

# A Vintage Refrigerator Back Where It Belongs

WHEN THE TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY DECIDED TO RESTORE ITS 1948 MJ-7 FRIGIDAIRE refrigerator in their historic Doc Thomas House, they turned to Antique Appliances in Clayton, Georgia, one of only a few such specialists in the country. “The refrigerator has so much meaning to the house,” says Elizabeth Smith of TAS. “It was important not to put it in the landfill.” The fridge, which had been working up until a few years ago, belonged to the Master Series of Frigidaire appliances without frills, typical of the era, says repair specialist John Jowers. “Coming directly out of the war years, the country was in a recovery mode, so cash was tight and products were offered in just the bare-bones basics,” he says. This model features an updated, one-piece outer shell finished in white “Dulux,” a trade name for their paint product. There was a full-width vegetable storage drawer and a glass chiller tray that went under the freezer section to keep meats as cold as possible without freezing. The freezer could store up to four ice trays. The restoration revamped the refrigerator system to make it safer for users and the environment, but the freezer still functions as is did originally – so it needs periodic defrosting.



PHOTOS: ANTIQUE APPLIANCES

**RESTORATION WORK:** The refrigerator arrived with rusty wire shelves and pitted metal parts. After dismantling the unit, restorers discarded all old insulation and inspected electrical wiring. The shell was cleaned and repainted, new insulation is added (above), and all cabinet hardware, controls and other components meticulously refinished by hand. On delivery day, Tom and Elizabeth Smith of Tropical Audubon Society and delivery man Albert Torrado moved the fridge into the kitchen (below). Inside, they unwrapped the shiny restored fridge. It's back at work keeping foods cool. Below right: events director Amy Creekmur and Tom and Elizabeth Smith.

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