

LEARNING MADE EASY



# Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor

for  
**dummies**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand



Step-by-step tips on  
how to upcycle furniture

Learn how to sell  
your creations for a profit

Give your old furniture  
a second life

**Judy Rom**

Champion of Upcycling at  
UpcycleThat.com





# Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor

**by Judy Rom**

Champion of Upcycling at [UpcycleThat.com](http://UpcycleThat.com)

**for  
dummies<sup>®</sup>**  
A Wiley Brand

## Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Copyright © 2023 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

**Trademarks:** Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHORS HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS WORK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES, WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS OR PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS FOR THIS WORK. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION, WEBSITE, OR PRODUCT IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHORS ENDORSE THE INFORMATION OR SERVICES THE ORGANIZATION, WEBSITE, OR PRODUCT MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A SPECIALIST WHERE APPROPRIATE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR AUTHORS SHALL BE LIABLE FOR ANY LOSS OF PROFIT OR ANY OTHER COMMERCIAL DAMAGES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR OTHER DAMAGES.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit <https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023933138

ISBN: 978-1-394-15002-1 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-15004-5 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-394-15003-8 (ebk)

# Contents at a Glance

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Part 1: Getting Started with Upcycling</b> .....	5
CHAPTER 1: Getting Excited about Upcycling .....	7
CHAPTER 2: Sleuthing Out Materials .....	21
CHAPTER 3: Tapping Into Your Creativity .....	37
<b>Part 2: The Big Upcycle: Preparing and Painting Your Piece</b> .....	47
CHAPTER 4: Preparing Your Piece for Transformation .....	49
CHAPTER 5: Sprucing Up Your Furniture Piece .....	57
CHAPTER 6: Finishing and Sealing Your Piece .....	77
CHAPTER 7: Adding Patina and Final Touches to Make Your Piece Pop .....	85
CHAPTER 8: Rejuvenating Antiques .....	105
<b>Part 3: Other Upcycling Techniques</b> .....	117
CHAPTER 9: Upholstery 101 .....	119
CHAPTER 10: Getting on the Cutting Edge with Glass .....	133
CHAPTER 11: Reclaimed to Fame Wood .....	143
<b>Part 4: Upcycling Tutorials for Your Home</b> .....	155
CHAPTER 12: Reimagining Furniture .....	157
CHAPTER 13: Elevating a Room with Home Decor .....	183
CHAPTER 14: Shining the Spotlight on Lamps .....	199
CHAPTER 15: Upcycling Art for Any Space .....	211
CHAPTER 16: Planters on Cloud Wine .....	221
<b>Part 5: The Four Ps of Selling Your Pieces</b> .....	233
CHAPTER 17: Planning for Props and Photography .....	235
CHAPTER 18: Putting Together Pricing and Promotion .....	249
<b>Part 6: The Part of Tens</b> .....	257
CHAPTER 19: Ten Things to Look for at a Thrift Store .....	259
CHAPTER 20: Ten Ways to Reuse Glass Jars .....	267
<b>Index</b> .....	275



# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
About This Book .....	1
Foolish Assumptions .....	2
Icons Used in This Book .....	2
Beyond the Book .....	3
Where to Go from Here .....	3
<b>PART 1: GETTING STARTED WITH UPCYCLING</b> .....	5
<b>CHAPTER 1: Getting Excited about Upcycling</b> .....	7
Upcycling Explained .....	8
Understanding the difference between upcycling and recycling .....	8
Discovering the benefits of upcycling .....	8
Entering the World of Upcycling .....	9
Starting with materials in hand .....	9
Working toward an end-use vision .....	10
Upcycling Inspiration for Your Home .....	11
Fun, yet functional furniture .....	12
Eye-catching home decor .....	12
Lamps that light the way .....	13
Gorgeous garden upcycles .....	16
Smart storage solutions .....	17
Art for any space .....	17
Holidays decor upcycles .....	19
<b>CHAPTER 2: Sleuthing Out Materials</b> .....	21
Hunting Down Materials .....	21
A thrilling adventure: Thrift stores .....	22
A 24/7 opportunity: Online marketplaces .....	23
The weekend mission: Garage sales .....	25
The treasure trove: Estate sales .....	27
The casual score: Friends and family .....	28
The inspirational scout: Reuse stores .....	28
The fortuitous find: On the street .....	29
Knowing What to Look For (and What to Avoid!) When Sourcing .....	31
Examining secondhand furniture — what to look for .....	31
Examining secondhand furniture — what to avoid .....	33
Preparing to Scour Thrift Stores .....	35
Building a thrift kit .....	35
Knowing your space .....	35
Knowing yourself .....	36

