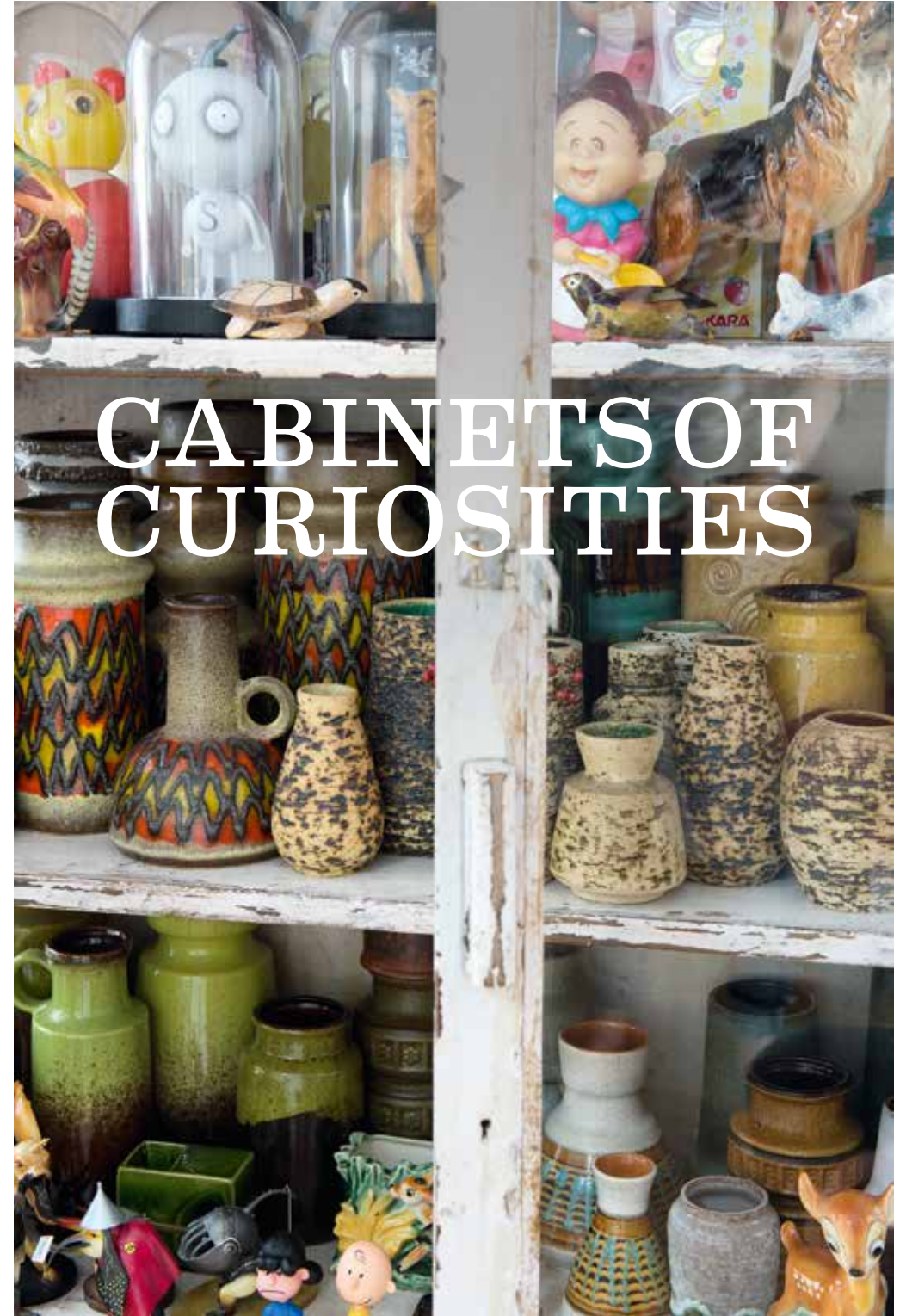




THIS PAGE Like many of Esther and Edgar's possessions, the 1940s cabinet in their ground floor office space comes with a story: a label on the back shows that it was pawned in exchange for food during the Second

World War. It is now used to store Esther's growing collection of ceramic creatures. **RIGHT** The couple's collections range from mid-century ceramics, particularly West German vases, to kitsch children's toys and figurines.



CABINETS OF CURIOSITIES

For avid collectors Esther Schulting and Edgar Kruijze, vintage and modern designs are at one in their home in the Netherlands

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THIS PAGE One wall on the ground floor is papered with Cole & Son's distinctive Woods wallpaper, which is the perfect backdrop for a collection of 1950s illustrated plates. Japanese dolls from the 1970s fill the shelves of a large cabinet in the meeting area on the ground floor.



THIS PAGE This corner of the study on the ground floor has a distinctly 1960s feel. A bamboo chair and side table are tucked under the stairs beneath shelves filled with 1960s carved deer, purple Flora Holland vases, assorted vintage toys and cameras.

