

Ideas of Order

Volume 2

THE CALIFORNIA CLOSETS MAGAZINE

THE Joy!

PROJECT

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sustain it, share it—
and build it into your life



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THE Joy! PROJECT

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Photo by Gray Malin

Ideas of Order

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VOLUME 2

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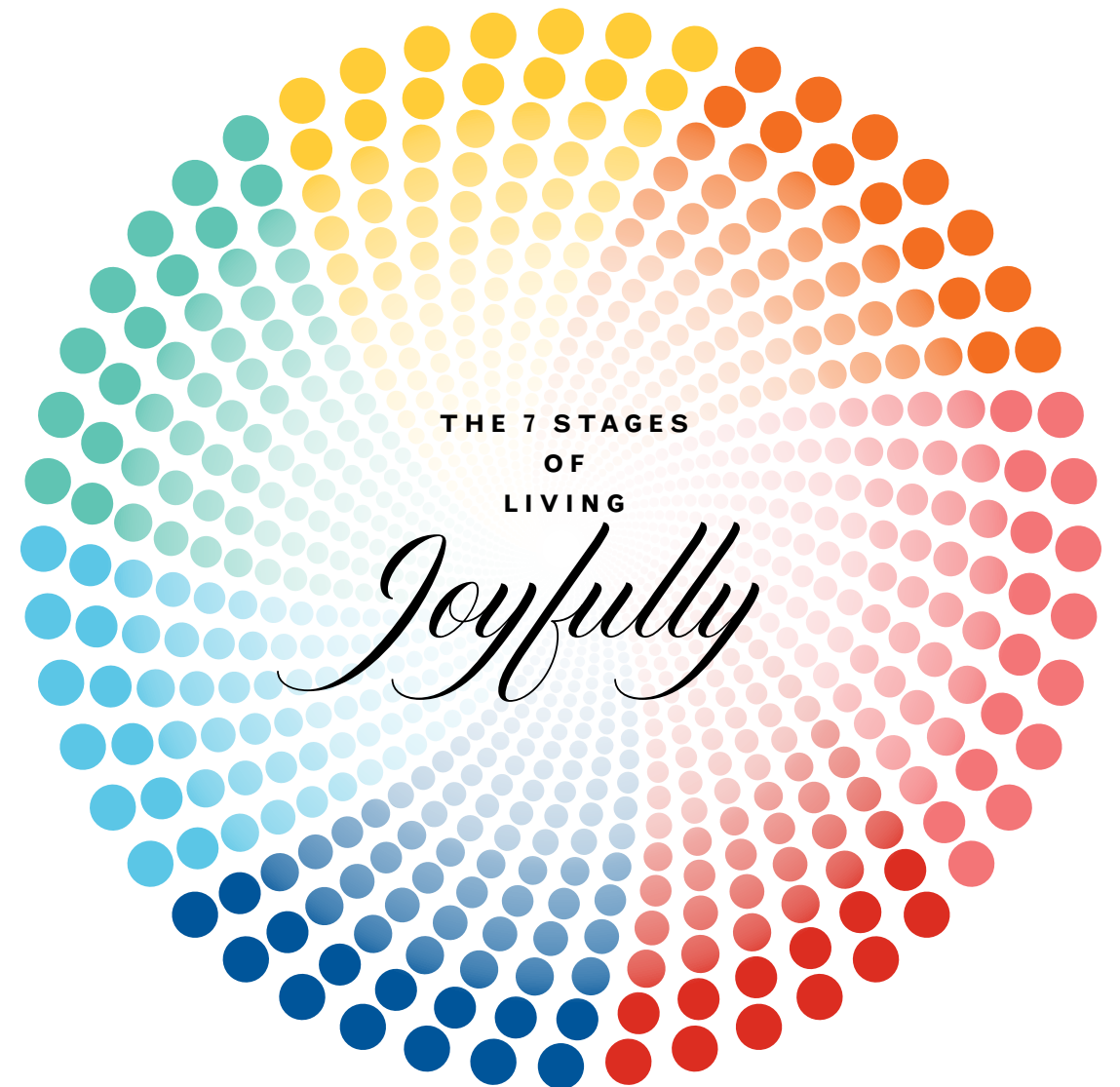
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“All the world’s a stage. And one man in his time plays many parts,
his acts being seven ages.”

—William Shakespeare



Starting Out / Settling Down / Settling In / Mixing It Up / Spreading Out
Emptying the Nest / Embracing the Moment

Photography Eduardo Navarro Text Claudia Dowling

Reporting Michele Filgate and Jill Russell

— Act 1 —

Starting Out

Inspired by design and connected 24/7, Anna Kocharian, like many twentysomethings, aims to create a serene home to recharge and boot up

She has a dream, and, step by step, Anna Kocharian, 28, is making it real. Like other young professionals, discovering who she is and what she wants to be is an exhilarating process of self-discovery, independence, and trial and error. Kocharian wants meaningful work. She wants to travel. And she wants a retreat to come home to that reflects her taste.

Check. Check. Check. “I’m lucky. I get to travel and do something I love,” she says. “It’s such an exciting time to be in New York and working in design.” She is a digital editor at *Domino*, a taste-making brand helping people make the best of their—sometimes small—living spaces. And she understands small. Her walk-up studio apartment in Manhattan’s Midtown East neighborhood, the first home of her own, is under 300 square feet. Even so, like many her age, she needs help from her parents with the rent—despite a full-time job. “I’ve tried hard to create a calming space,” she says. “My apartment is an escape from the hustle and intensity of the city, and, ultimately, that is what brings me joy.”

It is orderly, spare, and multitasking. Her dresser

doubles as a TV stand, and her desk becomes a serving area for entertaining. And she’s hyperaware that staying organized and intentional is key for maintaining a calm aesthetic in tiny quarters. “I’m a hard-core minimalist. Every time I buy something, I ask myself, will I really love this?” She collects tiny objects abroad: a trinket dish from a visit to Greece, a vase from a business trip to Copenhagen. “I love to fill my home with the pieces I procure. They’re often colorful and look beautiful against the all-white backdrop.”

Wanderlust is in the blood. Her surgeon father and math teacher mother moved from Armenia when Kocharian was six, eventually settling in Princeton, New Jersey. Kocharian graduated from Rutgers in journalism and psychology while her brother, who is training to be a neurosurgeon, followed her father’s footsteps into medicine. She’d like to visit Armenia again soon, or live in Europe sometime. “I love wandering,” she says.

For now, she roams closer to home. She’s a foodie, but, like many New Yorkers, that means discovering restaurants, not cooking at home. Her mini fridge is





empty; she and her friends go out to socialize. For people her age, she says dating is challenging. “It’s impossible. It’s easy to meet people, but there are so many options.” She adds, “Maintaining a work-life balance is a struggle and seems to be for everyone.” On a workday, she spends three waking hours, tops, in her apartment, and says that 70 percent of her life is “internet-driven”—working, shopping, communicating. As the day closes, she’s so sick of the computer screen that she reads actual paper books. “Most city dwellers spend little time at home; when we do, it’s special,” she says. The small things make her happy—her air plant, a ray of sun. “If it’s Sunday and I have the windows open with the light shining in, it’s cathartic to be in that moment. I can be working or creating or reading.” Living the dream.



“My apartment is an escape from the hustle and intensity of the city, and, ultimately, that is what brings me joy.”

Left: “My block is relatively quiet, which is not something people come to expect of Midtown East,” says Kocharian. “The apartment was such a lucky find.” **This page:** Under-the-bed storage corrals luggage, books, and clothing, while white keeps the space serene. “My apartment is almost entirely whitewashed, with earthy pops of color and textures. In a sense, it’s ethereal.”



— Act 2 —

Settling Down

For Amy Azzarito and Mark Fujiwara, their newlywed life is all about mergers and acquisitions

Setting up house with a partner is both exciting and challenging. Nesting is about trying to make each other happy, combining lifestyles and acquiring things that bring equal joy. It's a time of promise and potential. Like many couples today, Amy Azzarito and Mark Fujiwara married later in life—he was 49 and she was 40—and already had fully formed lives and tastes. And they wanted a mutually satisfying style. Not his or hers, but theirs. A longtime Brooklyn resident, Azzarito had moved back to California to be nearer to her sisters—and find a permanent relationship and a permanent home. On her first eharmony date with Fujiwara, they talked for two hours before opening the menu. With foresight, she drank nothing but water to avoid seeing him “with wine-colored eyes.” They didn’t live together until they had been engaged for several months.

Many couples who come to marriage bring their own symbols of commitment (such as sofas). But Fujiwara and Azzarito wanted a more potent one: a house. They found a 3,400-square-foot split-level house in Marin County with a view of the San Francisco Bay.

Fujiwara, a wealth manager for Baird, had often visited the area while growing up; it was near the home of the oldest of his 90 cousins. Azzarito liked the private downstairs floor for the master bedroom and the his and hers offices, with space for Fujiwara’s sports memorabilia and her design books. She also loved the clean layout. “The house was a blank canvas and required little renovation, which was amazing,” she says. “Now we’re focused on making it our own.”