<b>CHAPTER 3: Tapping Into Your Creativity</b> .....	37
Getting Inspired .....	38
Discovering inspiration in the world .....	38
Browsing Pinterest .....	38
Browsing Instagram .....	40
Making Mood Boards .....	42
Working with Color Schemes .....	44
Sketching Your Vision .....	45
<b>PART 2: THE BIG UPCYCLE: PREPARING AND PAINTING YOUR PIECE</b> .....	47
<b>CHAPTER 4: Preparing Your Piece for Transformation</b> .....	49
Gathering Your Tools and Materials .....	50
Cleaning .....	50
Sanding .....	50
Priming .....	51
Cleaning 101 .....	52
Sanding 101 .....	53
Recognizing why sanding is your friend .....	53
Smoothing your way to master sander status .....	53
Cleaning up the dust storm .....	54
Knowing when you can skip sanding .....	55
Priming 101 .....	55
<b>CHAPTER 5: Sprucing Up Your Furniture Piece</b> .....	57
Painting in Proper Sequence .....	57
Gathering Your Tools and Materials .....	58
Brushes .....	58
Proper paintbrush care .....	60
Types of paint .....	60
Understanding the Painting Process .....	62
Becoming Familiar with Painting Techniques .....	63
Painting perfect lines .....	63
Creating an ombre effect .....	65
Creating Interest with Papers and Designs .....	66
Stencils .....	66
Wallpapers .....	68
Decoupage .....	71
Gold Leaf .....	73

<b>CHAPTER 6: Finishing and Sealing Your Piece</b> .....	77
Getting to Know Sealants.....	78
Using Sealants.....	79
Applying with a brush.....	79
Getting a flawless finish with a roller.....	81
Spraying sealant.....	82
Working with wax.....	83
Applying oil.....	84
<b>CHAPTER 7: Adding Patina and Final Touches to Make Your Piece Pop</b> .....	85
Putting on a Finish with Patina.....	86
Distressing with sandpaper and tools.....	87
Aging wood with tea, vinegar, and steel wool.....	89
Whitewashing.....	91
Dry brushing.....	92
Creating layers with petroleum jelly.....	94
Scraping.....	96
Wet distressing.....	97
Making Pieces Functional with Furniture Hardware.....	99
Choosing hardware.....	99
Installing hardware.....	102
<b>CHAPTER 8: Rejuvenating Antiques</b> .....	105
Understanding What Furniture Restoration Is.....	106
Restoring and Repairing.....	107
Getting started.....	108
Removing the old finish.....	110
Removing black marks.....	110
Removing white rings.....	110
Repairing scratches, chips, and cracks.....	111
Restoring missing color.....	112
Refinishing Antique Furniture.....	113
<b>PART 3: OTHER UPCYCLING TECHNIQUES</b> .....	117
<b>CHAPTER 9: Upholstery 101</b> .....	119
Considering Reupholstery.....	120
Selecting a good piece.....	120
Learning the tools of the trade.....	121
Choosing the best fabric.....	122

