

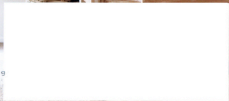
JUNE 2010

House Beautiful

25+
QUICK
FIXES
FOR EVERY
ROOM IN YOUR
HOUSE

12
GREAT
shades of
yellow

WHAT
YOU
CAN DO
IN A
DAY



LISA CREGAN: I could go for this life in a big way: a house in the middle of Napa wine country, doors flung open to the vineyards, the pool, the outdoor fireplace.

JEAN LARETTE: I know! The views are gorgeous. And there are walls of windows on both sides of the house that fold back for indoor-outdoor living.

Is this a new house?

No. It was a 1970s ranch with knotty pine and low ceilings. The clients wanted a contemporary farmhouse, and I took my cues from the simplicity and restraint of the architecture. There are farmhouse elements like the planked ceiling. And I love the look of the folding doors. They're clean and modern, yet they still have a farmhouse touch. But I also wanted the house to be sophisticated and elegant and sexy.

So how do you bring elegance and sexiness to a farmhouse?

See that blue and white pillow on the living room sofa? I put that touch of opulence there one day and it changed the whole room. The imitation fur throw in the master bedroom, the little candlesticks in the bathroom—they're so, so subtle, but they give the house that extra bit of pizzazz.

What about all the rich woods?

To be honest, I just love chocolate brown. My little black dress is always brown! That gorgeous rustic teak dining table and the stools in the kitchen look fantastic with all the blue. And see how great this big brown four-poster bed looks against tomatoey coral curtains! I've always loved the way colors combine with brown. Maybe it's because I have red hair and I think I look my best wearing brown.

Now that's interesting. Your hair color and your wardrobe translate into what goes into your clients' homes?

I have to say that fashion is by far my strongest influence. I started modeling when I was 15. I thought being a model was the best way to see the world. I lived in New York, London, Tokyo, Milan. By the time I was 23, I felt washed up! But I get so much inspiration from the runway. I'll see a beautiful Oscar de

la Renta gown go by and I think, "Throw pillows?" I thought about curtains when I saw a Vera Wang show.

What's the common denominator? Are there any other ways fashion influences your style? Fashion or interiors, it's all about restraint, restraint, restraint. There's not a lot of

flashy. It's far more difficult to be subtle and still get your point across.

It's like you have a gift for not decorating!

Every single thing here was designed to be subtle. The master bed's posts get narrower as they get closer to the ceiling; that keeps the bed from being too much of a presence.

Another thing you might not even notice! We used the same Valli & Valli drawer and cabinet pulls everywhere. It's a subtle little unifying element. The CaesarStone, too. We used it on the bathroom counters, kitchen counters, dining room buffet, mantel. Using the same materials throughout creates this quiet elegance. Nothing shouts from space to space.

Agreed. But there's nothing quiet about those yellow outdoor dining chairs and the orange cushions on the chairs around the fireplace.

We did get a little crazy outside, right? That side of the house catches the sunset—the family really uses it in the evening—and my client said, let's do something yellow and orange, like the sunset.

What's their favorite thing about the house? And yours?

Same answer: The openness and the sensuality. It's got traditional elements that make it cozy and friendly, but then it's got all these sensuous curves—swoopy dining chairs, a wavy sofa, curvaceous bathroom faucets. I mean, how often do you get sexy and cozy in the same house!

It all seems so Napa Valley dreamy.

Could this house be anywhere else?

Oh yes, I could see it anywhere from the Hollywood Hills to Maine. This place isn't so much about the indoor-outdoor lifestyle as it is about an aesthetic—farmhouse mixed with clean, contemporary design—that could fit anywhere. It has touches of tried-and-true styles—midcentury modern, Craftsman, farmhouse—that transcend region and time period. They're classic shapes I think my client will be happy with forever. If you buy quality, you can have it your whole life. It's like investing in a great handbag.

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stuff around, not even a lot of table lamps. Restraint is elegant; it's the key to serenity. I like solids—I'd rather create visual interest with texture than with pattern. If I do use pattern—on a throw pillow, say—it isn't a dainty pattern, it's a big geometric design. Even in rugs I like repeating geometric patterns. They feel more orderly, and I like things orderly. Look at the way the barstools line up in the kitchen, the organic rhythm of them—that feels right to me. And I don't respond to florals at all. I just think they look too grandmotherly. I don't use too many colors in one room. It's easy to be

ABOVE: "What an inviting place to relax with a glass of wine in the evening!" Larette says. The fireplace was designed by architect Marshall Schneider. Parati chairs by Carlos Motta. OPPOSITE: An ironies chandelier with onyx shades adds glamour to the dining area. The wall color, Benjamin Moore's Coventry Gray, was pulled from the Rainmonds Stairans painting. Larette designed the rug, based on an iron grate she saw in Paris. Siren dining chairs by Holly Hunt.