



House Beautiful
August 2008

THE LAST WORDS

Do you have a summer decorating ritual? Ten designers reveal the little things that refresh a room when the going gets hot....

interviews by
SARA BENGUR

"I cover accent tables with very lined tablecloths and put blue hydrangeas in white porcelain vases in the center of each table. I like the clean aesthetic sense of garden tomatoes in the kitchen. I pick a portion of the vine and place it in a simple white bowl on the kitchen counter. The deep vertical ridges of the tomato against the fern green vines adds an amazing contrast in the white bowl. It not only smells fragrant but looks divine—and they're easy to eat!"
—MARTHA COLLINS

"I plant fragrant things near my doors—lavender, gardenias, jasmine—so the scent comes in the open doors and windows. First, of course, I clean and repair all the screens."
—JANET BOVENS

"I lower the wattage of all the lights. Dark equals Cool. Then, my New York City apartment doesn't allow air conditioning! So, I pull out the many antique fans I've bought over the years from the Pin Man in Dallas, Texas (pinmanusa.com). They're vintage, with metal blades, so they can be enormously dangerous, but they look and work great. They also make a lot of noise, but it's very rhythmic, which I find soothing."
—JIM GAZDAR

"No, I've rented a cottage on Nantucket and can't get there. 'Have peppermill, will travel,' that's my summer motto. Really, that's all I need. So her advice: Rent someone else's house. Just get away from it all!"
—STEVIE BLUMBERG

"Change the bedding, both the weight and the colors. Brighter colors lighten the mood. I change the carpets, too. Flatter weaves and bright colors instantly make a home feel like a summer house."
—SARA BENGUR

"I take all the rugs out of the house and just have the bare polished concrete floors."
—JEWEL SHAWT

"I buy plants and fill my window boxes. I plant two with especially fragrant herbs. When the breeze blows over them, the house is filled with scent. I also load up bowls on my kitchen counter with fresh produce from the farmer's market, so I can just grab something fresh to eat—it looks wonderful, too."
—ELIZABETH

"I would love to sleep with Frodo on the sofa first thing this is just in all the window and door screens. Then I rearrange the furniture in the TV room. All over in the sofa sits against Frodo's back facing outward. When summer comes, I put it around and set a small dining table at the doors, which are covered as much as possible. They look out onto a brick terrace with a fountain where, in summer, I set four comfy patio lounge chairs. I look forward to seeing those every summer after they've been hibernating in storage."
—ARTHUR DOMALAI

"I have a changing guard. I redecorate always because I'm a nurse. I'm bringing out different themes for entertaining, and stock the wine fridge with my favorite white wines and rose champagnes. Even the music I play has a little more pep in its steps. Hummer is a playful season, and it's fun for a home to reflect that spirit."
—JIM OFFERS

"I have a large rattan and lacquer tray, my grandmother's glass-iced tea dispenser, and my linen-yellow monogrammed linen napkins, and stack them in the pantry for easy access. And when it's really hot and the air conditioning is in full force I spray the sheets with lilac-scented linen spray. It's refreshing and keeps that vital connection to the outdoors that's such a big part of summer."
—SARAH BENGUR LIND

120 HOUSEBEAUTIFUL.COM

"Change the bedding, both the weight and the colors. Brighter colors lighten the mood. I change the carpets, too. Flatter weaves and bright colors instantly make a home feel like a summer house."

SARA BENGUR