Reupholstering a Chair . . . . .	124
Stripping to prepare for something fresh . . . . .	124
Measuring and cutting foam . . . . .	125
Fabric measurements and cutting . . . . .	126
Stapling your way to a new look . . . . .	127
Securing corners with pleats . . . . .	128
Trimming to trick out . . . . .	129
Reattaching and the big reveal . . . . .	130
<b>CHAPTER 10: Getting on the Cutting Edge with Glass . . . . .</b>	<b>133</b>
Cutting Glass Bottles with Sharp Techniques . . . . .	133
Scoring leads to winning. . . . .	134
Feeling 5 o'clock fabulous. . . . .	138
Drilling Holes into Glass . . . . .	140
The thrill of the drill. . . . .	140
Drilling drainage holes . . . . .	142
<b>CHAPTER 11: Reclaimed to Fame Wood . . . . .</b>	<b>143</b>
Bringing Old Wood Back to Life. . . . .	144
Sourcing reclaimed wood. . . . .	144
Giving new life to old boards. . . . .	145
Giving Pallets a Second Life . . . . .	146
Picking a pallet . . . . .	147
Disassembling a pallet . . . . .	148
Divining Pallet Inspiration . . . . .	152
<b>PART 4: UPCYCLING TUTORIALS FOR YOUR HOME. . . . .</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>CHAPTER 12: Reimagining Furniture . . . . .</b>	<b>157</b>
Chevron-Inspired Desk . . . . .	157
Drawer-Turned Desk. . . . .	164
Steamer Trunk Bar . . . . .	165
Industrial Side Table . . . . .	172
Victorian-Style Parlor Chair . . . . .	177
Ombre Side Table . . . . .	180
<b>CHAPTER 13: Elevating a Room with Home Decor . . . . .</b>	<b>183</b>
How to Choose Home Decor . . . . .	184
Teacup Candles . . . . .	184
Tiered Trays . . . . .	189
Mountain Shelves . . . . .	193
<b>CHAPTER 14: Shining the Spotlight on Lamps . . . . .</b>	<b>199</b>
Fire Truck Lamp . . . . .	199
Mondrian Glass Pendant . . . . .	203

CHAPTER 15:	<b>Upcycling Art for Any Space</b> .....	211
	Beach Plastic Mosaic .....	212
	The Classic Collage .....	216
CHAPTER 16:	<b>Planters on Cloud Wine</b> .....	221
	Constructing Wine Cork Planters .....	221
	Cutting Wine Bottle Planters .....	226
<b>PART 5: THE FOUR PS OF SELLING YOUR PIECES</b> .....		233
CHAPTER 17:	<b>Planning for Props and Photography</b> .....	235
	Setting the Scene with Styling and Staging .....	235
	Setting the mood with props .....	236
	Location, location, location .....	239
	Photographing like a Pro .....	241
	Gearing up for a shoot .....	241
	Finding the best angle .....	242
	Photo composition .....	243
	Using natural and fill lighting .....	244
	Accenting images through editing .....	245
CHAPTER 18:	<b>Putting Together Pricing and Promotion</b> .....	249
	Pricing Your Piece .....	250
	Flipping for profit .....	250
	Using the handy-dandy furniture pricing calculator .....	250
	Purposeful pricing .....	251
	Making the highest margins .....	253
	Posting and Promoting .....	253
	Creating an online presence .....	253
	Finding places to sell your upcycles .....	254
	Selling with sizzle: Helpful selling tips .....	255
<b>PART 6: THE PART OF TENS</b> .....		257
CHAPTER 19:	<b>Ten Things to Look for at a Thrift Store</b> .....	259
	Real Wood Furniture Pieces .....	259
	Vintage Glassware .....	260
	Lamps .....	263
	Vases .....	263
	Artwork .....	263
	Wicker .....	264
	Textiles .....	265
	Old Books .....	265
	Silverware .....	266
	Seasonal Decor .....	266

