



# AIRBNB SAVVY HOST STARTER KIT







# WELCOME

**Hello! I'm Sheree Commerford, a designer and stylist for over 20 years.**

Welcome to the Savvy Host Starter Kit where I have teamed up with Airbnb to share some of my tips and tricks of the trade around curating unique, interesting and inviting spaces (without having to spend a fortune) to show future Hosts how easy it can be to get started on Airbnb.

This guide really is all about making the most of what you have, what is accessible to you and what you can find within your own community to create style and warmth within your space.

In this guide I will share the design principles I like to follow and how you can tap into yours to help give an authentic and meaningful design direction to your Airbnb.

You will be surprised at what is already in front of you and what can be achieved with minimal spend, (sometimes none at all), spare paint, a good playlist, a little muscle and the desire to want to make those soon-to-be guests feel welcome.

**Come on in. x**





**INSPIRATION IS EVERYWHERE.**







## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- > ***Inspiration is everywhere.***  
I always take the lead from the space itself, the location, the feel and the surrounding nature.
- > ***I also consider, 'who is this person coming to stay?' 'what is it they are wanting to experience?'***  
It can take one thing to trigger your inspiration. Such as my friend's river house where she has used the location and her passion for the river to create a tone and feeling by using antiques, furnishings from fishing nets, boats, hardware, pictures and lights all having been sourced locally.
- > ***Everything old is new again and in design this could not be more true.***  
History and tradition within a place or object is an important foundation for me when starting to work on a space or project. Listen to the story to create your own.
- > ***I do interiors the way I style and dress.***  
Old with the new, light and dark, masculine and feminine. I love contrast and the unexpected, yet am drawn to elegance and the classics. Creating your own rules is essential.
- > ***Give in to not knowing.***  
I have never been able to exactly plan my outcomes. They evolve through the process and always become something I never anticipated. It's like finding a secret door to an unknown room. The journey will be the outcome.
- > ***Most importantly, think outside the box.***  
Do not be intimidated by trends, give yourself freedom to try something knowing that you can always change things. Explore what you think might be the craziest of ideas and I promise it will lead you somewhere special.



# HOW TO GET THE BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

## Inherited Treasure

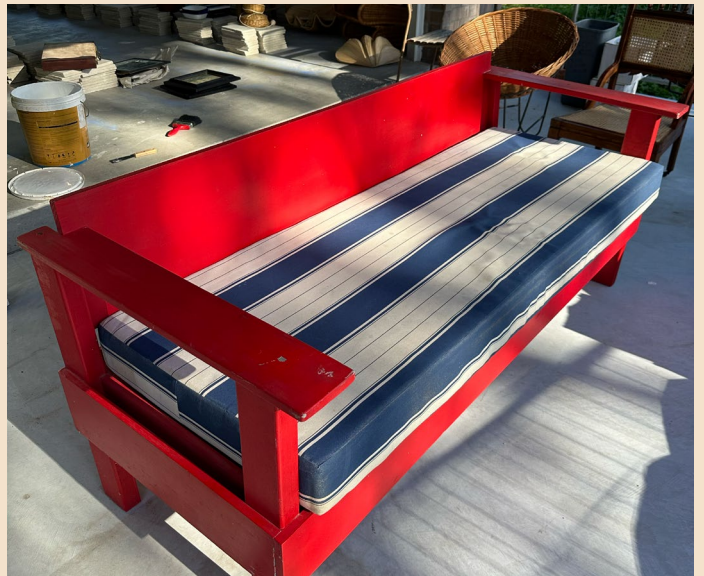
### *Have a look at what you already have.*

Maybe there is something interesting from a friend or relative or maybe you inherited something with a move that you've never considered using before, but with a lick of paint or a new handle or fitting, it will be as good as new.

I inherited this outdoor couch which was made I think in the 80's. It has a really interesting design and there is something I love about it. With the red I couldn't quite find it a home and the upholstery was quite weathered from being outside. For this project I wanted to bring it indoors so I dug deep through my left over paint pots for something warm and inviting that would work in a river house. To save money on upholstery I used a thick white cotton chenille throw I had scored at a flea market in France and gave it a fresh cover. Using the throw means it is easy to wash when it gets dirty. I rummaged through my friend's cushions and stole two to add comfort and colour.

I built the lounge room from a mix of pieces from different sources.

- > The lounge was inherited (free)
- > The pacific green floor lamp was from Facebook Market Place (\$200)
- > The side table was made by a builder friend who used leftover materials from his shed which I then gave a coat of leftover paint (\$0)
- > Coffee set (\$40) Facebook Marketplace
- > Coffee Table Books (\$20-\$30) Etsy
- > Cane chair inherited from a friend (free)
- > Mid Century bucket wicker chair was an investment at \$300 from a local antique store but a fabulous price compared to international sellers online







## Paint

There is nothing paint cannot give a fresh new life to. You can see I have used it in a number of pieces but recycling some old to gold can be done very easily especially if you have spare paint lying around or borrow from a friend. From painting old light fixtures to adding patterns and design details to your walls. You would be surprised what you might have left over from other painting projects so go through your colours first or see what a friend has.