Azzarito has deep experience in home design. She’s predicted trends for more than a decade, first as managing editor of *Design*Sponge*—a pioneering blog—and later as a sought-after contributor to *Design Milk*, *Architectural Digest*, *Brit + Co*, *Food52*, and others. A degree from Parsons in the history of decorative arts and design has made her a frequent lecturer. Her first book, *Past & Present*, incorporated design history into modern craft. Her next book, working title *Nest: A History of the Things That Make a House a Home*, is almost finished. So Fujiwara encourages her to take the lead when it comes to design. When she first saw

the master bedroom in their new home, for example, the closet area (which was larger than the Brooklyn studio she had previously lived in) did not suffice. “I wanted something that beautifully organized what we own but wasn’t so giant and crazy that it was out of control,” she says. So she installed lighted hanging rods and shoe racks to blend sophistication with efficiency. “I love the way it honors what you own.”

After a honeymoon in Japan, Azzarito and Fujiwara moved in. Their living room is a gathering place for family—particularly Fujiwara’s daughters, ages 15 and 13, from a previous marriage; his extended family who lives nearby; and Azzarito’s sisters. Their life together has begun—and with it, a new culture for a union of two, surrounded by the people and things they love most.



“The house was a blank canvas and required little renovation, which was amazing. Now we’re focused on making it our own.”

Opposite, top: Fujiwara’s pocket square collection lives in a pullout tray in the closet. “He wears a suit every day, so that’s how he expresses himself,” says Azzarito. *Bottom left:* Azzarito shot, edited, and framed enlarged photos of their cats, Loki and Freya, and pit bull, Romy. *Bottom right:* The home, built in 1963, is full of large windows and natural light, which have informed the couple’s design aesthetic: open, airy, and bright. This page: In the bedroom, a window seat topped with custom blush-pink velvet cushions and extra-large storage drawers underneath provides storage without distracting from the view.
CC design consultant: Corinne Cronin

— Act 3 —

Settling In

As new parents and first-time homeowners, Danny Montoya and Erin Feher get creative with space, time, and work-life balance

The family had outgrown their life in a condo in pricey downtown San Francisco. At 500 square feet, it was adequate in size but too far from Danny Montoya's business, a woodworking workshop for children called The Butterfly Joint. A butterfly joint is a carpenter's term for the bow-tie-shaped piece of wood that is used to splice a split in a larger board. And that's exactly what Montoya and Erin Feher wanted to do: to marry their two spaces—home and work—into one family-friendly life.

At the time, Feher, now 38, had been editing *Habitat*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s design magazine, and was five months pregnant with her second child, Vega, when *San Francisco Magazine* approached her to become its design editor. "I didn't think I wanted a full-time job. But I've always loved the magazine," she says. She ended up taking it, which made Montoya, 41, the primary childcare provider for Orion, 5, and Vega, now almost 2.

A mixed-use building four blocks from the beach solved their problems. The neighborhood is good for kids. There was space downstairs for the shop and space upstairs for a two-bedroom apartment. A small

business loan made it doable for a young couple on a budget. "It was a goal to make our family integrated with our business," says Feher. It was small, though. "I write about houses that are 10,000 square feet, and ours is 550 square feet," says Feher. "One day we'll add on, but for now it has plenty of space for us."

It was a DIY from the get-go. When the couple met, Montoya was working as a kindergarten and first grade teacher and moonlighting as a DJ, but he later segued into commissioned woodworking. When he set up the woodshop for kids, he had a ready-made clientele from his 15 years as a beloved teacher. He also had the skills needed to reconfigure their new place. He set about remaking it with the help of Feher's father, a retired contractor. They all slept on mattresses in the shop downstairs for a month while they built out the upstairs. "And then, my dad left, and we had this empty house," says Feher.

Montoya began building furniture: a table, bookshelves, and, most important, a loft bed to carve out a space from the kids' tiny bedroom for Orion to call her



own. To take one thing off Montoya's plate, Feher commissioned a custom closet beneath the loft bed for him as a gift. "Closet organization is super important in such a small space; if you don't have room for all this stuff, it's just chaos," says Feher. "And we're both really organized and clean, and get frustrated when things don't have a place." So successful was that project that she again commissioned his and hers closets for the master bedroom and installed them while Montoya was away. "He came home, and he was like, 'What?!' It was amazing, and such a luxury when everything we do is DIY."

In The Butterfly Joint downstairs, Orion works alongside a dozen other children enrolled in the class while Montoya keeps an eye on the baby sleeping upstairs via video monitor. Feher leaves work promptly at 5 PM. She thought they might have to get a car, but instead she got an electric bike with room for three children, like the ones they had seen parents using in Amsterdam when they were child-free. Like many older millennials or echo boomers, Feher and Montoya had children later in life, and the second child changed their lives significantly. They no longer travel to Europe annually or go out as often at night—but they were ready for the new lifestyle. They entertain at home or, after the kids are in bed at 8, stream HBO on a laptop. "Your life changes," says Feher. "We do so many more close-to-home things. We go camping. We really enjoy parenting and really enjoy our kids. We want to make them a full part of our life." The butterfly joint worked tenfold, marrying both their work and family into a strengthened whole.

Top: Feher is with the kids one or two days a week, while Montoya takes on the rest. "He's always throwing them in the air, doing crazy acrobatics, and making everything interesting," says Feher. **Bottom:** The Butterfly Joint serves as an extension of the household, a place to entertain friends, and an after-hours playroom, which Orion, 5, takes to her advantage.



“It was a goal to make our family integrated with our business. We really enjoy parenting and our kids, and want to make them a full part of our life.”

In the 7-by-11-foot children's room, Orion loves hanging up her dresses, while Vega, almost 2, plays nearby. Under her loft bed, Orion has drawers for dolls, display shelves for treasures, and space for the vinyl records she collects with her dad. (Her favorites include Harry Belafonte, thanks to *Beetlejuice*, and a band she discovered called Shannon and the Clams.) "The space makes her so happy," says Feher. "And because there's a place for everything to go, it always looks good."

CC design consultant: Corinne Cronin



— Act 4 —

Mixing It Up

James Kicinski-McCoy and Aubrey McCoy's blended family carves out space for hers, his, and theirs

With entrepreneurs changing business practices and the blended family changing today's modern household, James Kicinski-McCoy and Aubrey McCoy could be considered this century's real McCoy's. They were blended from the get-go. James, now 38, (and, yes, her name is James) was the mother of two, Julian and Milla Plum, when she married Aubrey, now 35. Then they had two more children, Birdie and Sailor, and launched a family business or three, blending both their children and their work. James had started a children's clothing line as a new mother at 23, but manufacturing problems tanked the enterprise. "I lost a lot of money," she says. "I started selling vintage clothing to dig myself out of that hole."

With the help of Aubrey, an experienced marketer, the vintage-clothing business, Bleubird, took off as a cutting-edge lifestyle website thanks to an accompanying blog featuring photos of the family. "It happened naturally. I started sharing more personal photos and info," she says. "People wanted to see more, so we went with it." It led to gigs with names like Stella McCartney, Gap, and Bugaboo. She also cofounded *Mother*, an online magazine, where the family also creeps into content. Aubrey was drawn





“When we moved here, we were all about being more minimalistic and intentional. It’s nice to get rid of things no longer appreciated.”

Opposite, left: Milla Plum, 15; Julian, 18; Birdie, 8; Aubrey; James; and Sailor, 5, gather in the living room on the middle level of their 4,000-square-foot house. *Right:* Bijou, the family’s Bengal cat, tip-toes across a vintage-vinyl collection. Other furry family members include pug Frances and bunny Bubble. *This page, top:* The garage houses Aubrey’s office and three vintage motorcycles. “I’ve always wanted my own garage,” he says. His favorite part? “All of the storage.” *Bottom:* Aubrey works on a bike with help from Sailor. “It’s kind of hard to keep the kids out of anything,” says Aubrey.

into virtual parenthood as well, becoming one of Instagram’s top dads through pictures of his Bengali cat, sleeping children, and vintage motorcycles.

After visiting Nashville, the couple decided to relocate from Houston. They rented the biggest of the three houses they saw, to fit the entire family, and when the landlord later put the modern, 4,000-square-foot house on the market, they bought it. As home-based entrepreneurs, they each needed their own space: for James a home office, and for Aubrey a “garage” office. “Once we bought this house, I was itching to get started and make it my own space,” he says. His father was a mechanic who restored old cars and motorcycles. “It was natural for me to follow in his footsteps.” First step: storage. “I like everything to have its place and be clean and well-kept,” he says. “Having all the cabinets and drawer space to hide stuff is a dream.”

James, a self-described clotheshorse with a collection to envy, required a hard-working closet. “We need-

ed help with the closet transformation because of its small size and odd shape,” she says of the narrow space with slanted ceilings. A walk-in closet helps her organize her large and varied wardrobe, which consists of everything from Levi’s and color-coded tops (including her favorite Grateful Dead T-shirt) to Chanel sling-backs, Gucci loafers, and Céline boots. “When we moved here, we were all about being minimalistic and more intentional about things,” she says. “Over five years, things start to accumulate—closets become stash spaces, things get lost, and you forget what you have. It’s nice to get rid of things no longer appreciated.” The businesses have accumulated as well. In 2015, Aubrey and James opened a Nashville clothing and housewares boutique called Two Son with another couple, who also has two sons. “Being business owners means that it’s often hard to find time for ourselves,” James says. “We’re making a conscious effort to make this a priority.”



– Act 5 –

Spreading Out

With friends, phone chargers, laundry, and after-school gigs multiplying, teenagers pose new challenges for Lily Kanter's maturing family

Despite being a Microsoft powerhouse and promising philanthropist featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, Lily Kanter left the corporate world. She had met Marc Sarosi, the owner of Africa Gems, before Internet dating—through a personal ad. He paid \$50 extra to put his headline in bold type: Gem in the Rough. They both wanted a family. And every Friday night, as Kanter and Sarosi gather at their long dining room table with their three teenage sons and one or two other families for a Shabbat dinner, she knows she made the right decision. “Since I left my corporate job,” she says, “I’ve been charting my own path of what brings me joy every day.”