<b>CHAPTER 20: Ten Ways to Reuse Glass Jars</b> .....	267
Vases .....	267
Candles .....	268
Gift Jars .....	269
Animal Jars .....	270
Mason Jar Oil Lamp .....	271
Herb Garden .....	271
Food Storage .....	272
Bird Feeder .....	272
Mason Jar Chandelier .....	273
Seasonal Luminaries .....	273
<b>INDEX</b> .....	275

# Introduction

Welcome to *Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor For Dummies*! If you're reading this book, you must be interested in upcycling. Upcycling is taking something that's considered waste, and turning it into something more functional, beautiful, and valuable. Congratulations for being savvy! Upcycling is truly the best way to get stylish and original furniture and home decor. It's fun, good for the environment, affordable, and oh so satisfying!

This book is for aspiring fixer-uppers. If you've never done it before, upcycling may seem daunting. But don't fret; this book will be your guide. I'll show you step by step how to source and transform items to give them a new lease on life.

## About This Book

Have you ever seen amazing upcycled pieces and wondered how they were created? This book illuminates the process and sets you up with everything you need to know to start. *Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor For Dummies* makes upcycling projects easy and enjoyable.

In no time at all you'll be updating items with your own unique flair and even selling your pieces if you want to. Because upcycling should be fun and accessible, this book is divided into six piece-of-cake parts:

- » **Part 1, "Getting Started with Upcycling":** Explore what upcycling is and find out how to save items from the landfill. Experience the thrill of the hunt! Here I explain where to find items, and how to increase their value with your ingenuity.
- » **Part 2, "The Big Upcycle: Preparing and Painting Your Piece":** Gain clarity on how to prepare your piece so that it lasts. I walk you through the tools of the trade and explain the techniques of priming, painting, and sealing. This section covers lots of amazing expertise for enhancing patina (rustic charm and aging), as well as how to add the finishing touches to take your pieces to the next level.

- » **Part 3, “Other Upcycling Techniques”:** Find out easy and specific ways to upcycle. Discover the revitalizing techniques of reupholstery; delve into the world of glass-cutting; and get pro tips for sourcing and reusing reclaimed wood.
- » **Part 4, “Upcycling Tutorials for Your Home”:** Pick up the processes for upcycling furniture like desks, tables, chairs, and more. Work through tutorials one step at a time to learn how to reimagine furniture and home decor.
- » **Part 5, “The Four Ps of Selling Your Pieces”:** After you’ve had some practice, you may want to reap the rewards of selling your creations. The four Ps — props, photography, pricing, and promotion — are key to lining up customers. I share how to style, stage, and photograph your items. I also take the guesswork out of pricing and promotion, so that you can confidently sell with sizzle.
- » **Part 6, “The Part of Tens”:** Certain items are always great for upcycling. Find out what they are so that you can nab ‘em when you see ‘em. It’s ideal to reuse items that you naturally have a lot of, like glass mason jars. Get wise to the top ten ways to repurpose them.

## Foolish Assumptions

This book is for people who want to turn trash into treasure. It’s for anyone who’s curious about learning how to upcycle furniture and home decor. Maybe you want to create upcycled items for your home or as a fun hobby that you can make money doing. I’ve assumed that you’ve probably never done an upcycling project before, but that you’re thrifty and eco-conscious.

Perhaps you already have some items that you’d like to refresh, but you’re not sure how to start. Even if you’re not naturally crafty, this book shows you how to transform and repurpose with panache.

## Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, icons in the margins call out for your attention. These icons highlight certain types of valuable information. Here are the icons that I use, with a brief description of each one.



TIP

The Tip icon marks practical tips and shortcuts you can use to make upcycling easier.



REMEMBER

Remember icons mark the information that is especially important to know. They help you to avoid common pitfalls. When you see this icon, you know that the information is important enough to read twice.



WARNING

The Warning icon tells you to watch out. It marks important information that could be detrimental to your success while upcycling. This icon isn't used a lot, so pay attention when you see it.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to the abundance of information and guidance related to upcycling that I provide in this book, you get access to even more help and information online at <https://dummies.com>. Check out this book's online Cheat Sheet for information about where to find materials and what to look out for. To find it, go to <https://dummies.com> and search for "Upcycling Furniture & Home Decor For Dummies Cheat Sheet."

