



Michael Karas **Summer Marsh** Oil 30" X 40"

**EXPERT ADVICE**

If you lack artistic vision, The Red Piano Art Gallery offers home walkthroughs with an expert for suggestions. Draw inspiration from the gallery's original works, shown on the following pages.

# How to choose art for your home

LOWCOUNTRY ART GALLERY OWNER BEN WHITESIDE GIVES US HIS BEST ADVICE FOR CHOOSING ART.

STORY BY MICHAELA SATTERFIELD

Wandering into The Red Piano Art Gallery in Bluffton is like wandering into a little corner of a storybook world. The paintings are the characters, and the owner, Ben Whiteside, is the narrator. Colors set the scene. Whispers of history and other worlds dance across the walls. You can't leave the gallery without wishing you could take a piece of it home with you – and the good news is, you can. But which piece to choose? You may know what you like or have yet to develop your taste. You may know which spaces in your home need art, or you may be at a loss on where to start. Either way, choosing the right artwork for your home is a task best advised by a seasoned gallery owner. **Here are Whiteside's five tips:**

## 1. Know what you're working with

We know you're itching to get out and see the Lowcountry's great art scene for yourself, but hang on. First, there are a few things to consider. For one thing, take a mental note of areas in your home that need artwork. Pay special attention to areas where you spend the most time. Whiteside says one service The Red Piano Art Gallery offers is a walk through, during which an expert lets you know which spaces in your home to prioritize on your search for art. You'll also want to note the sizes of your rooms – especially the ceiling heights. This will determine the size and scale of the art you choose. For example, tall ceilings are typically paired with large-scale art.

## 2. Check out the local art scene

Now, you can get to the galleries – the fun part. The Lowcountry has an art scene rich in history and variety. The Red Piano Art Gallery has been around since 1969, Whiteside says. It's filled with the work of artists who live from coast to coast. One great thing about the Old Town art community is everyone supports each other. "If someone interested in original art does not find what they are looking for with us, then they have many choices, all within easy walking distance," Whiteside says. He



Jonathan Green **Uncle Harry's Farm Bus** 18" X 24"

recommends shopping around to make sure you find the perfect pieces for your home. There's even a place to go for a list of all the Old Town art galleries: [shopoldtownbluffton.com](http://shopoldtownbluffton.com).

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Mark Boedges **Angela Rose** 30" X 40"

## 3. Take your time getting serious

When it comes to the search for art, there's no need to rush. Trust the process and don't take just any piece of art home with you. Whiteside says gallery guests are welcome to take photos to use as a reference before sealing the deal. Better yet, you can actually bring the artwork home to make sure it's the right fit. Whiteside says it takes time to learn which art appeals to you. That being said, he suggests collecting pieces over time. Your collection will grow with your taste in art. "As you discover what does have appeal to your own taste," Whiteside says, "this knowledge allows you to appreciate the artwork more."

