

THE BUZZ: DESIGN

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUG BENING

BACK TO LIFE

Architectural artifacts get CPR at South Loop's Revival

The official story on how Mark Steinke arrived at the name Revival for his South Loop architectural artifacts boutique is that he was inspired by David Adler, the famed "revivalist" architect who built homes with a decidedly European flair along Chicago's North Shore in the 1930s and '40s. Steinke, like Adler, has a passion for reintroducing traditionalist designs with a modern twist. But it's worth noting that the building housing the store—actually an extension of restaurant developer Jerry Kleiner's Chicago Illuminating Company event venue—has recently experienced a revival of its own, having been transformed from a dark, abandoned power plant into a happening multi-use space. Thanks to a thoughtful renovation, the store is not your average cluttered, dusty dungeon of an architectural salvage company; instead, the space boasts immaculate white walls, floor-to-ceiling windows, and clerestories lining two sides of the store. Revival—the space, its contents and even the up-and-coming neighborhood in which it's located—is a lesson in second chances.

"We mix pieces from all periods, from the 18th century through the 1980s," says Steinke, former managing director of Salvage One, one of the city's leading purveyors of antiques and architectural "reclamation." And while Salvage One has been operating for nearly 30 years, upstart Revival offers clients a new way to experience and integrate these unique and rare finds into their homes.

"I've found that people don't always know how to use architectural artifacts," says Steinke. "That's why we present these objects in little vignettes. We provide a contextual setting for these pieces to show how they can be used and how they can be placed. It takes away some of the guess work."

To illustrate his point, Steinke indicates an ornate 18th-century armoire that is paired with a '70s bubble-mirror (a piece that appears as if it were rescued from a fun house). "I like to mix things up," he says. "We look at scale, proportion and design. Currently, we're buying up a lot of '70s and early '80s stuff—lots of chrome and Lucite and lacquer—but only things that have classic overtones."

Revival's offerings range from the whimsical (French market bags for \$95, a cobalt blue Swedish candy dish for \$115) to the sublime (Modern wire chairs for \$425 a pair, vintage French brass sconces for \$1,250) to the one-of-a-kind (a 19th-century Italian fireplace mantel for \$18,000). These objects coexist in a kaleidoscope of color, texture and form that are meant to inspire both the casual shopper as well as the professional designer. In fact, celebrity interior designers have been flocking to Revival since its opening in July 2004, spurred on by word of mouth and notable write-ups in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

"We had some people in from London the other day, and they commented on the fact that this space is Chicago's own version of the Tate, the modern art gallery that was built inside a former power plant," says Steinke. "That's not exactly what we had in mind when we converted this building, but in a sense they're right. The big difference is that we're not trying to be a museum or gallery. We simply want to provide a modern space where people can look at—and buy—amazing artifacts." ■