You can find even more upcycling information and inspiration on my website, [www.upcyclethat.com](http://www.upcyclethat.com).

## Where to Go from Here

How you read this book is totally up to you. Start from the top to get excited about upcycling and to discover where to find inspiration and materials.

The linear route sets you up with the foundational knowledge of how to prepare for upcycling and brings you up to date on upcycling techniques you can use. Or, you might be raring to go and prefer to drop right into specific tutorials. Each chapter stands on its own, so feel free to reference chapters as you see fit.

Regardless of whether you go front to back or pick and choose, this book is ready to launch your adventures in upcycling. Let's get started!



1

# Getting Started with Upcycling

### **IN THIS PART . . .**

Dive into the world of upcycling with inspiring examples of “trash” turned into treasure.

Find out how you can create value and income while also saving furniture from going to the landfill.

Discover which materials are best for upcycling and where to find them. Gain crystal-clear clarity on what to look for when you’re sourcing.

Learn how to use mood boards, color schemes, and sketches to activate your creative juju and bring your unique designs to life.

- » Uncovering what upcycling is
- » Understanding the difference between upcycling and recycling
- » Discovering the benefits of upcycling and getting inspired to begin

## Chapter **1**

# Getting Excited about Upcycling

**T**here are a myriad of reasons to get excited about upcycling. To begin with, upcycling is like modern-day alchemy. It transforms unwanted items into highly prized pieces. It's like turning trash into treasure!

Another reason to get into upcycling is that it's eco-conscious. In a world experiencing a garbage crisis, upcycling is a part of the solution. It feels positively magnificent to rescue and reimagine items headed for the landfill. Also, it's downright thrilling selling pieces for a profit. That's right — upcycling is an environmentally-savvy hobby that can earn you cash.

In this chapter, I explain what upcycling is and explore its benefits. You'll also discover the first steps of upcycling and find the inspiration you need to start. Prepare to see the world around you differently!

# Upcycling Explained

Upcycling is taking something that otherwise would be considered waste and reusing it. Often the item is reimagined with an entirely different purpose.



TIP

It's called *upcycling* because the value of the item increases. It becomes more functional and beautiful than what it previously was.

## Understanding the difference between upcycling and recycling

Upcycling and recycling aren't the same because they have different processes. With recycling, items are broken down before they're reused. For example, plastic is shredded and melted down into pellets.

As the material is recycled, its value degrades, so the process of recycling is sometimes referred to as downcycling. For instance, recycled plastic isn't as valuable as virgin plastic, and can only be recycled a finite number of times.

Whereas downcycling reduces the value of an item, upcycling increases it. The item is reimagined and reborn. It goes from being an unwanted discard to a highly sought-after and valued piece. It's an inspiring journey!

## Discovering the benefits of upcycling

The benefits to upcycling are plentiful but include environmental, creative, and financial. Here are some of the top advantages:

- » **Upcycling is good for the environment:** First and foremost, upcycling is great because it reduces the waste that ends up in a landfill. Beyond that, as items are reused, the demand decreases for raw materials to create new products. This in turn lowers air and water pollution. It's like a snowball effect for environmental conservation.
- » **Upcycling encourages creativity:** Upcycling ignites your creativity. It's an innovative process with no limits. Plus, getting crafty and doing it yourself is satisfying.