#### 4. Go with the trends...

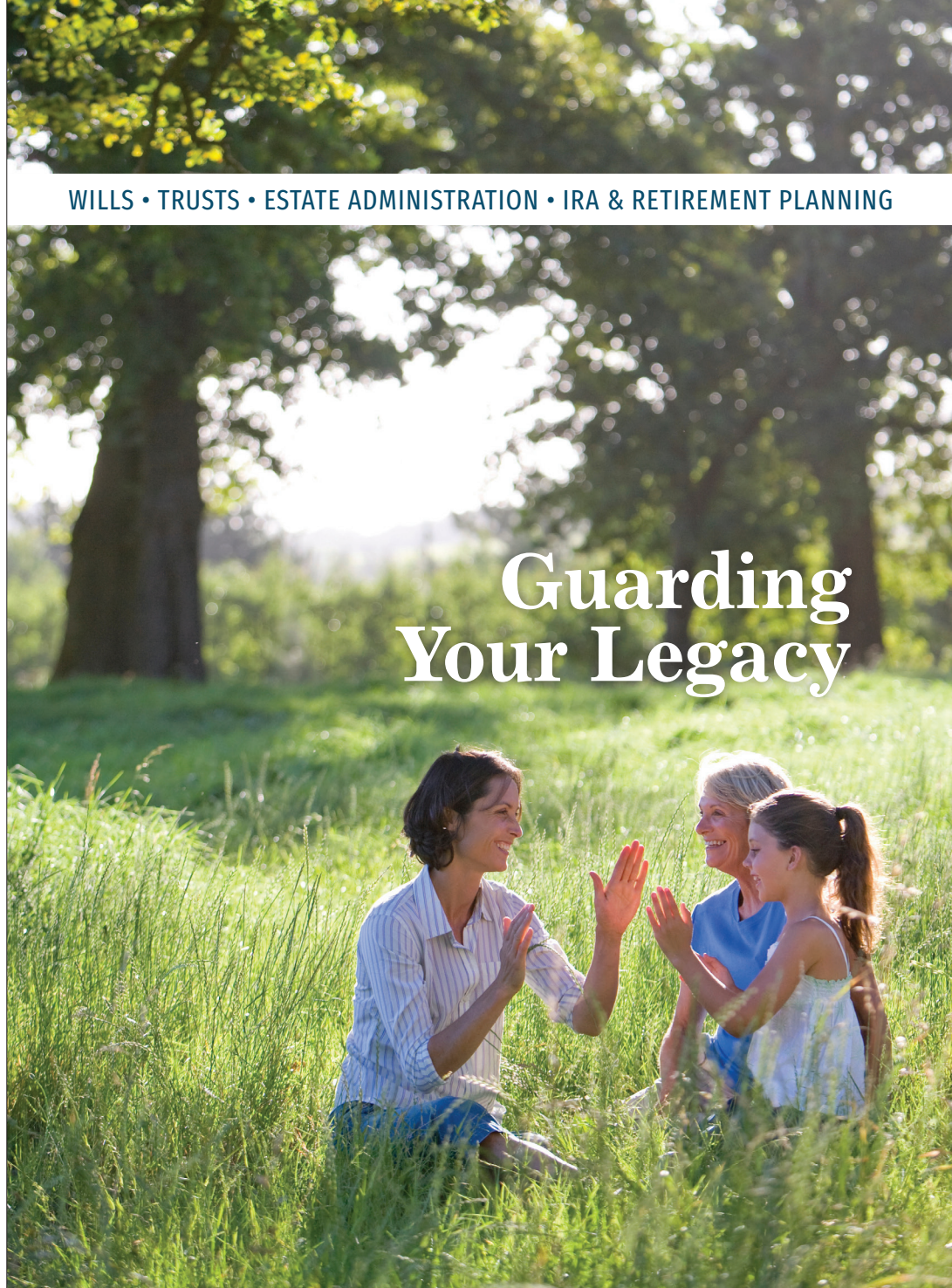
If you want to keep your interiors in style, Whiteside has some insider tips. He says neutral interiors that use art to provide color in the space are popular. As a bonus, this makes it easier to switch up a space when the trends change. To make sure the colors in a piece will play well with the colors in your home, Whiteside says bringing the artwork home for a test-run is your best bet. The gallery wall is another trend everyone is currently loving. This involves filling up a wall with art in different sizes featuring different subject matters. It may sound a bit crazy, but trust us on this one. Gallery walls are eclectic and quirky – the kind of charm you can't help but love. To look at it in a more practical light, groupings like these are handy to fill spaces where a single piece of art may look awkward and out of place.



Stephen Scott Young **Summer Fishing**  
18 1/2" X 17 1/2"

#### 5. ... or follow your heart

Trends come and go, but if you go with art you love, you can't go wrong. Choosing art that fits your personal taste will give your collection a timeless appeal. It's okay if you don't know which art that is at first. Whiteside says this takes time. "A person's response to art is an emotional response," he says. "If you see something that appeals to you, then you are beginning to learn what you like." LL



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