Part of that path has been starting three companies. Gen X parents are known for their entrepreneurial spirit (they launch the most start-ups), and Kanter, 53, could be exhibit A. As a new mom in 2002, she opened Mill Valley Baby and Kids, a specialty baby-furnishings store that carried the products she couldn’t find elsewhere. There she met Serena Dugan, and in 2004, the two partnered to launch the home design and furnishings brand

Serena & Lily, which maintains a cult-like following today. Ever the entrepreneur and impassioned by philanthropy, Kanter in 2017 started Boon Supply, originally a school-supply fundraising company that now sells goods for other nonprofit fundraisers, giving 50 percent of revenues to the charity of the buyer’s choice. “I truly believe in capitalism as a force for good,” she says. “We have already raised \$10 million for schools and teams in one year. It’s a very fulfilling way to spend my days.”

Despite the demands of work, family has always been the priority. Kanter and Sarosi, 57, bought their house after the birth of their third son 13 years ago with an aim to create a place where the kids would want to hang out. “You needed serious vision to see through the cobwebs and rusty toilets,” she says. The family spent most of their time in the large third floor as they renovated the rest. With tricycles, jungle gyms, and a child safety gate on the stairs, it was a “serious romper room,” says Kanter. Now the “teenager hangout,” the third floor includes foosball and air hockey tables, a movie theater screen with a popcorn machine, plus three sofas

Lily Kanter, Marc Sarosi, and their youngest sons, Zeke, 15, and Nate, 13, hit the deck of their yurt, which Sarosi built and Kanter decorated.



“Since I left my corporate job, I’ve been charting my own path of what brings me joy every day.”



and two king-size beds. “We are definitely the sleepover house that we always wanted to be,” she says.

During the renovation, the family put an emphasis on storage in the bedrooms. “We love home organization,” says Kanter, who devotes several hours a week to reordering a closet or room. “Organization makes me happy and more relaxed. There is such a sense of joy to open a perfectly organized closet, not to mention a great way to find what you’re looking for,” she says. “Our house is plenty messy, but thankfully we have lots of closet space, so I tuck it all away. It’s amazing what a decluttered space does for the mind.”

Family time is spent playing tennis and taking adventures abroad for international volunteer projects. They have built classrooms in Kenya, India, and Ecuador and have served lunch at an AIDS orphanage in Zambia. Closer to home, they deliver Meals on Wheels to seniors in Marin County through Jewish Family and Children’s Services. “A deep sense of community is very important to our family,” says Kanter. “We also value that it feels better to give to people less fortunate than to collect more stuff.”

So when Kanter looks down the Shabbat table, she feels happy. The phones are put away—even hers—though she knows they will emerge as dessert is served. “Those things are the most difficult for a parent in today’s world,” she says. “We caved in and gave our youngest son a smartphone in sixth grade. I wish we could rewind that decision.” Otherwise she has no child-rearing regrets. She has created a welcoming space and feels sure that, as the nest begins to empty, their sons will still want to come home.

Opposite: The dining table, which Kanter had custom-made, seats 16 comfortably for Shabbat dinners. **This page, top:** Kanter entertains often and set up a quiet retreat in the new yurt for guests. It has a kitchenette, indoor plumbing, and an outdoor fire pit. **Bottom:** Sarosi creates a photo book to document each one of the family’s travel adventures, including trips to Namibia and Zambia. “The house is filled with family pictures,” says Kanter. “Our family is our number-one pride and joy.”

“We are definitely the sleepover house that we always wanted to be.”

This page, top: Ping-pong is popular in the third-floor playroom. “Our house is relaxed and not too formal,” says Kanter. “There’s chipped paint on every wall from the boys playing ball.” *Left:* “I tossed in the towel several years ago on having their rooms look a certain way,” says Kanter. “As my mom used to say, ‘Just close the door.’” *Right:* The boys have storage built-ins in their rooms, to keep everything from sporting equipment to childhood memories organized. *Opposite page:* Zeke, 15, loves climbing and even summited Kilimanjaro on his own two years ago.



— Act 6 —

Emptying the Nest

Like many baby boomers who wanted it all and got it, Tammie and Phil Borders discover the upside of downsizing

Tammie and Phil Borders, both 57, went to the same Indiana high school but didn't meet until after college, at a New Year's Eve party. As newlyweds, they lived in downtown Indianapolis while Phil went to med school. They loved being in the city. But after having their second child, Tammie became a stay-at-home mom, and the family began to move around for Phil's work, eventually settling in a 7,000-square-foot house a half hour from Indianapolis. When their three children had grown and moved out, they began to dream of getting back to the city. So they did. No more yard work or dusting empty bedrooms. No more pool maintenance or driving everywhere. No more stockpiles of family members' possessions. "Now everything is used and easily maintained," says Tammie. "We don't have the stuff that clouds your life and makes it complicated."

Getting there, however, was neither quick nor easy. Getting rid of 30 years of stuff can be a drawn-out process—as was finding and renovating a place where they wanted to live. They noticed a 19th-century building, a former bakery, but with a sky-high price. A year later,

the price dropped, and they jumped on the deal. The couple began designing first-floor commercial offices, a second-floor apartment, and a third-floor addition. They hired a builder, an architect, and an interior designer. "I just kept saying, 'Clean and simple,' over and over," says Tammie. "My husband's only input was, 'Low maintenance.'" In a new, smaller space, she realized, everything visible has to be curated, redolent of individual personality and identity. It's not about what you own, but who you are and how you want to live.

To maintain that curation, the first floor, housing their own office and one rented to a design firm, has a big wall system of closets for coats and hats in the entrance. The second floor, where they live, has a master bedroom with a walk-in closet that features two laundry bins (one for dry cleaning), lighted drawers, and pullout rods for hanging clothes for the next day. "You can see what you're going to wear and set it all up the night before. I love those," says Tammie. In the interest of "a bed for every kid," the den not only has a built-in desk area and an office unit, but also a drop-down Murphy bed



“I don’t think a week goes by that we don’t say to ourselves, ‘We’re so happy to be downtown. We’re so lucky.’ It’s what we’ve been working for all our lives.”

and wall unit. The new third floor has a guest suite and a rooftop deck the couple enjoys every day they can—if they’re not walking to the theater, to lectures, or out to eat, that is.

The renovation took a year, and divestiture took a while, too. Tammie’s advice to any of the 74 million baby boomers contemplating downsizing: “Try not to be so attached to your things. It’s just stuff.” To their new home they brought only important mementos: a family Bible, an armoire, a tall black cabinet. The rest went at auction. “It’s much easier. It’s just more calm,” says Tammie. “I don’t think a week goes by that we don’t say to ourselves, ‘We’re so happy to be downtown. We’re so lucky.’ It’s an exciting adventure. It’s what we’ve been working for all our lives.” The couple recently celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary in their new place, in the city where they first lived together. Tammie’s daughter took her out shopping, and when they got home, there were 30 dozen roses filling the windows. Phil had to go to 10 different florists. “They all thought he was nuts, buying that many,” Tammie says, laughing. “It brought me to tears.”

Top: The den/guest room has a comfortable Niels Bendtsen chair and a Murphy bed that pulls down when the third-floor guest suite overflows. **Bottom:** “We like contemporary art and enjoy supporting local artists,” says Tammie. The oil painting here is by Patti Paris Owens, of Bargersville, Indiana.

CC design consultant: Merrick McGraw



The 7 Stages of Living Joyfully

– Act 7 –

Enjoying It Now

At 77, Marie Jordan-Knox is aging gracefully, comfortably, lovingly—and exuberantly

She has been married, divorced, remarried, and widowed. She has been the mother of four, a Montessori teacher, and a hospice worker. She's scrimped, and she's lived large. In her living room, the painting of a woman could have been Jordan-Knox in an earlier incarnation, as a grande dame with her second husband, the founder of luxury Canadian furnishings store Jordans Interiors. "I've been in the basement with no heat, and I've been in the penthouse with the world at my feet," she says. "It's been wonderful, and now I know exactly what to enjoy."

Jordan-Knox found it near her hometown of Vancouver, BC. She lives in an intentional community—a concept that encourages social interaction and teamwork—and one that many are exploring as they age. A friend invited her to the community's church some years ago, and she drove around. "When I entered that property, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace," she recalls. She wanted to live there, and put her name on a list. She had already downsized, living for 20 years in an apartment over her daughter's garage to be near the grandchildren, whom she didn't tell about her application because she didn't know if she'd be accepted. But they based approval on community participation, and Jordan-Knox fit the bill. She volunteers teaching English as a second language. And, after a tragic death in her family 30 years ago, she learned hospice work from the nuns who tended to lepers in Molokai, Hawaii. "I can take people on their final journey with ease and with love," she says. "It's a lot like childbirth, you know? It's not always easy to make the transition."

After four years on the wait list, the Sharon Village Housing Society offered her a 940-square-foot second-floor walk-up, one of 90 units—as is. She took it and began remodeling with gusto. And for once, she focused on what she wanted. "I've always done it for my children, what does my husband like," she says. "This freedom is amazing." Her home now features a fireplace cabinet in the living room, extra storage in the kitchen and dining room, and two Murphy beds. Jordan-Knox uses the smaller of the two bedrooms; the other is for visiting



“There’s a security in being at the top of the ninth. But I don’t want to go out sitting on the bench. I want to be out on the field, ready to hit a home run.”