## Reinvent

This fabulous vintage garden chair had seen some wear and tear having survived a flood. I loved the style so with some paint I brought it back to life and its former glory. Style it with some friends and it becomes an unexpected occasional chair, dining chair or outdoor chair.



## Restoration / Men's Shed

This chair belonged to my great Grandmother. From what we can figure out via family history we believe it could be close to 300 years old. It is what they call a bedroom chair. My father can tell you from what house and what family it belonged to and is a piece with a great story. It was an old frame that needed restoring so my father as a gift for me took it to the Men's shed to see if anyone would be able to repair this. Organisations like the Men's Shed are community-based, non commercial groups that help improve the health and wellbeing of their members.

In our local town there are a number of retired gents at the Men's Shed who are greatly skilled and looking for interesting work and creative challenges. They did a beautiful job restoring great Gran's chair for \$120 which is incredible when you think what it would cost to restore elsewhere.



## Furniture Swap

A really great way to recycle and reuse items no longer needed or that suit your current space is to swap. Talk to friends and family and see if they have items they are no longer wanting versus items they are seeking. I swapped my friend Kim this industrial wicker basket for this great trestle table which works perfectly with my collection of odd chairs. This can also be done on the Facebook group 'Buy Swap Sell'.



## Local Op Shops

Look around your town and surrounding areas for local op shops. Mine are Vinnies, Lifeline, Salvos and helicopter Op Shop. I love mixing glassware, ceramics and cutlery which worked well for the look of this project and helps for when you need to replace lost and broken items. Anything goes. Glasses pictured \$2-3 + 50 piece cutlery set \$30 + Mid Century Coffee set \$40

## Council clear out

Some communities offer a council free pick up on goods that you no longer need twice a year. In some neighbourhoods you can find some INCREDIBLE items that people no longer want. This vintage french chopping board was an excellent find. It's an original as it packs down with pieces removed. Price tag? Free.



## Closing down or end of business sales

These events are mostly listed on platforms such as local Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree sites.

I have found amazing chairs that were being sold due to a local business moving location. They were \$30 each and I only needed one to mix in with my collection of vintage chairs to complete the set. It finished off a really unique dining area.

These chairs were a "think outside the box" moment. A totally different look to the rest of the house but a fabulous contrast to the heritage feel of the place. A modern pop of colour, these IKEA PS VAGO outdoor chairs have been discontinued and now are an iconic find being sold as vintage pieces. These were a steal at \$20. Also incredibly functional for an Airbnb, impossible to break and can be left outside in all weather.





## WHERE TO GO TO BE INSPIRED

**A few of my favourite places where I go to find gems, be inspired and feel alive.**

### **My Locals**

- > Fossil Vintage
- > Heath's Old Wares and Collectables
- > Oscar & Keane Eco Vintage Furniture
- > Vampt Vintage

### **Showrooms (Nationwide)**

- > The Design Ark
- > Lunatiques
- > CCSS
- > LH Design Studio
- > CLO Studio
- > Tamsin Johnson
- > Mitchell Road

### **Online**

- > Curated Spaces
- > Secondi
- > GOODSPACE
- > Mood Objects
- > Facebook Marketplace
- > Gumtree





**Market in Nice**

## **International**

### ***Rosebowl Market***

One of the all time great fleas. In Pasadena, California it is worth planning your holiday around its monthly calendar. The size of a football field I have been going for 20 years and love everything from the furniture, art, clothes, jewellery and people.

### ***Long Beach Antique Markets***

If a flea the size of a football field overwhelms you then the Long Beach Antique Markets in California is my number one choice. A more curated selection of stalls than the Rosebowl, it is smaller but has a high level of quality finds. It is on once a month and a fabulous destination to take your time to dig and discover everything you can imagine.

### ***Paris Flea***

Porte de Clignancourt, officially called Les Puces de Saint-Ouen, but known to everyone as Les Puces (The Fleas). It covers seven hectares and is the largest antique market in the world. It is by far my number one favourite place in the world. The only downside is that I want to take so much home with me but I am grateful for what I can fit in my suitcase. There is magic to be found here!

## ***Brocantes***

If you are looking for an insanely beautiful, picturesque and cultural antique inspiring trip go no further than Provence in the South of France. It was a trip of a lifetime, done with two very small children through the countryside mapped out by village brocantes. I dream of doing it again. Below are some of the ones we visited:

- > Arles Flea Market
- > Villeneuve-lès-Avignon Flea Market
- > Isle-sur-la-Sorgue (Foire de l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue)
- > Carpentras Flea Market (Brocante de Carpentras)
- > Nice Flea Market (Brocante Saleya)
- > Saint Tropez Flea (Brocante du Jas des Robert)



