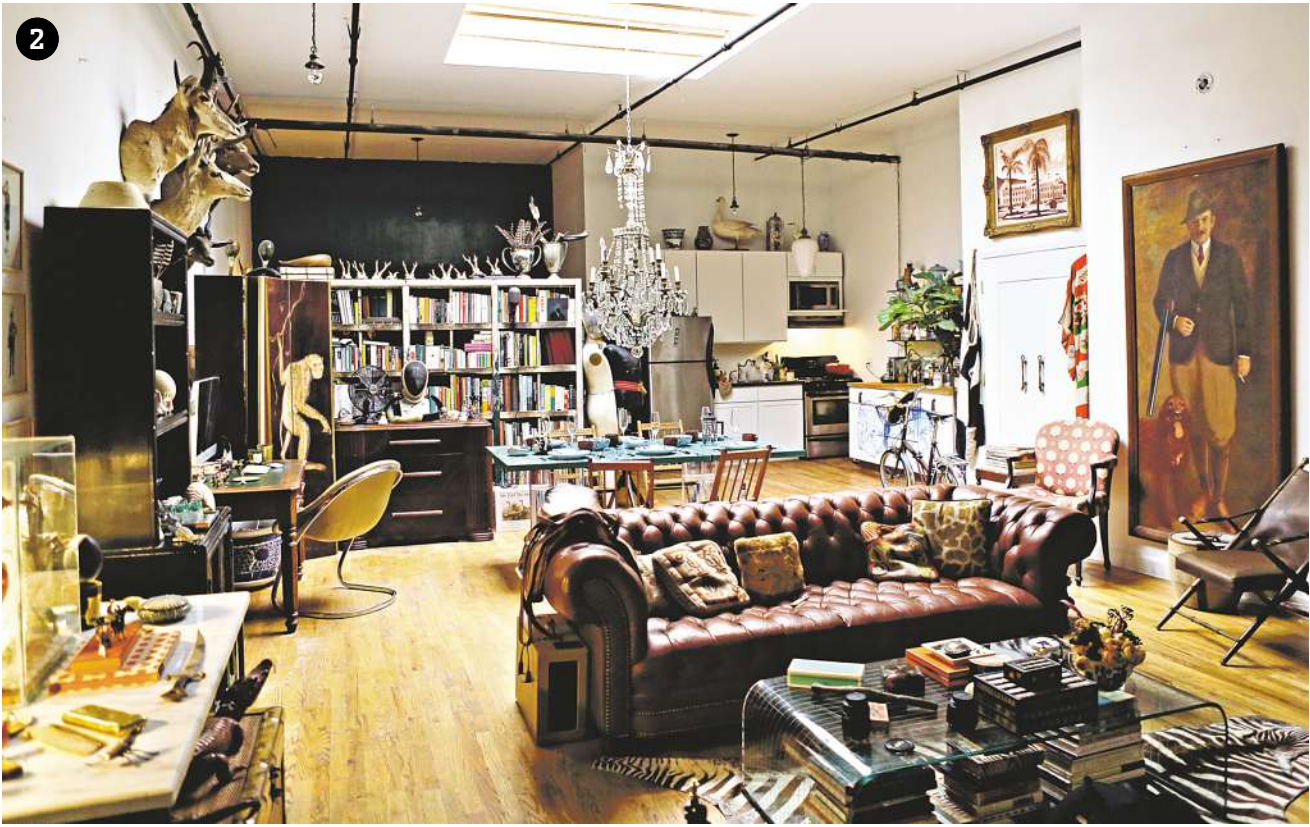


MANSION



IN THE MIX 1. A framed Hermès scarf that belonged to their mother hangs above Porter and Hollister Hovey's fireplace. 2. The sisters share a 1,400-square-foot Williamsburg loft. 3. Last fall, Anthropologie commissioned the pair to design a wall mural called 'Photographed Antiquities' (\$248). The print is based on a photograph of the Hoveys' living room. 4. Porter, 30, and Hollister, 34, at their home. 5. Among the heirlooms is a collection of stuffed birds. 'They're elegant and exotic,' Hollister says. 'Every woman should have at least one.'