Opposite page, top: “I write, I read, I edit books for people—I don’t have a television,” says Jordan-Knox. **Bottom:** Jordan-Knox’s front hall “memory closet” is where she shows off shoes and clothes from the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s. “Those pieces all have a history,” she says. **This page:** Red furniture is a “freedom flag” for Jordan-Knox, who is now single and relishing the ability to decorate how she pleases: “I can put in this enormous fireplace and not have to answer to anyone.”

CC design consultant: Danielle LaPointe

grandchildren, all five now in their twenties. “That was important, that they would know there was a place for them to come,” she says. “They tell me how hard university is, how hard work is, how expensive it is to rent a crummy car, the girlfriend that just dumped them. They come with everything. I’m so proud of that.”

And she loves the beautiful place where she lives. The doctors, accountants, and writers in the community all pitch in. “We clean our halls, we help with gardening, we shovel snow together.” And all give back. “I just wish there were more places like this in the world,” she says. “Being in service is such an honor. It means you’ve been around the block a couple of times, and you’re ready to pay back.” Jordan-Knox has been through all the ages and stages. She knows herself—and is not only growing older, but bolder. “There’s a security in being at the top of the ninth,” she says. “But I don’t want to go out sitting on the bench. I want to be out on the field, ready to hit a home run.”

Portrait of a Lady

Fine-arts photographer Jeannette Montgomery Barron creates an album honoring her mother's fashion legacy and life



Eleanor “Ellie” Morgan Montgomery Atuk (left) was a genteel force in Atlanta society during the mid-20th century. She married her college sweetheart, an heir to the Coca-Cola bottling fortune, and loved exquisite clothes, especially those by designers like Bill Blass, Yves Saint Laurent, and Norman Norell. She carefully curated her lifetime collections in spacious, organized closets.

In 2006 Atuk’s mind began to fade, and her daughter, Jeannette Montgomery Barron, started photographing her mother’s cherished pieces of clothing, shoes, and other personal possessions as a way to jumpstart Atuk’s memories—and stunt her own sense of loss. Even when she could no longer recall her daughter’s name, the photographs drew out reminiscences of where and when she’d worn her clothing and the paths she’d traveled in the favorite shoes and other items picked up at the shopping haunts she called “the Bs”: Bendel’s, Bergdorf’s, Bonwit’s, and Bloomingdale’s.

To create this photographic album, Montgomery Barron paired each item with a meaningful background—a toile that wallpapered the family home or a tablecloth from 21, one of her mother’s favorite New York City restaurants. Over the years of Atuk’s

illness, Montgomery Barron worked daily, climbing a tall ladder to attach fabric to strings fixed on a cornice to avoid marring the wall in the Rome apartment she shared with her husband, James Barron, an art gallerist. Once the work was completed, Montgomery Barron would carefully pack the portfolio and take it with her on her next visit to the States, first to her mother’s home outside Charlottesville, Virginia, and later, as the disease worsened, to a care center, where her mother died in 2007.

Welcome Books published the photo collection, called *My Mother’s Clothes*, in 2009. “In the years since she’s been gone,” Montgomery Barron writes in a caption accompanying a photo of a Chester Weinberg fur coat in the book, “I’ve taken to curling up beneath my mother’s fur coat; it comforts me. Her name is



embroidered inside, ‘Ellie M.,’ so it could easily be identified at a party filled with fur-wearing women. Sometimes I take naps with the coat as a blanket and am transported by the mixture of smells and a lingering odor of a perfume no longer in existence.” The woman who wore the scent of Norell (above) is gone, but this visual portrait remains an enduring tribute to the breadth and joy of a mother’s life—and to the depth and gratitude of a daughter’s love.



MAUD FRIZON PURSE

Mama always told me,

“Take some ‘mad money’ with you on a date. If you get mad, you can just leave.”



BILL BLASS JACKET

My mother loved and wore the hell out of this jacket.

She used to always try to get me to wear it but I was a white-shirt-and-jeans girl, much to my mother’s disappointment. My mother finally won—the jacket is now in my closet.

I wear it with jeans, something she would have probably thought sacrilegious.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY



BILL BLASS JACKET

My childhood home was very formal,

designed after a mansion in Vézelay, France. My mother had seen a picture of the house in a book and hired a local architect to replicate it. They were just putting on the finishing touches when I was born. Every year on my birthday my mother told me the same story. Grass seed had been planted the day she went to the hospital to deliver me; when she brought me home, the grass was starting to sprout.



She accumulated a lot of stuff,

so much so that there was an extra room in our house called the “junk room.” Old papers, bills, a safari suit from a trip to Africa with a bunch of wild Texans (it was called the Cipango Tour, “sip-and-go”). When the door was closed you had no idea what was lurking behind. I don’t keep anything; this is why.



MAUD FRIZON SHOES



BILL BLASS DRESS

Mama loved to dance and sing,

At home she would sing to the radio, often getting the words wrong. Who cared?

I really miss her,

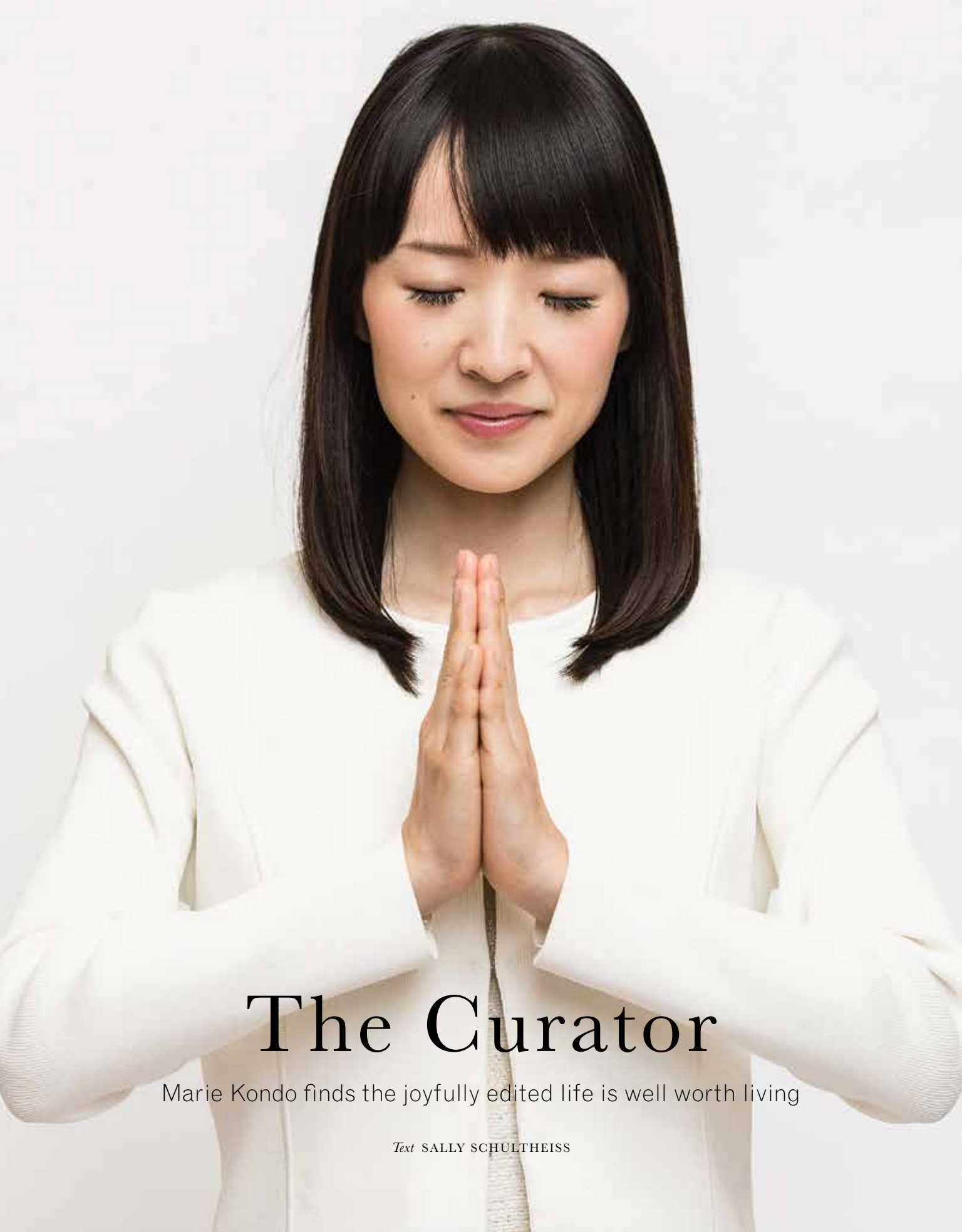
*but I had missed her for years before her death. I think about her every time I see a
beautiful flower, tree, sunset, ocean...or a special piece of clothing*

When I see something I think she'd like, I still have the impulse to buy it for her.

Then I remember she's gone.

Beauty. Possibilities. Create the look you love.
Experience the difference of California Closets





The Curator

Marie Kondo finds the joyfully edited life is well worth living

Text SALLY SCHULTHEISS

Marie Kondo's presence feels not unlike that of Yoda—sweet, little, and containing infinite wisdom. Through her four-foot-ten being, her feet barely touching the floor when she sits down, Kondo exudes soft-spoken gravitas. Like a tidy room, the Empress of Tidying is herself perfectly groomed, distilled to the essentials, at peace.

