

for the love of LINEN

BY DENISE GEE PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN STRATTON PRODUCED BY DAVID ANGER

SAVOR A NEW CROP OF LINEN, STYLED IN REFRESHING CITRUS HUES. THIS BREEZY FABRIC UPDATES ANY ROOM WITH REFINED TEXTURE, PLAYFUL LOOKS, AND JUST A HINT OF ROMANCE.

TIES THAT BIND When covered in bright white heavyweight linen, a cardboard storage box can move from its hiding place in a drawer to the top spot on a desk or bedside table. Use the newly transformed tray to beautifully harbor keepsakes, elegant ribbons, favorite swatches, and other memories in the making.



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SUMMER INTO FALL Light linen furnishings aren't always rumpled and cushy, as this well-manicured space shows. Here, a lemon-hue slipcover is the perfectly tailored suit for this genteel sofa. Its soft color plays off the Roman shade's greener tone, a subtle touch that lets both beauties have their due. The airy yellow pieces, which in sunny rooms have a tendency to float into obscurity, are grounded by bold black and white punctuations. The room's color scheme balances light and dark, keeps it masculine and feminine, and helps transition the space from season to season. A jazzy mix of vibrant lines—from a folksy rug to an exaggerated houndstooth-check needlepoint pillow to a framed flea-market scarf on linen (cleverly resembling a modern ink print)—emits even more positive energy. The

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CLEAN GETAWAYS Linen pillowcases (left) are pure simplicity. Forgo formal shams, opting instead for crisp white, lightly detailed cases. The tailored linen envelope over the headboard makes a fit-and-trim statement. The bed's mod striped coverlet is a great transition piece; it's light enough for warmer climates and, thanks to the fabric's tight weave, is sufficient for cooler weather. In another bright setting (below left), the graceful linen shower curtain mellows the room's extroverted tile.

THE CARE OF LINEN

Handled well, linen can last a few lifetimes.

CLEANING

- For delicate linen, washing is best because it softens linen over time. For heavy pieces, dry cleaning helps preserve shape, color, and crispness. ■ Use mild detergents. When machine-washing, place the item in a lingerie bag. ■ Clean stains with hydrogen peroxide; chlorine bleach can cause yellowing.

DRYING

- An outside line (to benefit from the sun's natural bleaching action) is best, but a dryer's gentle setting is often a safe bet. ■ Avoid wringing wet linen; it breaks fibers and can slightly warp the piece.

IRONING

- Heat-pressing linen while it's still slightly damp best relaxes wrinkles. For an old-fashioned look, put it on a table to finish air-drying in formation; use a pad underneath if desired. ■ Use your iron's medium-high setting (preferably with steam) and press the back side of the linen first so that a sheen can form on top. For embroidered pieces, use a soft cloth between the iron and delicate thread work.

STORING

- Avoid folding pieces the same way each time; repetitive creasing creates permanent fold lines and fade marks. ■ Never use plastic bags for storage; they don't allow natural fibers to breathe. Instead, cover linen with acid-free tissue paper or pieces of cotton or muslin. Store in a dry, well-ventilated place.





EYE CANDY Lively colors and textures breathe life into a space, but there's a fine line between out there and outstanding. In this case, the dining room achieves an air of sophistication with the use of neat-as-a-pin cushions in an aristocratic yellow linen on Chinese Chippendale chairs. Curtain panels in an exuberant fireworks pattern, designed by renowned interior designer Albert Hadley, make a satisfying salt-and-pepper backdrop for the kumquat-color chairs and white petal-top dining table. A wavy-lined lampshade sheds light on the fun scene.

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THE FRAME GAME Give cultivated flair to a vintage advertisement or other humble piece of art by framing it with an extra-wide linen mat (left).

COASTING RIGHT ALONG A chic tea-cart set (below left)—outfitted with vintage wares and timeless bar treats—is brought up to modern-day entertaining speed when topped with updated remnants of the past. Hemstitched linen cocktail napkins with orange appeal and a dainty honeydew and white tea towel perform beautifully.

DRUM ROLL What better way to present a bold linen lampshade than on a glass base? The lamp's modern bulbous base clearly shows off both stars of the setting: a heavily textured sage-green linen shade with cream-hue leaves and the room's golden basket-weave print wallpaper. ■

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