to painstakingly clean and polish the wood. I like that the home looks well taken care of, as opposed to completely new. If I wanted a brand new house, I would have bought one."

**A Spot For Everything**  
Lawrence has devoted an entire room to his favorite collection, taxidermy (OPPOSITE). In the master bedroom (THIS PAGE TOP), the bust and artworks are flea market finds, as is the short side table, which is fashioned from an old telephone pole. The other table is by Thayer Coggin, and the floor lamp is by George Nelson. An upstairs sitting room (THIS PAGE RIGHT) features an RH sofa, a Thonet chair, a Saarinen Tulip stool, and a portrait by Robert Padilla. See *Resources*.





**Casually Curated**

(THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT) McCoy pottery pieces line a shelf in the kitchen. Portraits purchased at the Chelsea Flea Market and at a junk store in Asbury Park, New Jersey, are displayed in the dining room. A collection of wooden canes occupies a corner of the living room. In the rear parlor, paintings found at New Jersey's Golden Nugget Antique Flea Market hang on the wall, above a bust from a Paris flea market and a grouping of shells and starfish on the floor; Lawrence bought the taxidermy piece as a gift for his partner, who "loves monkeys, although I don't think he was expecting a real one!" (OPPOSITE) A Lindsey Adelman light fixture hangs in the dining room, which features Plycraft chairs, a Saarinen Tulip table, and Curtis Jeré owl sculptures. The floor lamps are Chelsea Flea Market purchases, scooped up 20 years apart. See *Resources*.

