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## Stylish Solutions

By Ann McDonald



Use single-color accessories for a clean-lined spring home. You can always bring back the color in the fall and winter. Photo Couture Chateau LLC

### Spring Switch Tips:

**Slipcovers:** I know, some people roll their eyes, but here's the truth from a long-time interior designer: slipcovers save furniture. By giving your furniture a break seasonally, you extend the life of well-made furniture and extend the life of expensive fabric upholstery. I personally recommend clients spend to acquire well-made pieces and use the slip cover (tailored or flowy) to deal with mood and design changes.

**A testimony:** One of the sofas my husband and I have was purchased in 1989 and is still going strong. The base fabric, a pricey linen velvet, held its own until just last year. That's 26 years. When you do the cost analysis, you see the value. It may have set me back a pretty penny years ago, as the fabric wholesaled at \$175 a yard in 1989. At the time I was working for a wholesaler and that same fabric retailed at over \$350 a yard. Here's the thing, it was a nubby neutral, and lasted well over two decades. That fabric more than paid for itself.

I watched as friends tossed their "budget" furniture, and even now, those same friends laugh as the couch we bought is still in style and going strong in Orinda.

We recently had the sofa reupholstered, this time in another well-made upholstery fabric, and the piece is still a favorite. I credit slipcovers for preserving the linen velvet seasonally for all those years.

Consider options in florals and solid or tone on tone linens. If you go the route of linens, you can easily update your space by switching out colorful prints for some black and white photos for a clean look through summer.

**Pillows:** Remember my tips on color matching, and take something with you so you know how to coordinate. If you are very unsure, stick to one color and do tone-on-tone.

Spring has sprung, and it's so beautiful, I'm tempted to move my desk outside. But since that's not possible, it's all about updating homes and bringing the spring feeling indoors.

I want to share updates you can use to refresh your home this spring. The main thing is what we in the studio call the "spring switch." Give yourself several weeks to plan and execute - this is not a weekend project, but more of a lifestyle switch. Have fun with it.

What is the spring switch? It's the walk-through of your home, where dark tapestry pillows are put away in cedar-lined boxes in favor of fresh linens and florals. Winter draperies head to the cleaners for restoration, repair and proper storage until the fall, replaced by simple linen or sheers. Even the furniture gets the quick slip with summer florals or white washable slip covers or tailored throws.

Draperies: For our luxury clients, summer draperies are designed and fabricated at the same time the winter draperies are. These are then properly stored and cared for and professionally installed when the seasons switch. If you are doing it yourself, there are so many options, from the Pottery Barn catalog to other online sources. I love seeing the same summer options for outdoor drapery in all the catalogs arriving these days. Consider allocating some time to peruse and choose what would work in your home space.

From a budget standpoint, my professional opinion is the same for drapery as it is for furniture. Once you decide what you need in terms of window covering, go with the best you can afford. Even seasonally, if you invest in a well-made pre-fabricated product (look for lining and warranty information), you won't have to re-purchase next spring.

In closing, no matter what your space looks like, take time this spring to enjoy your home.

I read a funny article the other day about Pinterest, as the author described house shame. As the resident designer this week, I formally banish that from your thinking and say that your home is beautiful, unique and a gorgeous representation of you in process. It really is about you finding your wheelhouse, so to speak, and embracing the season you are in.

May your spring home be everything you want. If you'd like to join us for a trend report coming out of High Point Market, you may sign up at [www.couturechateau.com/trend](http://www.couturechateau.com/trend). This is an online webinar format where I will be sharing tips and observations my team has picked up while at market.

For now, happy home to you.



Even a simple drapery application can be gorgeous. This is a wire, with easy to use clips, available in many retail outlets or online. Photos Couture Chateau LLC



Linens and nubby sheers are perfect for the "spring switch."



Nubby and tone-on-tone are easy combinations to live with. Photo Couture Chateau LLC



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