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Quirky cottage-style home office

Earthy florals, wood, and stone mingle with an industrial metal desk for an updated take on an English farmhouse look. Here's how to re-create it on a budget By GILLIAN BARTH

A home office should be functional, but not at the expense of character—or even a little risk-taking. The design of this workspace, for example, is traditional English cottage style with a twist. It's where nature-inspired wallpaper and 19th-century antiques, such as a spindle-back armchair and a rustic pine chest, take supporting roles to a scene-stealing mid-century brushed-steel desk with an industrial edge.

"There's a quirky juxtaposition of styles and periods, but the harmonious colors and weathered finishes make it work," says Ros Byam Shaw, author of *Perfect English Farmhouse* (Ryland Peters & Small), which features this room. The contrasts continue with accessories such as a graphic flat-weave rug, which enlivens and warms up the limestone-paver floor. Keep reading for ways to strike a similarly pleasing balance in your home office.

vintage-look clock
Hang a stately timekeeper with spade hands and oversize Roman numerals that are easy to read from a distance. \$21; wayfair.com



distressed chest
Trade a nondescript filing cabinet for a tall dresser to stow papers and supplies. This one has a weathered finish that resembles the homeowner's antique pine dresser. \$179; walmart.com



nature-inspired wallpaper
This paper, with a bird-and-fern print, echoes the pattern on the designer version at right but for less than half the price. \$42 a roll; thibautdesign.com



storage boxes
Stash bills in decorative containers to tidy up your desk. Red linen box, \$29; bookbinders.com. Floral paper box, \$12; paperpresentation.com



spindle-back armchair
The homeowner's was an antiques-market find, but this boxy American Windsor chair has similar lines. An embroidered pillow makes it comfy. Chair, \$197; wayfair.com. Pillow, \$30; pier1.com



floor lamp
Rather than relinquishing space to a desk lamp, stand a light beside your work surface instead. The mica shade on this one radiates a soft glow that's easy on the eyes. \$50; target.com



mid-century steel desk
Instead of paying \$1,000 or more for a restored industrial-style desk, get one in used condition and fix it up yourself. We found this beige one for \$275 at Build It Green!, a reuse center in New York City. Remove old paint with an eco stripper, such as SoyGel. Then buff the bare steel to a soft sheen with a random-orbit sander, and top with clear polyurethane to prevent rust.



oval mirror
Reflective surfaces make a small office seem spacious. This look-alike of the wood-frame mirror at left has a lightweight resin surround, so it's a cinch to hang. \$30; kirklands.com



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colorful kilim
Warm up a tile floor with a patterned rug. This hand-knotted wool version has a bold geometric in greens, tans, and reds. \$127; overstock.com