



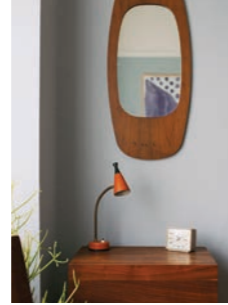
sage living

Decorate for the
Life You Want

Anne Sage

co-founder of Rue Magazine

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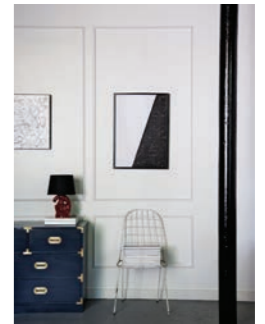
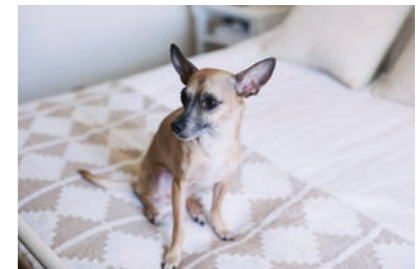


SAGE LIVING

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Photographs by Emily Johnson



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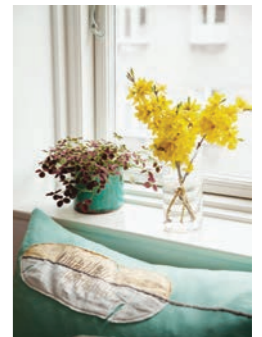
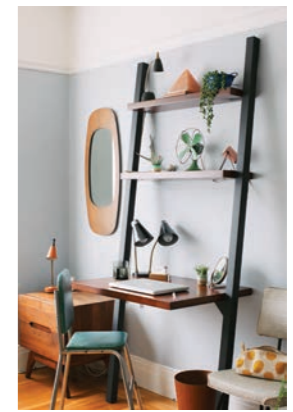
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INTRODUCTION

Our homes are like mirrors. An organized yet lived-in kitchen reflects its owner's passion for cooking and entertaining. A spare, restrained interior hints at a bachelor who values simplicity. A playful, eclectic interior suggests an inhabitant who is exploring her personal style in her first solo apartment. From our passions and interests to the stage of life through which we're passing, our living spaces are extensions of our self.

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Connect with Curiosity

Putting Down Roots

To the consummate wanderer, just about the only thing that seems foreign is the idea of staying in one place. After a military upbringing and a subsequent navy career that carried her to locales as far-flung as Sardinia and Tripoli, the last place that Jennifer Altman expected to find herself was the landlocked Appalachian town of Asheville, North Carolina. But when she found herself in Brooklyn, overwhelmed by the demands of raising three daughters with a husband whose job kept him on the road for half the year, she heeded the call of the countryside and hasn't looked back.

For all that the family has gained by settling in Asheville—the stability of routine, the comfort of community, and a spacious 1950s ranch house on a federally designated nature preserve—Jen remains conscious of the tradeoffs inherent to staying in one place. Her own nomadic past fostered in her an insatiable thirst for the exotic and also honed an impeccable eye for color, light, and material that distinguishes her work as a photographer and stylist. Jen wants her daughters to enjoy as broad an existence as possible, even as they reap the benefits of a small-town life. Thus, she's crafted a home that pays homage to the vast horizons beyond her front door.



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Hands-On Exploration

Given the advanced age and delicate nature of the living room's many treasures, the space could easily read as inaccessible. However, Jen avoids a look-but-don't-touch vibe by incorporating even the most precious items into the family's routine. She's given the girls carte blanche access to the antique credenza that she rescued from a five-hundred-year-old English cottage, and they frequently mine the mahogany drawers for the cache of paper, pastels, and colored pencils within. Similarly, a dozen vintage atlases spend as much time sprawled on the floor for informal geography lessons as they do stacked neatly beside the credenza. And a growing pile of family snapshots remains unframed on the console, begging to be picked up and reminisced over. In her quest to bring the world to their doorstep, Jen has created a living museum that values interaction over observation, imagination in addition to inquiry, and above all a reverence for the wonder of the everyday.



Connect with Curiosity: How to Bring It Home

- ◆ Incorporate elements informed by your interests into your living space. A love of reading might inspire reproduction prints from first edition books, while a fascination with the natural world could translate as framed star charts or a tray of semiprecious stones.
- ◆ Maintain a neutral palette in both furnishings and decor; without the distraction of much color, the details of each object catch the eye more easily.
- ◆ Encourage interaction with your decor by displaying objects that invite learning and hands-on exploration. Think vintage atlases and globes, nature and photography books, or even a rotating assortment of found black-and-white snapshots.

Entertain with Artistry



Shifting Focus

A career change presents no shortage of challenges. When it requires a complete overhaul, it can be downright disorienting. Just ask Brooke Atwood. After years of owning a successful women's boutique, the single mother left her hometown of Oxford, Mississippi, to attend the prestigious Savannah College of Art and Design. Faced with a city of strangers and stretched thin by the demands of school, work, and parenting, Brooke put her head down and soldiered through.