Now living in California’s Bay Area with her husband, Takumi Kawahara, and her two toddler daughters, Satsuki and Miko, Kondo gained an explosive following from the best-selling book *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* in 2014, and followed up with *Spark Joy* in 2016. Published in more than 30 countries, her books posit the philosophy that by being mindful in choosing what to keep, one’s life will become joyful. She made *Time* magazine’s list of most influential people in 2015, inspiring a community of more than 100 certified consultants worldwide trained in the KonMari Method. And on the horizon, there’s a Netflix reality show, in which Kondo helps tidy eight homes and in the process, she says, “shows how the lives of the families are changed by organizing.”

Today Kondo wears a floral dress with a loose bow at the collar and a light-blue cardigan—her weekend attire. At work she requires either her jacket or top to be white, usually paired with a skirt, black tights, and black shoes. Shopping, she says, is mainly dictated by color and size. “If it comes in my size, I’ll try it on,” she says. Instead of the ubiquitous American water bottle, she carries a thermos of herbal tea—today it’s lavender, but she also loves black bean gobo tea. Born in Japan in 1985, Kondo was famously enamored of housework at an early age and read voraciously about organizing; she was particularly curious why organization is associated with women. She eventually majored in culture

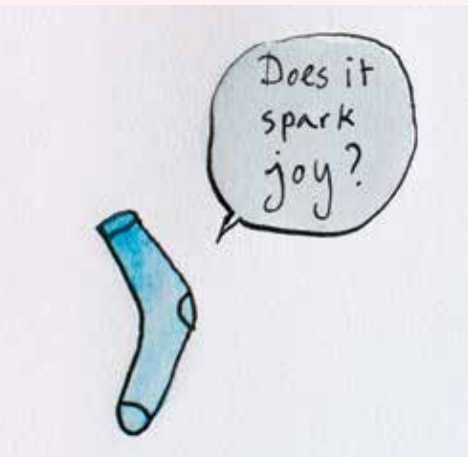
and communication, finding inspiration in the book *The Art of Discarding* by Nagisa Tatsumi. By her sophomore year of college, Kondo had started her own tidying business.

Her life at home remains distinctly Japanese. She shops at one of several Japanese markets in her neighborhood and often prepares bento boxes—which are composed of several side dishes—as well as miso soup every morning for breakfast and lunch. “Japanese food is the best for my body,” she says, adding that she likes to eat items with “a lot of collagen,” including fish and dark leafy greens. In the morning she opens all the windows in the house—a cleansing ritual, “my practice,” she says—and at night she unwinds by soaking her feet in warm water and scrubbing them with salt to remove the day’s detritus. Her daughters are being raised bilingual, speaking Japanese with their parents and English with the nanny.

Despite her global followers with their fervor for the KonMari Method, Kondo is not religious in the traditional sense, but she has an undeniable spiritual calling. Her doctrine is founded on organization, simplicity, and living joyfully. At the mere mention of “parting with” things, she becomes most eloquent. Joy has become buried for people beneath consumerism, which is made easier than ever by the internet, she says. “We have a fatigue of owning things and have lost what’s important. People have given up control of their lives to what they possess.”

”
We have a fatigue
of owning things
and have lost
what’s important.
“

OPPOSITE, TOP ROW: Kondo shares a laugh with daughter Miko; clothes folded upright according to the KonMari Method; sisters Miko and Satsuki share a walk. **SECOND ROW:** A drawer of clothing folded by a gold-level-certified KonMari consultant; Kondo surrounded by translated versions of her books; Kondo’s mantra: keep only the items that spark joy. **THIRD ROW:** Kondo admires Monet’s *The Water Lilies: Morning* at the Musée de l’Orangerie in Paris; field of lavender blossoms shot by Kondo’s husband, Kawahara, during a walk in LA; Kondo and Miko shop for flowers. **FOURTH ROW:** Japanese bento box—a Kondo lunchtime favorite; Kondo relaxes while preparing tea; cups of tea, which Kondo drinks daily.



A Place for Everything...

Creating just
the right closet
for just the
right things





01 | In Living Color

When transforming a spare bedroom into a brand-new closet, Los Angeles–based fashion designer Clare Vivier had two goals: to create a boutique space that let her bright wardrobe take center stage and that was easy to keep neat. The white finish lets her eclectic clothing pop, while strategically placed hooks corral her dozens of handbags. Twenty drawers hold everything from scarves to jewelry, and angled shelves allow Vivier to easily survey and pick just the right pair of shoes. The final touch? Vivier's very own Lotus wallpaper, designed for Wallshoppe, which enhances the aesthetic while adding rich texture. “I love how uniform and clean it is,” she says. “It’s functional without being stuffy. It feels like me.”

CC design consultant: Nicole Caswell

Our lives are filled with things. We accumulate, we collect, we purchase, and we covet. We have and we hold—literally—for years. Every so often we hit a point—too much!—and we scale back, pare down, give away, toss. What remains is what we keep, carefully selected by what we need, what our families need, what means something, what brings us joy. When we’re left with our carefully curated collection, we then must find a single place for every single thing.

The closet is the heart of the organized home. At its most basic, it’s a wardrobe of shelves, cubbies, hooks, and hangers. But more so, it’s an expression of who we are, where we’re at, and what makes us us. We are, as

they say, what we wear. Because our closets house our favorite things, we craft them accordingly.

And because our lives shift and evolve, our closets do, too. Like the single twentysomething who lines the walls of her reach-in with hooks to hang the scarves she collected while traveling or studying abroad. Or the newly cohabitating couple who adds drawers to the walk-in—the top one for her grandmother’s jewelry, the second for his pocket squares. When the baby arrives, the extra closet takes on a new life, renovated with cubbies for tiny shoes and stacks of onesies. And as the kids grow up, that former nursery starts to look like the perfect spot for an expansive closet to accompany the master suite.

The closet is a container. But it’s also a blank canvas, waiting to be constructed in a way that fits our things and our one-of-a-kind lives, stage after stage after stage. Because once we’ve pared it all down, landed on the items we can’t live without—those that emanate the joy of a life well lived—we want to know exactly where to put what matters most. In their own spots, where they can always be found. In the very place made for that very thing. —*Shawn Gauthier*





02 | Wall of Dream Storage

After moving into her first home in Charlotte, North Carolina, *Southern Curls and Pearls* blogger Caitlin Covington set her heart on transforming the poorly utilized master closet into her dream space—one as luxurious as it was clean and composed. Now, the closet optimizes its advantageous vertical height with an entire wall of storage, including built-in drawers for clothing, spots for shoes, and shelving behind glass doors to display her hand-bag collection with care. Covington added her own details—including bell jars to showcase jewelry—to reflect her personal style. “I wanted a design both functional and pretty, with crystal knobs and chandeliers,” she says. “This brought my dream to life.”

CC design consultant: Amber Colo





03 | Streamlined Storage Stunner

Eager to maximize convenience, practicality, and style in their new Indianapolis home, Brian and Carolina Lewis, both retired after working in online travel, knew smart storage would make the contemporary space complete. Custom closets on both the ground floor and basement were designed with input from architectural firm Jose Garcia Design to seamlessly blend with the space's open, clean-lined aesthetic. Strategic lighting and open shelves ensure everything is both visible and accessible, while baskets featuring adjustable separators easily accommodate and hide items of various sizes. The closets have become a focal point of the home. "I give closet tours!" says Carolina.

CC design consultant: LauraLee Kavanagh



04 | His-and-Hers Happy Place

Once “bursting at the seams,” the small San Francisco reach-in closet of mothermag.com cofounder Katie Hintz-Zambrano needed taming—and tidying. With the help of organization expert Marie Kondo, Hintz-Zambrano first decluttered by paring down items to those that gave her joy. In the closet, clear boundaries delineate Hintz-Zambrano's items from those belonging to her husband, Horacio, and pullout accessory trays ensure jewelry, watches, and rings stay organized. Shelves above keep shoes in sight and in reach. “We even have a landing dock where we place items that spark joy,” says Hintz-Zambrano, “including a picture of our son, flowers, and a hook for Horacio's keys.”

CC design consultant: Jessica Ballesteros





06 | Charmed Baby Closet

In the dreamlike “Lemondrop Lullaby” nursery—complete with custom, hand-painted, and sequin-embellished wallpaper—interior designer Dina Bandman created a closet to reflect the room’s charming balance of function and finery. The five-piece drawer set’s linen finish offsets the nursery’s rich palette, while dividers inside allow for designated spots for stacks of onesies and pairs of shoes. On top, baby blocks and artwork add to the room’s whimsy. “I wanted to be able to organize everything in a neat and thoughtful manner, but because baby items are adorable, I also wanted a few things to be on display,” says Bandman. “This closet design achieved just that in such a happy, decorative way.”

CC design consultant: Cygridh Rooney



05 | Nursery for Now

When entrepreneur and author Rana Florida found out she was pregnant with her second child, she saw her Toronto home office reimagined as a modern nursery—albeit only a temporary transformation so she could utilize it as an office again in the future. A mix of custom shelving and cabinetry provides a designated spot for everything from wardrobe to baby decor, while contemporary lines and a high-gloss white finish allow it to easily transition back to sophisticated office storage at a later date. “I never imagined my former office could be transformed into such a beautiful nursery,” says Florida. “A small room with no closet is now a light-filled fantasy escape.”

