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How to 'Downton Abbey'-ify Your Apartment Updated

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NEW YORK CITY — "Downton Abbey's" aristocratic melodrama has New York City's TV viewers spellbound — and its style gurus drooling.

Viewers are in love with the PBS favorite's post-Edwardian drapery, chandeliers and other finery as much as they are with the abbey's hot young heir, Matthew.

DNAinfo.com New York linked up with Chelsea-based decorator **Lindsay Hair** to share ways to recreate the grandeur of an English estate in, by comparison, tiny and humble New York apartments.

1. Build Your Library

"I think probably the biggest fascination [with decor from the show] is the library, creating that very cozy main living space feel," Hair said. To replicate the resplendent look of the Downton Abbey main library, where so many life-changing conversations occur, start with curating your collection by going for a consistent look across your books. If you want to truly recreate the Crawley's space, look for sets of books with the same bindings or find somewhere that will custom bind your books to look alike. Antique books can be found at flea markets and estate sales. And Hair recommends Paul Vogel or **Vogel Bindery** for customized book bindings.

2. Porcelain, Porcelain, Porcelain!

Prestigious English families of the early 20th century wanted to show off how worldly they were by displaying objets d'art from Asia and the Middle East, Hair said. She recommends decorating with porcelain, adding porcelain vases, containers or garden stools. But don't worry too much about buying the real thing, which Hair said "is prohibitively expensive." Instead, she recommends checking out **Pearl River** in SoHo. "There are lots of little soy sauce and soup bowls there," she said. Hair uses a low porcelain bowl on her bedside table as a coaster.

3. Bring Out the Fine China and Etched Crystal

Etched crystal glasses, where a pattern is etched into the glass, and fine china are often used in the dining room on the show. One of the characters is always raising a glass — to nuptials, miraculous health recoveries, the end of war, you name it — and they are swanky glasses. Hair encourages her friends and clients to use the fine china and glassware that are just accumulating dust in a cupboard. "I don't save [the etched crystal]. I'll have my orange juice or diet Coke in it," she said. "I don't believe in putting things in a cabinet and not using them. If a glass breaks, a glass breaks."

4. Create Separate Spaces with Screens

Screens, seen on Downton in drawing rooms and bedrooms, help create multiple functions for a larger room. "A folded screen, constructed out of lacquer and painted details or



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Decorator Lindsay Hair offers tips in embracing Downton Abbey style.

(DNAinfo/ Emily Frost)

upholstered in a great velvet damask, can serve as a regal backdrop in the corner of your room, as well as a room divide," Hair said. For an updated look, use a screen with a modern pattern. In her own apartment, Hair uses a screen with a bold lime color to add playfulness.

5. All in the Family, or Not

A sense of history is very important to the Crawleys; the need to hold on to the Downton legacy drives the drama. And in most rooms in the castle, an oil painting of a relative stares down upon the characters. Hair said her clients often reference the portraiture in Downton Abbey when describing the antique paintings they're after. Most people do not have these kind of heirlooms, and Hair said it's okay to own oil portraits of people you've never met. When browsing, go for "what speaks to you," she advises. For those with more to spend, Hair will go to auctions at Christie's or Sotheby's, where paintings typically start at \$3,000. If you're looking to spend less, she encourages browsing street and antique fairs around the city and to look carefully at the quality of the frame and the richness of the colors in determining whether you're getting a fair price.

6. Add Layers

Creating the Downton look is about adding layers and collecting in a smart way. Hair suggests adding a textile to the back of your chairs or to your headboard, mimicking what's known as an "antimacassar," a fabric was used in the pre-Downton days to keep powdered wigs from touching the chair. Antimacassars are passed down through the generations. Can't get the real thing? Find a fabric that catches your eye, perhaps with an Asian or Middle Eastern flair. "It's a great way to add color and pattern," Hair said. Wall upholstery is another way to add Downton flair to your home. "Consider upholstering your wall with a great brocade or damask fabric for an elegant softness to your bedroom," Hair said.

7. A Regal Bed

Hair said more and more furniture lines and stores are showing four-poster beds. Hair has one, from Pottery Barn, and it adds a lavishness to her room. She affixed curtains to three sides to make it feel cozy and regal. "Four-poster beds are really a trend [now] in beds," she said. Crate and Barrel carries a [black version](#) and a [more modern version](#).

8. Regal Rugs

Hair said "to achieve a truly regal look, your living room must have a large area rug with deep jewel tones of red, navy, ochre."

9. Lighten Up

Use gold paint or spray paint to door panels or walls to create a "great aristocratic effect," said Hair, adding that "a little goes a long way." Don't want to invest time in a DIY project? Lighten your home by finding a nice pair of sterling silver candlesticks or faux silver sticks or candelabras and dine by candlelight, like a lord and lady would.

10. Going to the Dogs.

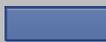
A final tip from Hair: "The perfect Downton accessory? A yellow lab named Isis, of course!"

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