When she lifted it four years later, it was with delight to discover that she had acquired not only

a master's degree but also an expansive network of friends and colleagues—as well as a deep reverence for the captivating history and personality of Savannah itself. She simultaneously realized that her single-minded pursuit of her goals had necessarily rendered her somewhat apathetic to her surroundings. Equipped now with the skills and support to achieve her lifelong dream of becoming a fashion designer, Brooke set about creating a space where she could celebrate her new life in old Savannah style.



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A Spirited Salon

Savannah has always been known for its vibrant cultural community, a reputation that Brooke ardently upholds. In the living room, she surrounds guests with objects that spark conversation and creativity. Oversized volumes on photography and illustration line the shelves. A complete library of *Vogue* magazine dates back to 1976. The musically inclined can browse the extensive collection of records that await

a spin on Brooke's vintage turntable, and a piano and guitar stand at the ready for spontaneous duets. Step into the dining room, and a gallery wall populated entirely by works from local artists pays homage to Savannah's thriving art and design scene. With her emphasis on entertaining as an active exchange of ideas and inspiration, Brooke continues a vital tradition of the city she now calls home.

Nourish with History

Savoring the Past

When it comes to food, childhood supertime memories can inform adult preferences. For Annette Joseph, a seat at her grandmother's table didn't just give her a taste for home cooking; it shaped her appetite for hosting, her belief that a thoughtful meal is an expression of love, and ultimately even her career. A first-generation American born to parents of Hungarian origin, Annette recalls spending summers in Budapest where Sunday lunch was an all-day affair with every aunt, uncle, and cousin contributing to the feast. Cooked over an open fire and consumed under the trees with a pace dictated only by the slow progress of the sun across the sky, the communal

repasts impressed on the young Annette the convivial spirit that now colors her work as a lifestyle editor and entertaining expert.

Annette knew she wanted to replicate for her own family and friends the same rich associations with food that she enjoyed growing up. The opportunity to build her Atlanta home from the ground up allowed her to implement exacting layout and decor elements for meals that satisfy both the stomach and the soul. Happily, most of the choices Annette made from emotional impulse met a functional need as well: a testament indeed to the wisdom of tradition.



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Open Door Policy

Like her forebears, Annette approaches cooking as a communal activity. She's at her best when she's simultaneously manning the stove, directing a small army of sous chefs, and catching up on the latest happenings. She has therefore set up the kitchen to be as intuitive as possible, not only for herself but also for all whom she drafts into service. Stemware hangs directly beneath the wine rack so that anyone can easily play sommelier. Stainless steel lazy Susans in the fridge keep ingredients accessible. Clearly delineated work stations—a cutting board and gar-

bage receptacle next to the washbasin, and cookware storage and utensil crocks near the range—not only prevent collisions when the prep comes to a head, they also let the crew focus more on chatting and less on shuttling from sink to stove. Finally, Annette has culled her tools to the bare essentials of a well-sharpened knife set, a handful of top-quality pots and pans, and zero single-purpose gadgets. After all, one less gimmicky appliance consuming countertop real estate is room for one more volunteer to elbow in and join the fun.

Gather 'Round

The most striking component of Annette's kitchen is the substantial farmhouse table situated in its center. At over six feet long, it seats a hungry hoard, but its narrower-than-usual width guarantees smooth traffic in the space around it. Inset drawers store cutlery and napkins to make it easy for the kids to set the table and feel a part of the action. Of course, the reclaimed oak beauty isn't reserved only for din-

ing; it's also witnessed many a homework, craft, or catch-up session while dinners roasted in the oven. By positioning the versatile and welcoming surface mere feet from where her thoughtful yet exuberant meals emerge, Annette has fused the acts of cooking, eating, and socializing into one seamless flow of warmth.

Disconnect with Peace

Internal Dilemma

To dispel the commonly but erroneously held myth that an introvert is by nature antisocial, look no further than Julie Pointer. The stylist and art director has spent the last several years managing the events division of the highly esteemed food and entertaining publication *Kinfolk*. Indeed, she even earned a graduate degree in experience design and has assiduously applied it to the block parties and holiday dinners she hosts for her neighbors and friends. Yet Julie is also the first to admit that for every minute spent in the presence of others, she craves ten on her own. For as much as she thrives on company, Julie has learned that her energy stores can only be replenished in solitude.

Julie didn't arrive at this realization easily and met it at first with resistance. Yet after several seasons of growing increasingly depleted by the gamut of gatherings she produced and attended for work, Julie accepted that in order to pour herself fully into her collaborative endeavors, she needed space and time to refill her own cup. She has created the former in her Portland studio apartment, and now she reserves plenty of the latter among the rustic and restful touches that define her home.



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Finding Zen

From the rising mist on a lake at dawn to the slow slide of the setting sun, Julie derives considerable peace from the unhurried progress of the natural world. She's sourced most of her decor from the wilderness to evoke the same steady calm. Bundles of twigs and driftwood recall the quiet majesty of the tree line where forest meets shore. Handmade clay vases hold dried flowers and berries rescued from the photo shoots Julie has styled. Depending on the season and on Julie's whim, a handful of peppercorns may spill from a basket, a stump may pose as a stool, or tumbleweeds may cluster in a corner. The ephemeral quality of each object engenders in Julie a sense of Zen nonattachment. As each treasure disintegrates and makes way for something else, Julie is reminded of precisely what she has come here to do: let it all go.