CC design consultant: Kendall Manor



...And Everything in Its Place

A room-by-room guide to putting your house in order



01 | Work Studio

Designer Jeremiah Brent is known for imagining beautiful, sophisticated interiors that reflect a true understanding of each client—and how they use their spaces. Brent's own studio's office, housed in the light-flooded carriage house of the Los Angeles home he shares with his family, is no different. The details, from vintage furniture to brass hardware and accessories, are impeccable, but function comes first. There's a striking custom cabinet built specifically to house and organize samples and supplies and a communal seating area where team members can collaborate. Each station is even equipped with a pop-up power station to streamline cords.

CC design consultant: Katharine Mills-Tierney

Benjamin Franklin once remarked: “(There’s) a place for everything, and everything in its place.” In the kitchen went the dishes, in the bedroom the bed. The home’s single-function rooms dictated single-function furnishings. It was simple, straightforward. A dining room for dining, a living room for living, a car park for car parking. And in each space, only the expected items in place.

By the 21st century, technology had sped it all up. Our houses not only became smarter, but they learned how to multitask, take on multiple functions, and adapt to multimedia. Beneath the antique hutch with its artisanal pottery hides a wireless printer, so the dining room can double as the home office. The cubbies in the playroom

provide easy access to the toddlers’ toys; later in life, the same space becomes a study room where laptops and tablets take over. The laundry room, replete with drawers, dividers, and hooks, is also the DIYer’s crafting crash pad. Wall racks line the garage so it can house cars and road bikes, not to mention the color-coded bins for all that sports equipment.

The home’s multifunctional rooms now dictate multifunctional organization. To do it all, we need smart storage to make smart spaces. Because in today’s smart house, the prevailing purpose is multipurpose. The multitaskers need multiple systems. Everybody needs a place for everything, and everything put in its place. Turns out Franklin was a man for all ages. —Shawn Gauthier

02 | Home Office

Longtime designer and founder of *Rue* magazine, Crystal Palecek knows how to bring a big vision to life, such as the in-law unit she recently converted into a “contemporary country chic” home office/guest house. With a pitched ceiling and tons of natural light, the space beautifully marries storage and style. The centerpiece is a built-in desktop in classic white surrounded by organizational details such as a hidden spot for a power strip, a slide-out shelf for the printer, sizable file drawers, and custom shelves for Palecek’s design samples and supplies. White drawers and doors with clean lines and a linen finish set the stage for pops of color and texture, such as dark-bronze hardware and fresh flowers.

CC design consultant: Caren Antone



03 | Creative Space

After moving into a townhome near downtown Austin, Texas, Larry Hayden, a computer-security professional, decided to dedicate a room to his off-hours passion: photography. The resulting third-floor studio is an effortlessly cool creative sanctuary with a subtle midcentury vibe. A sleek white countertop, propped up by two aluminum poles on one side, serves as Hayden’s computer desk. Above and below, a combination of open and closed storage keeps photo equipment, books, and electronics organized. The overall neutral palette contrasts beautifully with bits of color and texture, such as cabinets fronted with aluminum-framed satin glass and striking high-gloss doors in buttery yellow and slate blue.

CC design consultant: Kelly Toye



04 | Craft Room

Lifestyle blogger and entertaining expert Camille Styles has built a business celebrating—and elevating—everyday moments. It's fitting, then, that she would elevate the form and function of her very own craft room, inside the updated 100-year-old bungalow that serves as her office, production space, and photo studio—aka creative HQ. The space needed to support Styles's team and work with versatile storage and plenty of room for supplies of all sizes, from carefully labeled ribbons and fabrics to neatly stowed printers and tools. In the end, Styles's finished craft space seamlessly matches the vibrant bungalow's aesthetic and provides a home for each and every one of her crafting supplies. "We now have the perfect space to work on art projects of any size!" says Styles.

CC design consultant: Jill Siegel and Shanna Davis



05 | Playroom

When Jeanne Chan, founder of the lifestyle blog *Shop Sweet Things* and mother of two daughters, decided to renovate the playroom/laundry room in her San Francisco home, she kept one eye on the future, wanting the option to eventually turn it into her office. With that in mind, the game plan came together with plenty of flexible storage: a built-in desk for arts and crafts, a large open shelving unit that houses the kids' books and toys, plus bins and baskets to keep smaller items corralled and a cozy reading nook with pullout drawers along the bottom. The utility spaces were also closed off to keep laundry items and cleaning supplies hidden out of sight during playtime and, down the road, work time.

CC design consultant: Sarah Winge





06 | Basement Workspace

Once a dark, “scary-looking” basement, this now bright, cheerful workspace is where creative consultant Michelle Adams tackles projects. The inviting nook features ample counter space for Adams to spread out and work, while a slat wall keeps her most-used tools and small items— from scissors and paintbrushes to craft papers and ribbons—within arm’s reach. The system is flexible, so Adams can add new accessories, such as paper holders and hand-tool hooks, and rearrange her stash at any time. And floor-to-ceiling white paint mimics natural light for a fresh, clean vibe.

CC design consultant: Janice Fischer



07 | Garage

When Natalie and Serg Boytsov set out to revamp their garage, they wanted an extension of their home—a hub where the whole family could cross off chores and enjoy hobbies. Now, the space is an organized multitasker’s dream, with bold pops of color to boot. Everything from tools to gardening accessories is hidden in drawers or behind doors fronted in a cobalt blue acrylic finish, while larger items (such as sports gear, shovels, and rakes) live in oversize bins and cubbies. And useful details are tucked in every corner: a sleek maple butcher block workbench, a matching countertop that serves as a spot for repotting plants, and a row of apothecary drawers nestled behind the door to the home.

CC design consultant: Susan Martin-Gibbons





The Collector

Martha Stewart believes more is more meaningful

Text SALLY SCHULTHEISS

Martha Stewart has never gotten rid of a single piece of clothing. Stored in the attic of her home in Bedford, New York, her museum-quality collection is climate controlled and perfectly organized. Each item is hung professionally and removed from dry-cleaner plastic—her very own vast sartorial archive. The long reigning queen of domesticity begs the question: wouldn't we all keep everything if we could?

Stewart oversees an impressive empire. Over her seven decades, she's transformed skills such as cooking and crafting into high art. At 76, she still gardens, decorates, organizes, entertains, and more—all the while managing four houses, a multimedia brand, and a new denim line for QVC. Personally, she is an adoring grandmother to daughter Alexis's two children, Jude, 7, and Truman, 6, and she also dotes on her 200-plus pets and farm animals.

On a Friday afternoon, Stewart fields questions from a reporter via phone. Unaccustomed to multitasking, she both talks and chops. "There's leftover short ribs and brisket chuck," she explains. "I have people coming to visit tomorrow for a garden show and I'm making sandwiches. I'm caramelizing onions to throw in, and probably some oven-roasted tomatoes, and I'll use horseradish from my garden." She makes it sound effortless.

Is there nothing she can't do? "I learned how to sew all my clothes," she says of her modest upbringing in Nutley, New Jersey, as the second oldest of six. "Shirt sleeves, button holes, jackets, coats—I made my own wedding dress." She married Yale law student Andrew Stewart (whom she divorced in 1990) while attending Barnard, where she double-majored in history and architectural history. They settled in Connecticut; Stewart started a catering business, and a New York publisher approached her to write a cookbook. *Entertaining* came out in 1982, *Martha Stewart Living* magazine in 1990, and her television show in 1993.

Stewart still takes great care of her clothes. At her Bedford home, she recently turned a 200-square-foot bedroom into a walk-in closet, including a double bureau island with jewelry

drawers and floor-to-ceiling hanging wall space. "I needed easy visibility and access for housekeepers to replace clothing as it returns from the cleaners," she says of her constantly revolving wardrobe. "Today I have two changes of clothing, tomorrow I might have three—for meetings, dinners, TV appearances, etc." Current closet staples include denim shirts (from her QVC line) and leather pants. "Leather looks like nice with anything," she says.

Sometimes she visits the archives to retrieve former outfits. "Broad-shouldered jackets are back, so I found my beautiful Hermès suits I bought in Russia in 2005," she says.

"They're perfectly in style, with large kimono sleeves." She finds "new" clothes all the time. "I think it's a little harsh to say, 'Get rid of everything.' I don't believe it's necessary to get rid of something valuable or meaningful. I try to find a place for it. I've collected a lot of stuff and done a lot of work to organize it all. I'm a historian, and I like old, historical things." Such as her mother's clothes, her daughter's first baby dress, three pairs of diamond stud earrings, and every inch of Edsel Ford's 100-acre estate

in Maine, which she purchased in 1997 in toto—forks, spoons, hair dryers, and all.

At this life stage, she's more about curating a legacy and less about paring down possessions. "I don't know yet what my grandchildren will value," she says. She's one person, she acknowledges, but nonetheless holds onto properties in Maine, Bedford, the Hamptons, and New York City. "Will my grandchildren want a house at the beach, or to travel around Tasmania? Until I have clear answers to those questions, I will not downsize." For now, it's back to the chopping board.

“
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“

OPPOSITE, TOP ROW: Each of Stewart's drawers is dedicated to one item; in this drawer, scarves are staggered so each one is visible; a two-sided bureau topped with marble provides space for a clothes-folding station.
BOTTOM ROW: A window seat with a velvet cushion doubles as storage and a comfortable spot to pull on shoes; Stewart's shoes, arranged by style, sit on shelves that are more than an inch thick for extra-solid construction.



Simplified
ABUNDANCE

Bag and shoes and jewelry. *Oh my!*
Here's how to tame the masses



A collection of 200 pairs of shoes deserves to be showcased and admired. Here, softly lit white shelves make these colorful, wearable works of art pop.

