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By Design with Lisa McDennon

A **fresh** look at **New Year's Resolutions**

With the new year in our sights, we turn our thoughts to resolutions. Someone once said “Many people look forward to the new year for a new start on old habits.”

We don't share that pessimistic view. We don't want to talk about the resolutions that read like a list of chores. We want to talk about some ways to plan for a little fun – elevate your lifestyle! We want to encourage you to finally make those changes you have put on the back burner all year.

Plan for success.

Start off by going through your home, room by room, and create a wish list of ideas you have for rejuvenation

and improvements. Resist the urge to schedule all of the items on your list for January – you will bite off more than you can chew and your plans will fizzle. Use the list to make a calendar, prioritizing your projects throughout 2012. Not only will this list give you activities to look forward to, but it will also boost the likelihood that all your items will be checked off come next December.

Here are a few of our ideas that may inspire you. Think past, present and future.

Look to your past.

“Memories do not belong in drawers,” says Jim Merritt, a local picture framer. He is usually referring to photographs, but we suggest that there are many beautiful items in our homes that live

**Look to the past
present and future for
design inspiration**





**Incorporate things
that are important
to you into your
everyday life**

too long behind closed cupboard doors, in drawers or on the top shelf of closets. Keep this phrase in mind as you take down your holiday decorations and restore your home to its natural state.

Think about what is important to you and see how you can incorporate it into everyday life. Wouldn't you rather enjoy your grandmother's Lalique vase full of flowers, instead of locking it in the sideboard? Why not set the table with your wedding china for every dinner party, instead of just for the big holidays?

If you don't already own any heirlooms – create your own. Splurge on a fabulous set of flatware from Christofle (we love the Vertigo collection by Andree Putman). Swap out old bedding for a crisp new set of high thread count sateen sheets. Slip between a new set of Sferra bedding – the stresses of the day will ease away. (The detail stitching on the Millesimo collection is fabulous.)

By uncovering those things we classify as our “best” or “too precious” to use, we are allowing them to bring beauty to our lives, both visually and emotionally.

Look to the present:

Being organized can be so satisfying! Getting organized not so much fun. We would like to suggest that you look at your clothes closets and linen closets and create a beautiful space for your things.

Clear out the hall linen closet; remove the doors and add a fun colorful drapery or a stack of tailored linen boxes and create a new focal point.

Or maybe you have decided this year is the year to build out that dream custom closet or dressing room. Closets have become an art form unto themselves. Commit to an overhaul and you will find yourself in a luxury guaranteed to put a smile on your face, even while issuing that time-honored phrase, “I have absolutely nothing to wear.”



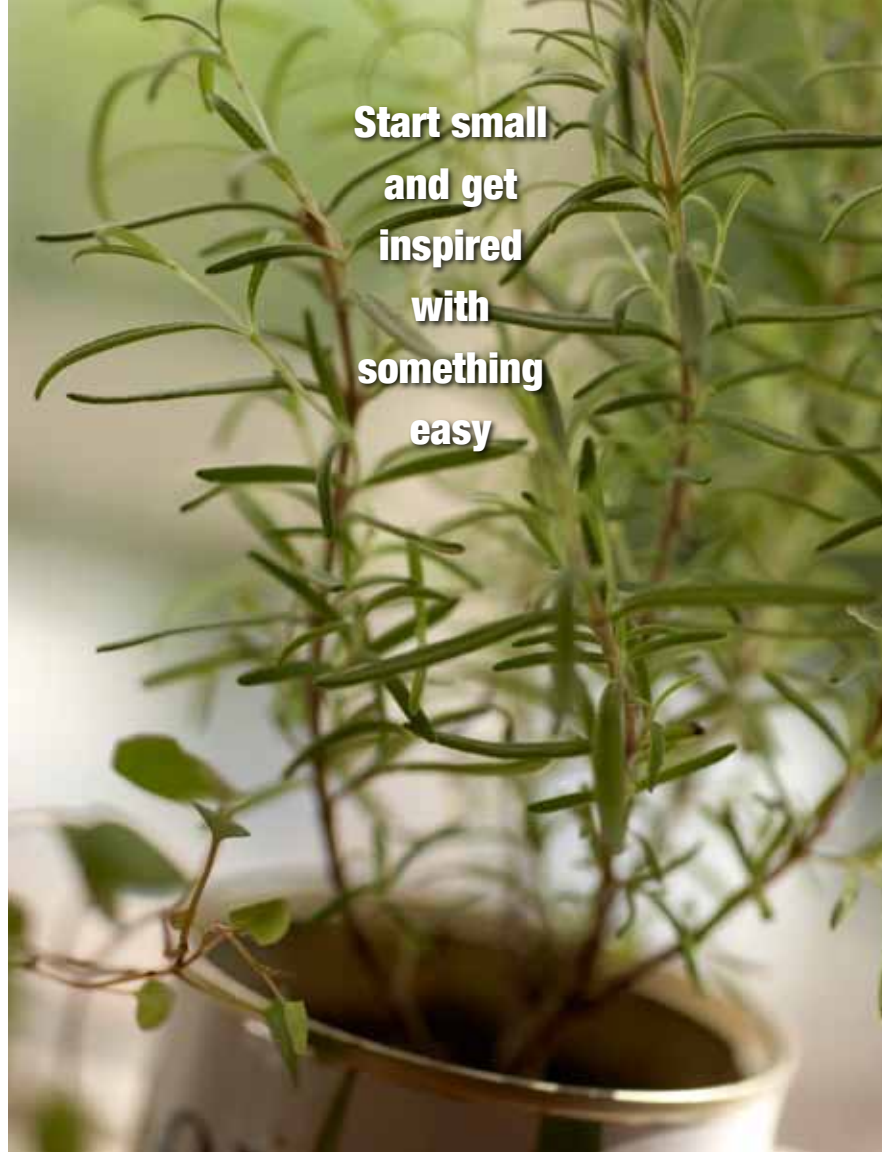
Create a beautiful space for your things



Look to the future:

Take some steps to make a “green” impact on your home, but don’t assume that a total overhaul is necessary. Think “evolution” not revolution. Start small and get inspired with something easy like recycling, and as spring approaches think about composting or starting a herb garden, making a small step toward sustainability. Before you don your garden gloves, try calling a local nursery; many will be happy to come out and set up your herb garden.

Greening the inside of your home isn’t just about replacing light bulbs and buying energy-efficient appliances. Technology is now available that makes our homes eco-friendly while making our lives easier, with the simple touch of a button. Consider the Lutron RA2 wireless system. You can dim lights, control window shades, temperature and make an automatic schedule for on/off, all to reduce the energy expenditure in the home. The system will sense when a room is empty and turn off lights and appliances. You won’t even need to cut one bit of drywall – it’s all retrofitted. Amazing!



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And to top it off, the RA2 system can also be accessed remotely from your iPhone or iPad.

We hope, as always, that this year will be better than the last year. Have fun, be imaginative and live well. ■

With degrees in both fine art and interior design, Lisa Rachelle McDennon opened her own full-service interior design firm in Laguna Beach 11 years ago. Specializing in high-end residential and commercial projects, she has won numerous awards and has been featured in many publications, including being named one of House Beautiful’s “New Designers to Watch.”

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