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Out of antiquity

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*In the South Loop, a shuttered powerhouse is remade
as a cultural destination*

Just as Michelangelo had to move the marble to find his David, Mark Steinke had to move the bricks to find his Revival.

The Chicago-based antique dealer was looking for a showroom befitting his inventory. He needed a space with the class of a 19th century drawing room and the character of a Bethlehem Steel refinery. He also needed a spot that would wow his clients, who include a few household names. And, perhaps most importantly, Steinke needed a building with huge doors and tall ceilings because some of his antiques—most of them garden and architectural pieces—literally weigh a ton.

"We wanted an interesting location," Steinke says, "and we found it in this building."

Steinke's showroom is called Revival, a name that describes not only his inventory, but also his space, a former Commonwealth Edison power plant turned empty relic at 19 E. 21st St. The place was a real fixer-upper, complete with bricked-in two-story windows that Steinke unbricked and then rebuilt to create a dramatic storefront.

The location is certainly off the beaten path, if such a path

yet exists for shoppers in the South Loop. In fact, Steinke believes the space will be the neighborhood's first retail "destination." That's why he joined forces with restaurateur Jerry Kleiner, whose fine-dining empire includes Opera and Gioco in the South Loop and Red Light and Marche in the West Loop.

Kleiner initially planned to turn the cavernous 6,000-square-foot space into his home but switched gears after he realized its potential. Now, when visitors ask concierges downtown, "Where do Chicagoans spend

their Saturday?" we think they'll direct them here," says Steinke.

The space will house a concert room, gourmet cooking area, art galleries, a special-events facility and, of course, Revival.

Free of dust, clutter, and tacky glass cases, "I don't think it looks like any architectural antique store that I know of," says Steinke. The main floor, set up to resemble a (really fabulous) living room, will serve as the showroom. Downstairs, customers can check out lighting options. And an outside garden—which may double as a cafe—will feature some of Steinke's largest pieces.

"In this business a lot of people don't understand how to show people how to use a product," Steinke says. "What we plan to do with the store is to make it look like a well-lived-in home."

Steinke developed his eye for great design at Sotheby's and Salvage One, where he worked until he decided to launch Revival. But design is actually his second career. He spent years in international banking—an experience that taught him volumes about marketing and business savvy. Movie studios have come to know Steinke as a primo source for props; he's lent authenticity to films such as "A League of Their Own," "Father of the Bride," and "The Untouchables." He's also worked with uber-designer Ralph Lauren and locally renowned garden guru Craig Bergmann, who featured some Steinke finds

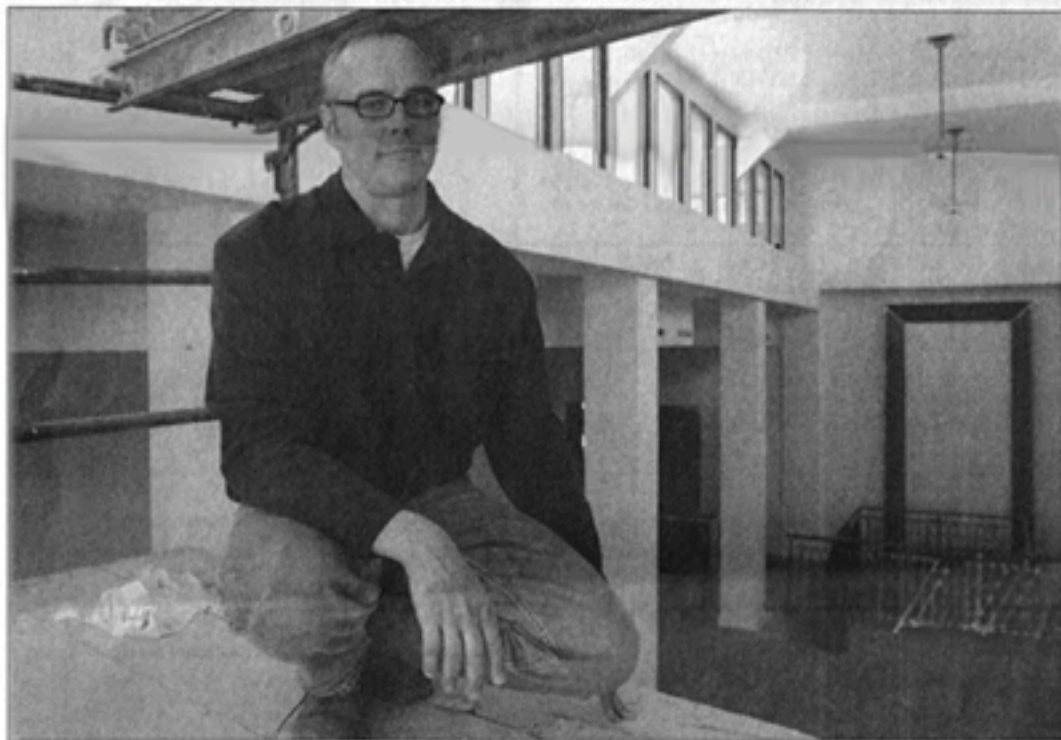


Photo by Josh Hawkins

Revival owner Mark Steinke, in his new space inside the old Commonwealth Edison plant.

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in this year's Chicago Flower and Garden Show.

"We have our favorite pieces, but everything is for sale," Steinke says. He and his small staff of designers find inventory all over, from estate sales to European collectors to junkyards. And, yes, he actually does go Dumpster diving from time to time.

"The Gap can just order more T-shirts from China," Steinke says. "I can't."

Half the fun is in the hunt. One of his favorite unearthings was a small stash of Blommer Chocolate pots, used by the Chicago candy company in the middle of the century and buried in a pile of trash. Steinke says he looks for pieces with "great proportions, great scale ... we always like to see patina."

Finally, Steinke remains mindful of folks' pocketbooks. While some items sell in the five figures, he's not above selling a \$20 piece of pottery. "Good design is not only timeless, but it comes in all price ranges," he says. "We get them at a great price, so we pass them on at a great price."

Revival will open by mid- to late-April, while Kleiner's portion of the project is slated to open sometime in May.



Photo by Josh Hawkins

Mark Steinke is sitting on a remnant of the Pabst Mansion in Milwaukee, an artifact he reckons would look good in a garden.