CC design consultant: Melanie Baudot

Most of us can't claim our homes to be museums, despite the various collections they house. Filling our lives with what we love most, we often amass things in multiples: bags, books, shoes, sheets, bowls, blankets. We don't need sneakers in spades, yet we own 15 pairs. The drawer overflows with T-shirts, yet we purchase another. If one is good, wouldn't more be better? But with each purchase, the challenges grow: Where to put it? How to find it? Will we even remember we have it if we can't see it?

Whether it's large-scale art, tiny furniture, or infinity scarves, what we buy on repeat reveals traits about us: our obsessions, interests, desires, and style. It's less about need and more about fulfillment—what we collect represents a preservation of the past. As young children, we form emotional bonds with security objects such as blankets and pacifiers because they provide a sense of identity and belonging. According to psychologist Carl Jung, "We need to project ourselves into the things around us. My self is not confined to my body. It extends into all the things I have made and all the things around me." We connect to and find happiness in our things; they do more than just clothe or accessorize us.

Therefore, how we live with them becomes as important as the items themselves. Carelessly amassed, things that conjure joy can leave us crippled, overwhelming both our physical and mental capacities. But with thoughtful organization—shelves devoted to shoes of all kinds, cubbies for handbags big and small, divided drawers for jewelry ranging from rings to earrings to bracelets—we enhance their meaning by simplifying their presence. Fritz Karch, coauthor of *Collected: Living with the Things You Love*, recommends that we "cluster and mass things all together in one location for stronger impact." With it all right in front of our



faces, we're emotionally satisfied—we can see it all. But, more so, it's practical: what's the point of collecting things if you can't easily find them?

They may be inanimate, but our collections are important to us. They're proof of our time here on earth, of our diligent work to hunt and gather what we love most. No, we don't *need* more sneakers, but they make us happy, so we add them to the arsenal. We find the spot on the shelf they'll sit from here on forward, always in sight, always accessible. Because when we collect with intention and store with purpose, our many items in many multiples become as manageable as they are meaningful. And that's a vision—and joy—to behold. —*Shawn Gauthier*

ABOVE: Illuminated by strategic accent lights and atop glass shelves, HGTV Canada hosts Scott and Sabrina McGillivray's statement accessories take center stage.

CC design consultant: Cassandra Reinthaler

RIGHT: In this boutique-like master closet, glass doors protect precious cargo—including Hermès Birkins—while inlaid strip lights cast a subtle spotlight.

CC design consultant: Jin White

*Whether it's large-scale art, tiny furniture, or infinity scarves,
what we buy on repeat reveals traits about us:
our obsessions, interests, desires, and style.*



Best known for her handbags, designer Clare Vivier unsurprisingly collects accessories. Her always-evolving jewelry stash lives in a multilevel drawer organizer, where compartments in varying sizes allow Vivier to quickly scan her pieces and find exactly what she needs.

CC design consultant: Nicole Caswell



When we collect with intention and store with purpose, our many items in many multiples become as manageable as they are meaningful.



one wish

Good design is all about creating functional spaces—and making a person’s wish, no matter how small or specific, come true. Here we hear from six people who dreamed big about little details in projects ranging from laundry rooms to garages, and the designers who made them a reality.

Text Jill Russell



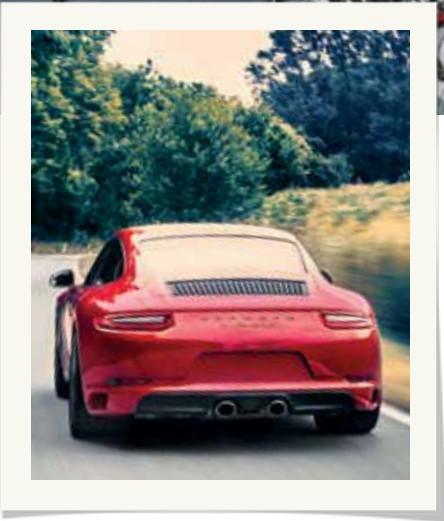


red hot

WHO: Raymond McCall, pharmacist and pharmacy consultant

WHERE: Lake Charles, Louisiana

DESIGNER: Naomi Carter



THE PROJECT: Overhaul the garage with a custom installation focused on efficient storage. “I like to keep the garage as neat and clean as I keep my car,” McCall says.

THE ONE WISH: Design details to match his new Porsche, a 2018 Carrera S 911 in carmine red. “I’ve driven Porsches for 10 years,” he says. “I like red and thought it’d be neat to have a garage decked out to match.”

THE SOLUTION: First, Carter tackled storage with wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling cabinets. Then she added strategically placed accent doors and drawers in Rojo, a high-gloss red, to

pop against the unit’s neutral finish—and match the Porsche. “The red we carry, Rojo, ended up being perfect!” she says.

THE RESULT: A clean, masculine garage space with plenty of storage and an unexpected pop of color as stunning as the sports car inside. “When I came for the install, I was literally speechless,” says Carter. McCall agrees: “I smile every time I go into the garage. And my neighbors always comment on how cool it is.”

BONUS: A row of can lights above the storage unit illuminates the space and maximizes the dramatic visual impact.

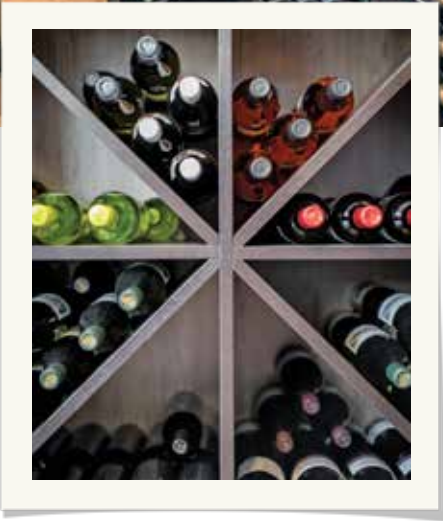


haute home vault

WHO: Joe H.

WHERE: Carmel, Indiana

DESIGNER: Erin Moore



THE PROJECT: Carve out a section of the basement for a custom wine cellar to house both individual bottles and crates.

THE ONE WISH: Spotlight and stash an extensive wine collection—upwards of 900 bottles.

THE SOLUTION: A three-wall unit set off from the rest of the basement, with three different types of open cubbies along the back wall: small squares, each 24 inches deep to fit two bottles; rectangles for crates and boxes; and triangles, arranged in two “starbursts,” to group bottles by type or region.

More individual bottles float on floor-to-ceiling pegs on both side walls.

THE RESULT: A utilitarian and inviting wine vault that feels anything but dark and dusty, blending seamlessly into its surroundings. The fabricated left “wall” was even carefully built to match up with the two existing walls. “We hid the seams on the back side so it looks like it’s freestanding,” says Moore.

BONUS: The nook at the center, where built-in lights illuminate a colorful triptych and a countertop serves as an ideal spot for pouring, serving, and sipping.

the cat's meow

WHO: Emily Henderson, creative director and style expert

WHERE: Los Angeles, California

DESIGNER: Chloe O’Keeffe



THE PROJECT: Convert a cramped “laundry hall” into a more beautiful, functional space.

THE ONE WISH: Incorporate a tucked-away litter box for the family’s two cats, to get it off the floor and out of sight, and prevent litter from being tracked throughout the house.

THE SOLUTION: Design and install a cabinet around the litter box to hide it, with custom “cat door” access. The cabinet’s front doors hide the box (but pop open for easy cleaning), while a hinged trapdoor on the cabinet’s side allows the cats to roam in and out.

THE RESULT: Blogging about the project, Henderson put it best: “This is the cat commode of my dreams. There’s still sand in the cabinet that’ll need to get cleaned often, but SO much less mess on the floor.”

BONUS: A completely enclosed box helps contain both litter odors and messes, too.



on the block

WHO: Michael and Leanne McWilliams, director of power company and accountant, respectively

WHERE: Vancouver, Canada

DESIGNER: Ilona Beed



THE PROJECT: Turn a small home office into both an efficient workspace and a music/playroom for the couple’s two sons.

THE ONE WISH: Dedicated space to show off their LEGO sets (which they’ve collected since 2013) and corral extra pieces—all without sacrificing the room’s stunning waterfront views.

THE SOLUTION: A mixture of closed cabinets and open shelving built to accommodate specific sets, such as the Ferris Wheel and Parisian Restaurant. “There were many hours spent measuring and counting LEGOs,” says Beed. “They also wanted the option to change and add new pieces over time.”

THE RESULT: A multifunctional room that puts the LEGO sets front and center, complete with a wraparound desk, access to the boys’ piano, clear bins for sorting extra LEGOs, and an unobstructed view of False Creek. “Taking advantage of the space vertically, particularly above the piano, makes the room feel so much bigger than before,” says Michael. “We’re thrilled.”

BONUS: The asymmetrical “step-down” design along the top of the open shelves works with the existing bulkhead and sprinklers, while also providing extra storage.



snack station

WHO: Damon and Wendy G., architect and surgeon, respectively

WHERE: Atlanta, Georgia

DESIGNER: Jen Bellinetti



THE PROJECT: Build a his-and-hers closet in the couple's second-floor master suite, which opens onto a deck.

THE ONE WISH: A hidden built-in mini fridge, in addition to a pantry space and coffee/tea station, to keep beverages and snacks close at hand to enjoy alfresco. "Wendy is a surgeon and spends a lot of time inside, under fluorescent lights," says Damon. "The deck lets her get fresh air without having to go all the way downstairs."

