

# Reclaiming BEAUTY

Annie Brahler, designer and owner of Euro Trash, scours unexpected places to bring visual interest and authenticity to her interior design projects.



PHOTOS BY BJÖRN WALLANDER



*I was thrilled to have the chance to chat with Annie Brahler after becoming enamoured with her unique approach to her projects and the fascinating measures she takes to adhere to her design ethic. — S. Peters*

#### Can you briefly describe your core design philosophy?

I started my design and import company, Euro Trash LLC, 15 years ago with the firm belief that everyone deserves to live beautifully. That is not to mean that one needs to be surrounded with expensive things, but rather to find the beauty in things that are available to them, be open to creative solutions, and give themselves permission to explore their own personal style rather than be dictated to by the mass market.

#### Tell us a little about the stable project.

The stable on my client's property started out as a typical, completely utilitarian metal pole-barn. When we built the main house for the family, I purposely designed it in such a way that the horse barn related to the front of the house so my clients would feel connected to their beloved Arabians.

When considering how to solve what became an aesthetic issue after that decision was made, I came up with the idea that we clad the entire structure, both inside and out, with reclaimed wood and stone we salvaged from civil war armory and barn tear-downs. We salvaged and collected for a full year prior to the projects. The existing structure was so sound that it provided the perfect canvas.



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**What were the criteria for the stable-design project, and what were your primary design objectives?**

I wanted the stable to have a visual warmth and to feel as if it had been on the property for years. The existing metal building gave me the necessary function my clients needed, and I had to make it something that felt like it had a history.

**Was the stable designed as shared living spaces for the horses and owners?**

The stable had a tack room and office that was formerly just a metal room with a cement floor. I added a reclaimed bead-board ceiling, wood floors, and paneled walls and shelving to make the space welcoming and to showcase my client's collections.

**I understand you designed a stone cottage on the same property. Did you try to incorporate the same aesthetic?**

The stone cottage that we positioned directly across from the stable was built from the same limestone we used to clad the stable foundation and to build out the limestone wash bay. The thought behind incorporating some of the salvaged limestone on the stable project was to tie in the architecture of the other buildings on the property.

**You seem all about authenticity. Can you elaborate?**

To me, authenticity means the appreciation of natural materials such as real stone, real wood, and metals that aren't faux painted to look like something they are not. I would rather take the time to dig through flea markets, eBay, and Craigslist, looking for real copper fixtures, for instance, than pay a crazy price for something that has been painted to pretend to be copper.

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Annie Brahler



**Do you get many requests to design equestrian-inspired spaces, even by non-equestrians?**

So many people love horses, even if they don't ride themselves. They are incredibly beautiful creatures and offer creative inspiration to so many people.

**What would you consider key elements that help give interiors personality?**

I think the key element in any interior is that the space be made personal to those who use it. Something can be visually appealing, but the magic happens only when the space relates to the inhabitant intimately.

It is my job as a designer to find that connection that makes a space personal to the owner.

**I know our readers will be curious about your company name: Euro Trash. Can you explain its origin?**

I named my company Euro Trash as an intended tongue-and-cheek nod to those around me who buy into the belief that expensive means beautiful and that name brands mean value. I don't like those rules and do not play by them. I find beauty in unconventional places all the time—even in dumpsters—and I will never apologize for that. **EQ + PAGE 105**