# A LIST OF AIRBNBS THAT CAN INSPIRE YOU



**The Little Black Shack**  
Great Mackerel Beach, New South Wales, Australia



**Woodpecker Bay Bach**  
Punakaiki, West Coast, New Zealand



**"Oh Buoy" Private Island Escape**  
Berowra, New South Wales, Australia



**Historic Character CBD Oasis**  
Auckland, New Zealand



**Redrock Hut**  
Ohajune, New Zealand



**Stargazer's Luxury Retreat**  
Lake Tekapo, New Zealand



**Salty Dog**  
New South Wales, Australia



**Mario Cesare**  
Sardegna, Italy





**Joshua Tree Little Jo Cabin**  
California, United States



**Captain's Rest**  
Tasmania, Australia



**Beachfront: House of the Weedy Seadragon**  
Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania, Australia



**Sailors Whisk**  
Flinders, Victoria, Australia



**Coldwater Cabins**  
Miena, Tasmania, Australia



**Vintage House**  
Daylesford, Victoria, Australia



**Eco cabin between Queenstown and Milford Sound**  
Kingston, Southland, New Zealand



**The Black Ace**  
Yamba, New South Wales, Australia



# WHERE TO GO TO SOURCE



## Facebook Marketplace

An absolute Disneyland of bargains. This becomes addictive so be warned. There are so many fabulous bargains to be had from designer antiques to contemporary pieces. Not to mention art, homewares and even building materials. It doesn't take long for the algorithm to get into your groove and you will be surprised at what is out there. The key is to keep it realistic to the area you live in so that you don't blow the budget on couriers or pickups.

**Take Note** - Things that are a steal and worth it go quickly and not everyone stays true to their word on holding items. Be quick on the pick up.

**Hot Tip** - I use Airtasker to help me round up items within a reasonable radius. This way you can set your own budget so it's worth it.

This floor lamp was listed at \$350, I offered \$200. A classic Pacific Green piece designed somewhere between late 70's and 80's. This is an investment piece that adds a nice design element to the more simpler pieces surrounding it and adds balance to the space. If you can invest in one or two stand out design pieces it will tie everything together.

- > Italian Wine Glasses - One of the best finds I have sourced on this platform. \$20 for three.
- > Mid-century (1960's) Bitossi ceramic vases ranging from \$20-\$80. A beautiful way to add textural and colour elements.
- > 80's Backgammon set. Everyone loves a game and you can't find a cooler one then a vintage backgammon set. Great colour and design - \$40
- > Ceramic coffee set \$40
- > Occasional chair \$80



## Local Antique And Vintage Stores

There is nothing like finding treasures in your own neighbourhood while supporting local businesses. Spread your net to nearby and border towns and make a day of it. The best way to find them is to ask a local or the owner of one of the stores. They all usually know each other and are happy to share information.



## Etsy

My favourite find on Etsy for this project was second hand coffee table books. I LOVE interesting books when I stay somewhere and it also again helps set the tone of your stay. Coffee table books can add up so buying second hand is key and they are items that don't date and are usually in great condition, not needing to be bought new.

Books from \$20-\$60



## Flea Markets

I found these fabulous wicker fishing chairs at one of my favourite flea markets overseas. I didn't realise at the time they were a valuable antique. A little special moment to offer guests. A great flea might be a little harder to find depending on where you live but they are out there. Usually held once a month they can be called many things - trunk sales, swap meets and garage sale trails.

This [site](#) is a great resource to find one near you.

Fishing chairs \$100 each



## Community Events

Check the yearly calendar in your community to see what might be on offer. In the area near where I live, Brunswick, we have a festival called Gold & Old that celebrates all things collectible and antique and is held on the King's Bday long weekend every year. It is a collection of fairs and around 80 garage sales that you can wander though on a trail, finding exceptional bargains. The local antique stores also come together to create an antiques trail along the Northern Rivers which is an exceptional resource updated every month.





## Estate Sales

Look for local estate sales and auctions. You can find these listed on platforms such as Gumtree and Buy, Swap, Sell. Also you can find auction houses online where you can bid live if you are unable to go to the auctions in person. An excellent resource for curating a unique space. Items are mostly made way back when and built to last so perfect for longevity. Just a little refurb and you can make things completely your own at an excellent price in addition to finding undervalued antiques. Art is a key one to look for at an estate as it is nearly always undervalued.

## Renting

With appliances, white goods, TV's and a quality bed, key for a successful Airbnb, renting these larger items until you are making an income is a consideration to get you up and running without going over budget. Tip - Factor the rental costs into your nightly rate.

## The Big Sale

Nearly all furniture and soft furnishing brands have online or in-store sales but the big savings are to be had at warehouse sales that are usually offered once a year. For example, designer furniture from MCM House is usually drastically reduced in their warehouse sale, up to 80% and could be the one investment piece that you build the rest of the space around.





## TIPS

- > **Check opening hours for the various places** you want to visit as markets and op shops are not always open every day of the week or have specific opening hours.
- > **Go early and give yourself as much time as you can.** Beat the crowds and be first in line for the best treasures.
- > **Bring cash if you can** as it can help you haggle and negotiate better deals
- > **Keep an eye on the market,** regularly checking online marketplaces like Facebook, Gumtree or Trade Me in NZ can help you appreciate the value of the items you want and **to know when you are getting a good deal before you commit and buy.**
- > **Having a theme in mind** ahead of a shopping trip can assist with the **selection and curation of your items.** Whether this is a style, colour, era or even saved examples of inspiring places, you can use this as a guide to look for items that you are drawn to or align with your overarching design vision.