THE TRADE

FLEA-MARKET CHIC

Sisters Porter and Hollister Hovey create interior designs that combine pieces of personal history with thrift-store finds (like stuffed birds) and a smattering of modern electronics



Dorothy Hovey for The Wall Street (d): Anthropologie (mural)

BY MEGAN BUEGER

IN THE SHARED Brooklyn loft of sisters Porter and Hollister Hovey, stuffed birds mingle comfortably with eclectic vintage furniture. The unusual décor displays the combined styles of Hollister, 34, a leather-loving tomboy with a taste for Louis Vuitton luggage and antique backgammon sets; and Porter, 30, a photographer who loves exotic stuffed birds, chinoiserie vases and pearls.

"It's Palm Beach on crack," Ms. Hollister jokes, describing Ms. Porter's style, "but mixing and matching in an eclectic way is our game."

The sisters run the up-and-coming décor company Hovey Design, creating a distinctive aesthetic by combining keepsakes with thrift-store antiques and a smattering of modern electronics. Since founding the firm in late 2011, the Hoveys have decorated penthouses in Williamsburg, developed a wallpaper and an adhesive wall mural for retailer Anthropologie and published a book entitled "Heirloom Modern,"

which was released last month. On May 23, décor e-retailer One King's Lane will release a "tastemaker tag sale" with about 100 of the Hoveys' favorite items up for grabs.

On Hollister's blog, which she started in 2007, the sisters share old family photos, renovation tips and snapshots of thrift-shopping adventures from the Berkshires to Tokyo. Known in design circles for its vintage style and flea-market savvy, the blog receives about 2,000 hits per day.

It's easy for manipulated authenticity, particularly one built around nostalgia, to feel contrived. "The key is to be yourself," Hollister says. "It sounds simple, but trust us, it's not. You have to be honest about your story. If you try to be someone you're not, everyone who enters your home will notice. Instead, they should take a deep breath and say, 'This is so you.'"

To do so, the sisters say clients must embrace their oddities and abandon perfectionism. The Hoveys' design service, which begins with a consultation that costs about \$3,500 per room, comes with a lengthy, per-

sonal questionnaire. (They typically charge between \$3,500 to \$5,500 to conceptualize each room, plus an additional 20% charge on top of the price of any items they source.) In the questionnaire, clients are asked about their favorite childhood vacation, the best advice their parents ever gave them and the secret career they wish they had. Those answers then become a treasure map for details to highlight in the décor.

"Our process is very personal," Porter says. "Sometimes it feels like therapy, unearthing childhood memories and showcasing them in a sophisticated way."

"The memories aren't always happy or pretty, but that's life," Hollister adds. "It doesn't make your home a sad place, it fills it with life. It's what makes it interesting."

The Hoveys' 1,400-square-foot Williamsburg apartment is brimming with quirky antiques, animal prints and a mishmash of design genres—a lot like their childhood home in Kansas City, Kan. The two credit their treasure-hunting abilities to their mother, who was a fan of flea markets and eccentric fashion and filled

their home with trinkets from around the world.

"She believed eclecticism was fabulous and always encouraged us to be individuals," Hollister says. "She potty-trained me by bribing me with designer underwear."

Their mother died in 2002, and the women have turned her favorite Hermès scarf into a piece of framed wall art. Next to it sits an old family desk flanked by a pair of 1970s Art-Deco chrome chairs and a large portrait of a hunter. The space also includes a life-size papier-mâché leopard, plastic tusks made from melted toys and a trio of taxidermied birds including a pheasant, swan and scarlet ibis. None of this is supposed to go together, but that's the point. The sisters rely on traditional design rules such as color balancing and shape variation, and then bend them to give the space personality.

Hollister and Porter Hovey took different paths out of Kansas. Hollister worked as a reporter before joining a health-care public-relations firm, where she still works, and Porter worked at an art gallery in Manhattan before dabbling in music pub-

lic relations and, now, real estate.

Their first client, Peter Jenkins, was one of Porter's bosses who hired them to decorate his penthouse loft apartment in Williamsburg. It was so well-received that it quickly led to more clients; the apartment he bought for \$2.16 million in 2011 was listed for \$3.25 million and is now under contract.

