

SOUTHERN *Lady*

COLOR YOUR
SUMMER

FRESH LOOKS
INSIDE & OUT

BEACH
**TRAVEL
ESSENTIALS**

easy treats
TO BEAT THE HEAT
**fresh watermelon sorbet
and more**

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PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF NICKI HUGGINS

Creative Reflections

Draw inspiration from a designer who, driven by a love for candy colors and all things summer, began reinventing vintage patio furniture and discovered a style that blurs the threshold separating indoor and outdoor living.

BY KATHLEEN JOHNSTON

While other antiques enthusiasts search for rosewood armchairs or Victorian sofas, Nicki Huggins has her sights set on a different sort of seating. Inspired by the old glider from her grandmother's front porch, where she spent Southern summer evenings watching fireflies and eating watermelon, Nicki is interested in the American-made steel patio furniture of the 1920s to 1960s. The restored gliders and chairs headline her company, Retropatio, as well as a unique style we thought perfect for summertime spruce ups. After all, Nicki has become a pro at creating outdoor spaces that feel like rooms, indoor spaces that feel like porches, and an overall design scheme that feels like there is no great difference between the two.

This easy-to-achieve style relies heavily on hues. Nicki says, "Don't just think in terms of green and brown outside. Flowers have color—why can't furniture?" Take cues from the hibiscus brightly blooming on the patio, and apply those bold shades to furnishings inside. With a fresh coat of cherry red paint, a teak bench designed by Nicki goes from a beach condo balcony to modern-style guest bedroom with the greatest of ease. The bright color, her favorite, gives the piece new attitude and enhances its asymmetrical flowing curves. To punctuate the statement made by this live-out-loud bench, Nicki relied on her aptitude for making old things new and created wall art with a custom mirror and a combination of old and new plates.

You can get the same chic look with most any mirror, so scavenge thrift stores and even your own cupboards for current and vintage dinnerware in a variety of shapes, sizes, patterns, and complementary colors. Consider giving your "frame" a theme, and search for dishes bearing botanical or landscape motifs. Attach hardware for hanging to the back of the mirror, and affix plates using a construction-grade adhesive. Then simply sit back to reflect on your inside-out, or rather outside-in, makeover. ♣



Retropatio owner Nicki Huggins believes the glider is the most nostalgic piece of furniture ever made. "It's symbolic of what we want to create and hand down in our families," she says. Nicki first began researching and redesigning the vintage pieces for her California home, but her desire to share these examples of vanishing Americana led her to create her fun and fresh company. For information, visit retropatio.com.