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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
SHAX RIEGLER

"I cover accent tables with ivory linen tablecloths and put blue hydrangeas in white porcelain vases in the center of each table. I like the clean aromatic scent 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 cardinal red 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 then you can eat it!"

CHRISTINA SULLIVAN

"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."

SHARONE EINHORN

"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 Fan Man in Dallas, Texas [fanmanusa.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."

JOHN DANZER

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

JEFFREY BILHUBER

"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."

JENNY ARMIT

"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."

CLODAGH

"Because I love to sleep with fresh air, the very first thing I do is put in all the window and door screens. Then I rearrange the furniture in the TV room. All winter, the sofa sits against French doors facing inward. When summer comes, I flip it around and set a small dining table at the doors, which are opened as much as possible. They look out onto a brick terrace with a fountain where, in summer, I set four comfy 1940s iron lounge chairs. I look forward to seeing them every summer after they've been hibernating in storage."

ARTHUR DUNNAM

"I have a mini changing-of-the-guard. I don't redecorate, but I always have more flowers, bring out different linens for entertaining, and stock the wine fridge with my favorite white wines and rosé champagnes. Even the music I play has a little more pep in its step. Summer is a playful season, and it's fun for a home to reflect that spirit."

JAY JEFFERS