Disconnect with Peace: How to Bring It Home

- ◆ Invite friends into your bedroom when they visit: the calming, disarming effect it has on both hostess and guest might surprise and delight you both.
- ◆ Space devoted to your favorite reflective activities is one less obstacle to actually doing them. A comfortable chair with adequate lighting promotes pre-bed reading, while a corner floor cushion supports that morning meditation practice you've been meaning to start.
- ◆ Found natural objects add a layer of personal interest without feeling too precious or contrived. Reserve a bowl on your dresser for an assortment of interesting stones, tuck a collection of feathers between your mirror and its frame, and don't think twice about switching it up when you're ready for something new!

Grow Thoughtfully

Storied Tradition

Oxford, Mississippi is an unlikely but legendary hitching post on the highway of the American imagination. For decades the community's thriving literary scene has attracted established and aspiring authors alike, among them Erin Abbott Kirkpatrick's mother. Erin recalls the constant stream of lectures, plays, and festivals that allied with Oxford's sleepy Southern charm to give her a childhood both stimulating and steady. The town's appealing dichotomy lived in Erin's mind long after her family moved away; remained there as she earned a degree in early childhood education; lingered for ten years while she toured the country nannying the offspring of several high-profile entertainers; and ultimately inspired her purchase of a rambling farmhouse just outside Oxford city limits. There Erin established a home base and continued her extensive travels until 2009 when the fading allure of the road settled her for good.

Erin soon entrenched herself more deeply in the community with the launch of Amelia, a boutique that highlights unique finds from independent artisans and that has since become wildly popular. Not long afterward, she and her husband welcomed their son Tom Otis—along with the privilege of raising their child in the town Erin holds so dear. In decorating Tom's bedroom, Erin drew upon her background in education and her own idyllic Oxford memories to encourage both active adventures and wandering daydreams. The cheerful, engaging space combines equal parts enrichment and enchantment for a room in which the whole family can learn, dream, and grow together.



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Education Stations

Erin follows the teachings of the Montessori tradition, which suggest that a child's play should foster a sense of freedom and independence within a prescribed set of limits. She drew from this perspective to determine the layout of Tom's room. Several distinct zones punctuate the perimeter, each offering a different type of pastime and each positioned so Tom can access it without assistance. Blocks pile high in braided rope baskets beneath the window for hands-on fun. A canvas hamper keeps a drum, xylophone, and other wood instruments handy for Tom's frequent urge to strike up the band. Crayons and chalk live in wide-mouthed jars that rub shoulders with a pint-sized easel and its seemingly endless roll of paper. Erin defines each area according to its container so that Tom knows exactly where to reach for the activity of his choice—and also exactly where to return it before he moves on.

Now and Later

Many elements in Tom's room seem at first glance beyond the toddler's years. Yet Erin has intentionally incorporated delicate objects into the mix, giving Tom's as yet unlearned abilities a chance to emerge. A one-of-a-kind globe lamp, with its delicate on-off switch, provides a lesson in treating belongings carefully. A vintage picnic table stands too high for Tom so currently displays stuffed animals, while its bench functions beautifully as a play surface until Tom can reach the table itself. Finally, a colorful assortment of books from Erin's own childhood, many of them signed by their authors and therefore quite precious, line a top shelf while newer offerings rest below. The signed volumes have taught Tom that all books require a gentle hand, and that these books in particular require Mom or Dad's hands for now. By viewing decor as an opportunity to teach and empower Tom in the world of adults, Erin has created a space that will age along with him.



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Elementary Accents

When Tom beds down for the night, he does so in a picture book brought to life, for the hallmarks of children's literature have directly informed the room's decor. The saturated reds, blues, greens, and yellows that punctuate the room echo the rainbow of spines that fill Tom's shelf. Shapes from the chunky limbs of jointed animals to the printed triangles on a storage

bin echo a kindergarten primer's bold, eye-catching appeal. Finally, framed animal and alphabet artworks feel borrowed from a library of illustrated classics. Color, composition, and character channel a book's ability to transport Tom to the world of his imagination, long before he sounds out his first word.



Grow Thoughtfully: How to Bring It Home

- ◆ Keep toys and belongings in check by establishing a straightforward organization system that kids can take part in maintaining. Categorize bins and baskets according to object type, and make clean-up a part of playtime to teach both sorting skills and a sense of responsibility.
- ◆ Resist the temptation to populate the space with kids-only furnishings and decor. Incorporate "grown-up" pieces where appropriate and use them to teach lessons in being careful or politely asking for help.
- ◆ Look to the schoolroom for decor inspiration. Faded primary colors, retro alphabet artwork, and classic picture book characters feel lighthearted and playful yet tasteful too—and they mesh nicely with a home that has a found vintage sensibility throughout.