- » **Upcycling saves money:** Upcycling furniture instead of buying it new can save you thousands of dollars. It's also an attainable way to get custom, one-of-a-kind pieces.
- » **Upcycling generates value and income:** Upcycling and reselling furniture and home decor is an awesome side hustle. It's a smart way to make money by being creative.
- » **Upcycling is beautiful:** Upcycled items are often bespoke. These items feature custom artisanship and are stylishly unique.
- » **Upcycling is fun and accessible:** Anyone can be an upcycler. With a bit of passion and commitment, you too can learn how. The materials are just waiting to be discovered, and finding them is one of the best parts.
- » **Upcycling is inspiring:** The flash of inspiration to upcycle can come from the most unexpected pieces. That's part of the magic. Once you start creating, you won't want to stop.
- » **Upcycling is meaningful:** Upcycled pieces have a history and character to them that you just don't find with "fast furniture" (low-quality, mass-produced furniture that's being rapidly bought, used briefly, and quickly discarded). The item has already lived a life (or two), and that makes it special. In addition, upcycling supports local artisans.

## Entering the World of Upcycling

You begin upcycling either by using what you already have, or by scouring for materials with a project in mind.

### Starting with materials in hand

When you already have the materials, there's a great opportunity to use your imagination. Do you want to repaint and refinish the item, or do you want to repurpose it into something completely new?



TIP

Think about what the item *could* become. Figure 1-1 On the left is a door that was converted into a table. On the right is an epic coffee table made from a dresser drawer. Find out how to make it in Chapter 12.

**FIGURE 1-1:** Door table by Curtis Smeltzer of Handy Father LLC (left). This gorgeous coffee table by Judy Rom was made from a dresser drawer found in an alley (right).



## Working toward an end-use vision

Alternatively, you might have a piece of furniture or decor that you want to create, like a dramatic light fixture, and just need to find the supplies. You can repurpose glass plates and bowls into light shades, like in Figure 1-2.



TIP

Charming glassware is waiting to be rescued at your local thrift shop.



**FIGURE 1-2:**  
Roos Kalff of  
Studio Kalff  
upcycled this  
stunning  
cluster of  
pendant lights.

## Upcycling Inspiration for Your Home

Upcycling is your opportunity to get creative. You can upcycle furniture in thousands of ways. In this section, I provide lots of visual inspiration!

## Fun, yet functional furniture

Sometimes it takes removing part of the original item to repurpose it. On the left of Figure 1-3 there's an awesome bathroom vanity made from a dresser. Charlotte Smith of At Charlotte's House refinished this piece and used a jig to cut out a place for the bathroom sink and faucet. She also retrofitted the drawers so they'd still be functional. To finish the piece, the artisan applied a heavy-duty sealant to the dresser to keep it from warping in the humidity of the bathroom.

Sometimes the piece needs to be added to. On the right of Figure 1-3, there's an IKEA cabinet that Teofi González of The Kiyomi transformed by adding a veneer cutout and gorgeous pastel hues. Trendy new legs complete the look.

**FIGURE 1-3:**  
Bathroom vanity by Charlotte Smith (left). Reimagined cabinet by Teofi González (right).



The console on the left of Figure 1-4 appears perfectly worn and weathered. This stunning coastal look was achieved by painting it with multiple colors and layers, using salt wash for texture and then sanding it smooth. On the right of Figure 1-4, you see a curvy, scalloped dresser that was completely transformed with a white, turquoise, teal, and deep blue ombre. The upcycler perfectly accented the piece with gold leaf to create a stunning geode design.

## Eye-catching home decor

Home decor is important because it sets the tone for your home. Style is completely subjective, and you can express yourself in unlimited ways.

**FIGURE 1-4:** Weathered console table by Michelle Dickson and Stephanie Hofer of Sunny Side Design (left). Geode cabinet by Kate Anderson of KT Designs (right).



Vinyl records will always have that cool factor. Unfortunately, they're often scratched beyond use. Turning them into home decor is a great way to keep the music alive. The top left of Figure 1-5 shows a record turned into a bowl.

The skateboard decks-turned-shelves shown in the bottom left of Figure 1-5 are ideal for a skater.

Denim upcycles are classic. You can turn ripped jeans into multiple creative home furnishings, like those shown in the top right and bottom right in Figure 1-5.