‘Sometimes I get jealous of people living in minimalist homes, but I wouldn’t last a week in one. Minimalism just doesn’t work for me,’ says Esther Schulting, pointing to the glass-fronted display cases that surround her; each one filled with vintage dolls, vases and teacups, not to mention all the books. Shelves around the house are home to neat rows of old cameras, toy robots and carved wooden deer. Everywhere one looks, another collection vies for attention or an unexpected juxtaposition catches your eye: tropical plants and Norwegian chairs sit alongside Chinese cupboards and contemporary art; the staircase is filled with photographs of travels, portraits and rock stars, and decorative monochrome plates are hung against Cole & Son’s iconic Woods wallpaper.

Esther shares her home, and her passion for collecting, with her husband, Edgar Kruize, with whom she also runs a

communications company as well as their online business, Vintage Fever. Together they deal in an eclectic mix of old and new furniture and interiors accessories, some of which are at the distinctly kitsch end of the vintage spectrum. The house is both their home and the business’s storeroom.

‘If I made a list of all the things we have, you would think that this would never go together,’ Esther admits, and it certainly does sound like it should be nothing more than a chaotic jumble; but in reality, their home is an enchanting, highly organised treasure chest in which order amongst the disparate elements is often established by grouping things according to colour. ‘Full cupboards are pretty much the story of my life,’ Esther laughs. ‘No cupboard stays empty for long in this house.’

It helps that the couple’s furniture is simple and minimal. They are drawn to the clean lines of mid-century pieces, such as the Ingmar Relling Siesta chair in the sitting room, which Esther discovered ▶

The Owners
Esther Schulting and Edgar Kruize, who run a communications agency, buro33, as well as an online shop, Vintage Fever (vintagefever.nl).

The Property
A newly built terraced house in Almere Buiten, the Netherlands. Arranged over three floors, there’s an office and access to the garden on the ground floor. Stairs lead to an open-plan kitchen and living area on the first floor. On the top floor there is a bathroom, walk-in closet and a bedroom.



THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT An antique Chinese cupboard is the centrepiece in the living room, which is part of a light-filled, open-plan space on the first floor; a glass cabinet from India is used for storing a mix of vintage and modern cups and mugs. **RIGHT** The couple bought the painting over the sofa many years ago. Esther likens it to a scene from a Hitchcock movie, 'You don't really know what's going on, but you keep on wondering,' she says.

in a secondhand shop. 'I didn't recognise it immediately, but I did have an inkling that it was something quite special.' It would seem that Esther has a knack for spotting such hidden treasures: she found another classic chair from the 1960s while browsing in a local vintage store. 'It was covered in bright pink fabric that had 1990s written all over it,' she smiles, still delighted by her find. 'Once I'd peeled the pink stuff away, it turned out that the original fabric was still there and completely intact,' she says.

But the joy of discovery is only one part of what drives Esther and Edgar's passion for collecting. They both take a keen interest in the history and past life of everything they buy. 'I am always thinking about who the previous owner might have been, where the piece might have lived, and how it would have been used,' she says. 'I like the stories behind antiques and vintage pieces.' She points to a stamp on an elegantly curved cabinet which stands in the couple's home office on the ground floor. 'This shows that it was pawned by its owner during the Second World War in exchange for food.' According to the details revealed via the stamp, the owner was fortunately able to buy it back later.

Although a strong mid-century and 1970s theme pervades the house, Esther says they aren't drawn to any particular time period. 'We are both children of the Seventies and the quintessential colours of that era – the ochres, burgundies and browns – keep popping up in our home. But we also like designs from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, ▶



'I am always thinking about who the previous owner might have been, where the piece might have lived and how it would have been used,' says Esther.

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A sofa by Kho Liang le for Artifort is one of the couple's favourite pieces; a glazed cabinet at the top of the stairs is home to a collection of Disney toys; a 1970s Siesta chair, designed by Ingmar Relling, is one of Esther's best finds.

A sideboard made from reclaimed wood is home to white West German vases.

RIGHT In the master bedroom, an eclectic mix of artworks adorns the walls. Esther inherited the still lifes from her grandparents.



'There is only one rule,' Esther says. 'It has to be beautiful and it has to have soul.'



as well as new things made from old materials.' She sums up their approach to their decor as being a case of mix and match. 'There is only one rule,' she says. 'It has to be beautiful and it has to have soul.'

Although there is clearly a shared aesthetic when it comes to furniture, art and music, the couple also have quite different – though complementary – specialist areas of collecting. When they set out on one of their regular flea market treasure hunts, Edgar's focus is on superhero figurines and vintage Transformers, while Esther is on the lookout for more West German vases to add to her extensive collection. She is drawn to their sculptural forms and arranges them in groups around the house. She also has a passion for tableware and when guests come round they are offered not only a choice of tea, but a choice of teapot, too.

The appeal of antiques and vintage pieces for Esther lies not only in their beauty and history, but also because they are inherently green. 'There is so much beautiful stuff that already exists,' she says. 'I am a big fan of reuse and recycle.' But there is only so much they can justify keeping for themselves. 'Three years ago, we started Vintage Fever, our online shop, so we could share some of the gems we find.' What began as simply a way of sharing their passion for vintage items has now expanded to include a selection of new items made from recycled materials. 'We hope that our range will inspire people to think differently about 'old stuff',' says Esther. 🍃