In their book, the sisters offer personal examples of translating a life story into décor. The book draws on a mixture of family and friends for inspiration; subjects include their aunt and grandmother, along with friends like New York hotelier Sean MacPherson, of the Bowery and Jane Hottels.

"We often feel like we've been branded as these vintage puritans, but it's not that simple," Hollister says. "Taste is more complicated than that. In the book, Sean talks about how the Navajo intentionally weave mistakes into their rugs as a way of celebrating imperfection, and I thought, 'That's it.' It's the antiger-neric. It's about breaking out of traditional design boxes in order to build your own."



SPREAD SHEET

The Ritziest Gold Coast of Them All

Worth Their Weight?

A look at the real-estate market in five areas referred to by the locals as a 'gold coast.'

GOLD COAST	MEDIAN LISTING PRICE	CHANGE IN INVENTORY, YEAR OVER YEAR
Seattle	\$1,224,125	-53%
Long Island, N.Y.	\$1,199,000	-50%
Ventura County, Calif.	\$899,000	-52%
Chicago	\$548,250	-40%
South Florida	\$424,900	-42%

Source: Trulia; Note: Data as of April 1; current listings exclude foreclosures



GOLDEN ERA Leonardo DiCaprio plays Jay Gatsby in the film that depicts the Roaring '20s on Long Island's Gold Coast.

LOOK AT A MAP of New York and you won't find a town called West Egg, home of F. Scott Fitzgerald's fictional tycoon Jay Gatsby.

Instead, look for villages such as Kings Point and Sands Point along Nassau County's Gold Coast, where colossal, gilded-age mansions inspired "The Great Gatsby." The area is just as opulent today as it was in the Roaring Twenties, when the book's events took place. According to real-estate website Trulia, homes currently for sale on Long Island's Gold Coast have a median listing price of \$1.199 million.

Large estates "have been flying out the door recently," says Paul J. Mateyunas, a real-estate agent with Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty and author of two books on Long Island's Gold Coast.

Another Gold Coast is, even costlier than Gatsby's, according to the Trulia analysis. Washington state's Gold Coast, located in the eastern suburbs of Seattle, has a median listing

price of \$1,224,125.

The eastern suburbs have been home to many of Seattle's wealthy residents since the late 1800s, but the software boom in the 1990s sparked new interest in Medina, Bellevue and Mercer Island, says John Deely, principal managing broker at Coldwell Banker Bain based in Seattle. "We ended up with a high concentration of millionaires and multimillionaires, and they predominantly located on the east side of Seattle," says Mr. Deely, citing tech titans like Bill Gates and Paul Allen.

Many high-end buyers there build large estates by joining together two or three lots, bumping up home values. Now, there's hardly any new construction, and inventory is tight, he says. The median listing price in the greater Seattle metro is \$334,975—roughly a quarter of the Gold Coast's, according to Trulia.

Not all gold coasts have long and storied histories. Starting in the 1950s, the gold coast moniker referred to a number

of cities along South Florida's coastline, explains Beth Butler, president and chief operating officer at One Sotheby's International Realty in Coral Gables, Fla. Later, the designation developed a "cocaine cowboy"-type reputation, and by the 1980s, some cities, such as Palm Beach, wanted to distance themselves from the nickname. As a result, "every 100 miles of coastline now has a different coast reference to distinguish itself," Ms. Butler says. "We've got the Treasure Coast, the Gold Coast, the Forgotten Coast, the Space Coast."

Today, "gold coast" is back in vogue and evokes an old-world elegance that attracts high-end buyers, Ms. Butler says. Of course, let's not forget the obvious: "Our Gold Coast accounts for our sun, too," she says. "We have the best weather of any other gold coast."

—Sanette Tanaka

► See asking prices for 'Gold Coast' homes around the U.S. at Blogs.WSJ.com/Developments.



SOUTH FLORIDA



CHICAGO



LONG ISLAND, N.Y.



VENTURA COUNTY, CALIF.



SEATTLE