

# Romantic Dining

## with Cottage Chic Collectibles



Here is a great example of an updated "Romantic Victorian Style" inspired breakfast table showing layered linens, lots of florals, cottage style furnishings, and vintage table accessories. (Photo courtesy of [www.vintagerosecollection.com](http://www.vintagerosecollection.com).)

"Romantic Victorian Style," also referred to as "Country Victorian," is a great look for collectors and home owners who enjoy combining cottage chic with turn of the century elegance.

Borrowing design elements from earlier times, the romantic cottage collector enjoys the "feminine" touches that were prevalent during the Victorian period, but not the dark and heavy textiles, window treatments, and furniture.

Flowers are everywhere ... as patterns on china, tablecloths, napkins, draperies, and wallpaper. Elaborate bouquets of either fresh or dried flowers in attractive vases are always present. Roses are by far the most popular motif for the romantic cottage collector.

Hand-painted china, vases, gorgeous serving pieces, collections of decorative plates, figurines, and candlesticks are all very desired collectibles. Buffets, china cabinets, and dining room sets are painted white or pink and showcase lovely collections of floral teapots, cups and saucers, creamers, pitchers, and other dining accessories.

Ornate crystal chandeliers, Italian tole, and decorative sconces are very compatible with divine dining. You can find fine examples of these romantic style collectibles in my new book, *Hot Cottage Collectibles for Vintage Style Homes*.

"Cottage Chic" is really a perfect choice for homeowners who want to add a little pizzazz to their holiday table without going over budget. Because "Romantic-Country Victorian"

allows you to blend the new with the old, you can use what you have or add a few elegant touches.

For example, set your table in style by finding a beautiful older tablecloth to overlay atop your newer tablecloth. Many hand-embroidered or lace, square or round, cloths make gorgeous additions to your holiday table. Check for stains, holes, and missing stitches when buying older linens. Colorful floral tablecloths from the 1940s – 1950s with pink or red roses are also attractive to use.

This is the time to take an old silver-plated pitcher or pottery vase and fill with flowers. If you have a closet of decorative plates passed down from Grandma or your favorite aunt, bring them out and use them to serve condiments, appetizers, desserts etc. Mixing different kinds of china plates is fun and very “in” today.

You may also enjoy serving tea or coffee in pretty vintage teacups. It's time to take these lovely china cups out of your buffet closet and use them! What are you waiting for? If you need to buy a few more cups, go ahead and visit your nearby antique shop or an online auction. These collectibles are readily available and so easy to find.

A hand painted creamer and sugar set are also darling additions to your special table. When buying china, always run your finger around the inside of the rim to check for chips. Pass up pieces with cracks, crackling, or discoloration. On the other hand, if you chip a china teapot, pitcher, or creamer that you have, don't despair ... re-purpose them. Use them for flowers.

Suppose you break a few dishes along the way — hang onto the pieces. Broken china is very collectible. Many people enjoy the craft of broken china mosaics, also called *pique*



A silver-plated water pitcher is transformed into a lovely, romantic Cottage Chic-style vase covered in broken china. (Photo courtesy of [www.lavenderhillstudio.com](http://www.lavenderhillstudio.com).)



Vintage decorative plates and broken china pieces are applied to this charming, white painted vintage teacart made by Lavender Hill Studio. (Photo courtesy of [www.lavenderhillstudio.com](http://www.lavenderhillstudio.com).)



This white painted china cabinet is accessorized with romantic vintage china including teapots, chocolate pots, decorative plates, creamers, and more. (Photo courtesy of [www.bellarosecottage.com](http://www.bellarosecottage.com).)

assiette. When it comes to “cottage chic,” everything can be used for something.

C. Dianne Zweig is the author of *Hot Kitchen & Home Collectibles of the 30s, 40s, 50s* and *Hot Cottage Collectibles for Vintage Style Homes*. She is also the Editor of [lantiqueonline.com](http://lantiqueonline.com), an actively growing Internet-based resource community for people who buy, sell, or collect antiques, collectibles, and art. You can find Dianne’s fabulous retro and vintage kitchen, home, and cottage

collectibles at The Collinsville Antiques Company of New Hartford, Conn., a 22,000-square-foot antique emporium with an in-house retro café.

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## Antique School Sees New Generation Of Antique Enthusiasts

The Ashford Institute Of Antiques, a professional-level distance-learning program on antiques, collectibles and appraising, recently released some surprising data compiled from its enrollment statistics, that shows an interesting trend beginning to develop in the antique industry.

According to a published press release, school spokesman Anthony Drew said, “There appears to be a younger generation of individuals beginning to discover antiques and collectibles — and our enrollment is showing that.” Drew went on to say that over the past 40 years, the school has kept a detailed analysis of age groups and demographics of students, and has noted that when there is a sudden surge in “younger” antique enthusiasts, it often spells good news for the antique market as a whole.

Drew went on to say that younger people are now finding it hip again to head out to garage sales, flea markets, and thrift shops in the hope of finding something funky and old. “It may not be Georgian they’re looking for,” said Drew, “but they’re starting to collect and decorate again, using items from the past.”

For readers seeking more information about the antique and appraisal course offered by the Ashford Institute of Antiques, they can be contacted at 877.444.4508, or by visiting their Web site, [www.ashford.com](http://www.ashford.com). You can also write to them at: the Ashford Institute of Antiques 981 Harbor Blvd., Suite 3, Dept. 275RZ19, Destin, FL 32541-2525, or at their Canadian office at; 131 Bloor Street West, Suite 200, Dept. 124RZ19 Toronto, ON M5S 1R8. j