THE SOLUTION: A small fridge, paneled in the same finish as the rest of the closet, and a cabinet with glass doors overhead

to serve as the pantry. The coffee/tea station fits perfectly in the open nook between the two.

THE RESULT: Discreet space to stow mugs, dishes, and non-perishable goodies; to keep sparkling water, juice, and other beverages both cold and within reach; and to brew a fresh cup of morning joe or tea. "There's barely a telltale sign that there's a fridge in the closet," says Bellinetti.

BONUS: The glamorous glass-topped center island organizes and shows off Wendy's jewelry and Damon's collection of bow ties, pocket squares, cuff links, and watches.



home run

WHO: Daryl C., civil engineer

WHERE: Seattle, Washington

DESIGNER: Michelle Gion



THE PROJECT: Create a basement "man cave" in the charming but small home he shares with his wife, Maki, located in Seattle's historic Queen Anne neighborhood.

THE ONE WISH: A place where his collection of 110-plus baseball hats—which previously lived on the basement floor—could shine.

THE SOLUTION: A shelving unit with individually lit, deep cubbies—one for every existing hat, plus more to grow into. To really spotlight the headwear, Gion carefully experimented with various lights and the positioning of the hats on the shelf. "The goal was for the cone of light to land perfectly on the

team logo," she says. "We also wanted just the right amount of negative space around each hat."

THE RESULTS: A one-of-a-kind showcase finished in warm wood that would make any die-hard baseball fan envious. Plus, it's a visual breakdown of MLB standings: each column represents one of the league's six divisions, and Daryl rearranges the hats all season according to team performance.

BONUS: All the wiring is hidden in channels built into each shelf and partitioned to flow into a single corner outlet. Also, the lights can be dimmed so Daryl isn't distracted while watching games nearby.

THE ASTONISHING WONDER OF EFFERVESCENT JOY

Playwright and humorist Jenny Allen dissects this potent emotion



The coffee mug proclaims it, the greeting card, the T-shirt, the billboard, the bumper sticker, the GIF: “Joy!” The word is everywhere. Those old standbys—*Joy of Cooking*, *The Joy of Sex*—have been joined by many other books. So, so many: *The Joy of Yoga*, *The Joy of Foraging*, *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing*.

And why not? It’s a wonderful word—so short, so sweet, so onomatopoeic, sounding just like what it means. Like “fun,” only way more caffeinated. It’s exciting. It’s giddy. It’s pumped. It’s a rush. Who, besides hard-core beer nerds, would buy *How to Homebrew*? Boring. And why would one be tempted to learn the benefits of vinyasa through *The Practice of Yoga*? The ancient Indian discipline is surely a practice, but no one likes the sound of a homework assignment.

Maybe we’re tossing the word around so much because we need joy now more than ever, what with the din of divisive politics, technology run amok, the tolling bell of climate change. And our brains are wired for joy. It’s built into us, and it’s infectious. Look at a baby—or an octogenarian—cracking up. It cracks us up. And calling a book *The Joy of Foraging* isn’t just crafty advertising. Who but a curmudgeon wouldn’t get a rush from finding fresh watercress growing at the bank of a stream, or coming upon fiddlehead ferns, with their perfect spit curls, during a walk in the woods?

Those—and about a million others (fresh sheets, a perfect peach, a bouquet of peonies)—are just your basic small joys. Then there are the ecstatic ones that knock our socks off. The birth of a child. The heart’s leap at reuniting with a long-absent loved one. The clean scan after a cancer scare. The moments that make all the other moments—the bill paying, the root canal, the standstill traffic, the busted water heater that floods the basement, the computer that freezes (gah! Not that horrible rainbow wheel again!)—worth it. They are the gifts given to us as sublime reminders that life, with all its troubles and endless irritants, is so worth it.

Still, too often we can’t seem to sustain it, this joy. It comes,

and it goes. Bad things happen to good people. The trusted pal betrays us, the loved one leaves again, the rumor at the water-cooler wasn’t a rumor at all. So now we’re shattered. Or angry. Or we feel sorry for ourselves, and for our real-world woes and worries. Could joy be only a fair-weather friend? Are we foolish to think otherwise?

We get it back eventually, this capacity for joy, but most of us also think this: life is harder than it is joyous, and moments of joy are the best we can do. Big sigh.

Psychiatrist and author Mark Epstein, trained in traditional Western psychiatry but a practicing Buddhist as well, offers a more optimistic take. “One dimension that the Buddha’s world gives to us is this sense: not of the unconscious being only a whirlpool or cesspool of destructive feelings, but also a back-

ground of joyful and loving energy that is here if we are willing to look for it, or is even here if we are receptive to it.”

We can invite joy in—if we can be open to it. This is not just a trippy concept: our brains are plastic, all the research shows, and they can grow, change, and shift throughout our lives. We can teach those neural pathways to pump more joy. And we should, if we know what’s

good for us: we’ll live healthier, longer lives as a result.

So how do we open ourselves? Curiosity, compassion, connection, kindness, service—all open us to more joy. The kind of joy, soulful and deep, that can sustain us through disaster and sorrows. Take a class. Look at art. Make art, even if it’s bad. Listen, really listen, when others tell you their troubles. Roast a chicken for a sick friend. Take care of yourself. Remember to eat, to sleep. Try not to gossip, to be jealous, to crave what you don’t have. Clear the clutter. Clean the cupboards. Bring order to the house.

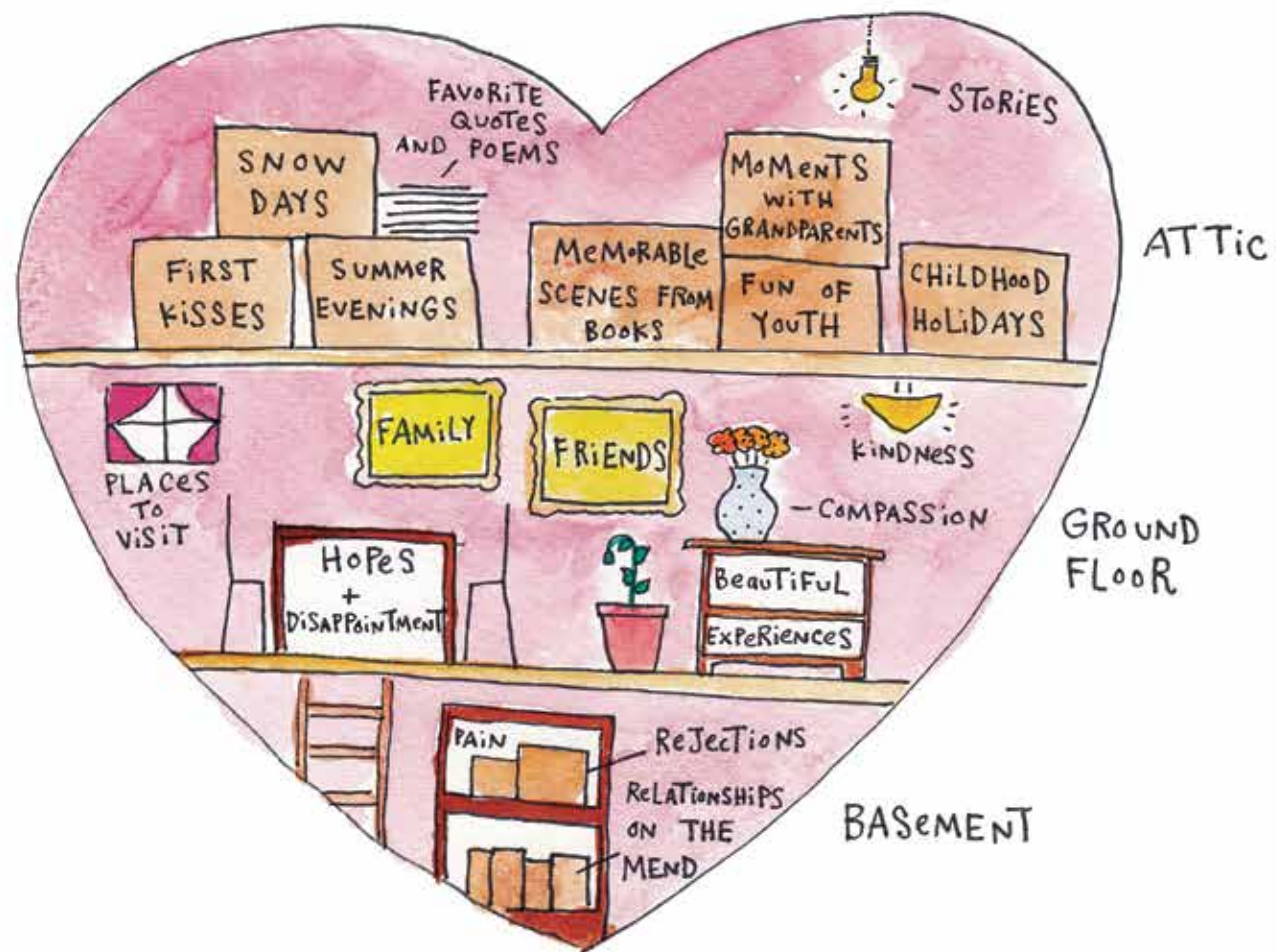
But isn’t all this such a...tall order? OK, then, start small. Just breathe then. In. And out. Listen to your beating heart, even when your heart is hurting. Especially when it’s hurting. What an astonishment. What a joy.

”
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