## Lamps that light the way

Upcycled lighting will really brighten up your life. There are lots of inventive ways to reimagine items into lights. Repurposing an item as a lamp shade for a pendant light is one of the most effective ways to create a light source.



**TIP**

You can buy a pendant light cord from your local hardware store or online.

At the top of Figure 1-6, Heinz Beanz cans have been turned into funky pendant lights by Willem Heeffer, a Dutch designer.

It's also possible to make lamps out of electrical wire, light sockets, and a lamp switch wire and plug. The phone lamp in the middle left of Figure 1-6 was DIY-ed by Judy Rom and Bart Taylor with those items, a bit of imagination, and an old rotary phone.



**FIGURE 1-5:** Record bowl by Judy Rom of Upcycle That (top left). Skate decks suspended by aircraft cables by Judy Rom of Upcycle That (bottom left). Denim home decor upcycles by Claire Armstrong of Pillar Box Blue (top and bottom right).

A Sputnik-style light on the middle right of Figure 1-6 is a modern take on upcycled lighting. Sputnik lamps have multiple arms that each have a bulb. This kind of fixture became popular in the Atomic Age (1940–1960s) when the first satellite orbited Earth. This stunning Sputnik chandelier with Depression glass used as shades was designed by Jeff Risinger and Mark Winn of BootsNGus.com.



**FIGURE 1-6:** Iconic cans turned into pop art lighting (top). Retro phone reimagined (middle left). Upcycled plates are illuminated by this gorgeous Sputnik chandelier from Jeff Risinger and Mark Winn of BootsNGus.com (middle right). Rainbow mason jar chandelier from Jeff Risinger and Mark Winn of BootsNGus.com (bottom).

Multiple items look gorgeous grouped together as a chandelier. The bottom of Figure 1-6 features a stunning rainbow chandelier by Jeff Risinger and Mark Winn of BootsNGus.com made with painted mason jars. The center ring used here is made from solid wood. Additionally, the lids have been drilled to allow heat to escape so that the jars won't overheat.

## Gorgeous garden upcycles

You won't believe the extent of what you can upcycle into planters. The top left of Figure 1-7 shows an incredible TV-turned terrarium.

Covering plant pots with a burlap coffee bean bag is a delightful way to dress them up! The bottom left of Figure 1-7 shows the look.

Upcycling is a fabulous way to embellish your garden. The right side of Figure 1-7 shows some lovely garden markers made with vintage silverware. The names of the herbs have been hand stamped onto each one. They're positively delightful!

**FIGURE 1-7:**  
Captivating TV terrarium by Heather Jeffery of Re4m (top left). Coffee bean bag plant pot covers by Helen Bradbury of Plant Apparel UK (bottom left). Silverware garden markers by Lindsay Brown of The Woodsy Way (right).



## Smart storage solutions

There are scads of ways to upcycle for organization. Crates are particularly practical. You can repurpose vintage fruit or wine crates to hold shoes, toys, books, towels — you name it!

Figure 1-8 shows an example of how to stack and style crates in a foyer.



**FIGURE 1-8:** Wooden crates are both functional and decorative.

A boot bench is an inventive two-in-one idea. Made with reclaimed wood, it offers a helpful place to sit and put your boots on. It also has an open side that can house a large storage bin. Figure 1-9 shows the vibe.

## Art for any space

Art and upcycling go hand in hand. Creating a gallery wall with vintage frames is a fabulous idea (see left of Figure 1-10). It's easy to find inexpensive frames from your local thrift shop, and Etsy has tons of incredible options for art prints. The right of Figure 1-10 shows the brilliant idea of framing a map.

**FIGURE 1-9:**  
it's handy  
having places  
to keep large  
storage bins  
(left). The  
perfect place  
to sit and put  
your boots on  
(right).



**FIGURE 1-10:**  
Gallery wall  
(left) and  
framed map  
art by Kristine  
Franklin of the  
Painted Hive  
(right).

