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## NATURAL SELECTION

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# LOFTY IDEAL

*For his flat in a Borough warehouse conversion, a designer eschewed the predictable 'loft style', fitting it out – without any need for radical reconfiguration – as a comfortable, traditional backdrop for his collection of antique French furniture*



The sitting room showcases Robert Moore's preferred mix of Continental, antique furniture with classic fabrics and colours. The French, nineteenth-century, parcel-gilt fauteuils were bought in Paris; the Chinese birdcage came from an antiques shop in Bath

TEXT BECKY PUGH | PHOTOGRAPHS LUCAS ALLEN  
LOCATIONS EDITOR LAVINIA BOLTON





Walk through the door of interior designer Robert Moore's London flat and you are in for a big surprise. In an old tea warehouse in the heart of Borough, you might expect to find a cavernous loft-style space full of exposed brick, white walls and modern art, but that is not Robert's style. 'Too often, people take a warehouse space and think it's got to be uber modern. They don't think of treating it in a traditional way,' he says. 'I like a mix of Continental, antique pieces with classic fabrics and colours. I'm not big on English furniture, but I do have to curb my passion for French antiques, and deconstruct it. I can't indulge myself too much – otherwise I'd be going around in a powdered wig.'

Robert has spent the last 13 years working in the Pimlico interiors shop Nicholas Haslam, with owner Paolo Moschino. His projects there have included a chalet in Switzerland, a country house in New York State, and a town house in Kensington, but this flat is the first property he has done up for himself. 'I had in mind a blueprint of how I'd like it to be, but it didn't happen immediately. When it is yours, you need to live in it a bit. It really feels like home to me now,' he says.

Structurally and in terms of layout, the flat was to his taste when he bought it, allowing his part in its transformation to be purely aesthetic. He applied mouldings to the doors, replaced the bathrooms, had custom-made wardrobes installed, boxed in radiators to create a more streamlined feel, put up shutters, and hung curtains made from sophisticated, Nicholas Haslam fabrics. He also repainted throughout, in warm, muted blues, greens and off-whites.

The result is that the 102-square-metre space feels like a grand French salon. It may be compact but, Robert says, 'it works well for its footprint.' A generous entrance hall opens on to a utility room, a bathroom, an elegant main bedroom with en-suite shower room, a spare bedroom that doubles as a study, and an open-plan kitchen and sitting room – evidently Robert's pièce de résistance. A stunning, folding mirror-glass screen divides the neat kitchen area from the dining table and sitting area, and throws out extra light. 'It works because you can be cooking in the kitchen, but still be part of the room, while your guests are spared the sight of what's on the draining board,' he explains.

Robert is a self-confessed magpie, so each room is bursting with beautiful things: books, photographs and silvery trinkets adorn every surface. Deep, well-stuffed sofas mingle with pretty, Louis XV-style armchairs. A glazed-and-painted vitrine displays Robert's aunt's china and an array of decanters, vases and jugs. Exquisitely framed pictures hang in carefully chosen spots – some are his own sketches, others the result of his keen eye for a junk-shop gem.

Without rewiring the flat, Robert has illuminated his favourite objects inventively. 'I like using alternative ways of lighting things,' he explains. 'I find that simple uplighters give portraits better light than proper picture lights, while a desk lamp – a Nicholas Haslam design – mounted on top of the vitrine, lights up its contents perfectly.'

It is clear that Robert's creative juices never stop flowing. With the decoration of the flat complete, he plans to renovate the interior of the 1958 motor yacht he keeps in Norfolk for weekends. 'It's my plaything, my pride and joy. I've been doing up the exterior; the inside – where there is stunning teak all over the place – will be next. I'm thinking lots of tan, herringbone fabric, and leather-piped cushions,' he enthuses, clearly lost in the sheer potential of a new design venture □

Robert Moore, at Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam: 020-7730 8623; [www.nicholashaslam.com](http://www.nicholashaslam.com)

**THIS PAGE** The sitting area (top) is adjacent to the dining area (centre left) and is divided from the kitchen (bottom) by a folding, mirror-glass screen. A glazed and painted vitrine (centre right) holds china and glass. **OPPOSITE** **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** The

Beidermeier secretaire in the entrance hall came from a Swedish furniture dealer. The candelabrum is from Brussels. The spare bedroom is also a study. The main bedroom is painted in 'Tablecloth', by Paint & Paper Library; the mirror was bought in Arundel

