

A Fresh Start

Hello, spring, I've missed you. After this winter, I'm sure it's no surprise that I'm greeting this seasonal adjustment with open arms. No doubt you are doing the same.

It wasn't the harshness of this winter alone that had me longing for change. It's also because spring is one my two favorite seasons (fall is the other). Summer is grand, of course, but I much prefer temperatures that aren't too hot or too cold. I adore comfortably warm air accompanied by an energizing sun, a combination that feels oh so good, especially in the spring.

I must admit that I'm inclined to rush outside when the temperature begins to rise. But I find that I'm quickly drawn back in to do some sprucing up — spring style. Just as fresh air is welcomed in through as many open windows as possible, I like to refresh my surroundings with reminders that a new season is upon us.

As soon as the opportunity arrives, I like to stash away any interior remnants of chilly weather. Gone are the bulky winter throws and spicy scented candles, and in comes a fresh bunch of aromatic flowers and spring-toned accents. Wintery reds are swapped out for light whites, sunny yellows and grassy greens. These changes, though subtle, help me to feel as invigorated inside my home as I do when I walk out the door. A bright new look equals a positive new attitude.

Whether you boost your spring spirit with changes in your home decor or prefer to head outdoors to breathe new life into your empty planters, this issue of Merrimack Valley Home has something for you.

Susan Mitchell, our garden expert, will leave you longing for beautifully manicured landscapes and flower beds with her report on two private New Hampshire properties and their participation in The Garden Conservancy's "Open Days" program. In her "Gardening Essentials" column, Susan offers advice for people looking to do some gardening on a smaller scale in decorative containers.

Liz Michalski shares ideas on how to entertain smartly outdoors, and our Home Bitz section shows off some fabulous indoor/outdoor rugs, as well as unique and attractive outdoor furniture collections.

If you're wondering what to serve at your next outdoor



Adrien Blisson

gathering, check out Dean Johnson's breakdown of favorite cookbooks, where I'm sure you'll find a perfect recipe.

We're also excited to feature three beautiful homes located in North Andover, Concord and Topsfield. Each home stands out with its own tasteful style and interesting story, and all are great examples of how active families can combine comfortable living with sophisticated design that is both functional and beautiful.

Be sure to read your way to the last page of this issue, where you'll learn about our reader contest opportunity. Submit a photo of your "bleak bookcase" and you'll be entered to win a bookcase makeover by Merrimack Valley Home design consultant Linda Holt.

Warmest regards from our house to yours,

Beth

 Talk back to Beth at BethDaigle@mvmag.net



Meghan Moore

In the Next Issue:

Merrimack Valley Home was thrilled to meet interior designer and television personality, **Taniya Nayak**, during her visit to UMass Lowell in December 2014. Our October 2015 issue will include our follow-up interview with Nayak, highlighting her experiences as a UMass Lowell student, a designer on Food Network's "Restaurant Impossible," and her latest tips for interior design.