

Compliments of Steven E. Love

Good to Be

issue 31

HOME

THE
transformative
POWER
OF TEAL

*Designing with 2026's color
of the year | PAGE 42*



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in praise of plywood | 30




Love Financial Services, Inc.
2940 S. 7th Street
Terre Haute, IN 47802

ISSUE 31
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Front of Tear Out Card 1



**BAKED
FRENCH
ONION SOUP**
with gruyère topping



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Back of Tear Out Card 1

SERVES 4

BAKED FRENCH ONION SOUP *with gruyère topping*

INGREDIENTS

- 5 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 lb. 4 oz. onions, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. freshly chopped thyme
- ½ c. fruity red wine
- 4 c. vegetable stock
- ½ French baguette
- ⅔ c. grated Gruyère
- 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- 2/ Heat the oil in a 4-qt. Dutch oven over a medium heat and gently fry the onions, garlic and thyme with a little salt and pepper for 25 minutes until really soft and lightly golden, stirring frequently to prevent the onions from burning.
- 3/ Add the wine, bring to the boil and boil for 5 minutes or until evaporated, then pour in the stock. Bring back to the boil and season to taste.
- 4/ Cut the bread into slices ½ in. thick and arrange over the top of the soup. Scatter over the Gruyère and Parmesan cheeses and transfer the pan to the preheated oven. Bake uncovered for about 10–15 minutes until the soup is bubbling and the cheese melted and golden. If you wish, you can brown the top of the cheese under a hot broiler/grill.
- 5/ Cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Adapted from *A Cookbook for Winter: More than 95 Nurturing & Comforting Recipes for the Colder Months*.
Published by Ryland Peters & Small. Recipe by Louise Pickford. Photography by Ian Wallace © Ryland Peters & Small.



Dear Bill and Judy,

Winter ushers in frosty mornings, piping-hot meals, and cozy evenings, but it also calls for thoughtful preparation. This issue of Good to Be Home aims to help you navigate the season, both inside and out, with car care advice, filling recipes, simple energy-saving tips, and more.

Cold weather can be tough on vehicles, so be sure to check out the enclosed recommendations for protecting yours. From keeping an emergency kit on hand to checking under the hood, these preventive steps can help you avoid roadside trouble and drive with confidence.

When temperatures drop, thoughts naturally turn to hearty, comforting dishes. Inside, you'll find recipes for a satisfying soup, roasted salad, steaming potpie, and gooey chocolate dessert that will warm your heart and home.

This time of year also brings higher energy demands, but taking precautionary measures can lessen the impact on your wallet. Explore smart strategies to keep your place efficient, including sealing drafts and optimizing your furnace and chimney. Remember: small changes can lead to big savings!

How will you stay winter ready, well fed, and warm this season? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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this blue-green hue
into your home.*

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cold weather
CAR CARE

written by ALEXA BRICKER

When the temperature turns chilly, it’s not just rough on us—winter weather can do a number on our cars, too, especially for those in more northern climates. If you typically experience such elements in your region, here are a few steps you can take to help ensure that you and your vehicle both make it through the season unscathed.

Maintain your tires

Considering they’re what carry you over ice and snow, your tires should be a top maintenance priority. Look for signs they may be in poor condition, such as low tread and uneven wear, and have them rotated or replaced if needed; you could also temporarily swap them for winter ones, which handle particularly well on icy roads. Another pro tip: tire pressure tends to drop in the cold, so check it about every two weeks and refill your tires as necessary.

Repel road salt

Full of chemicals designed to eliminate ice from streets, road salt and other melting agents can stain and scratch your vehicle, possibly leading to corrosion. Applying a layer of wax to its lower areas like the grille and wheel wells, where these substances tend to accumulate the most, can help prevent such damage. And make sure to visit the car wash regularly (depending on the weather) to remove any salt buildup on both the exterior and undercarriage.

Expect the unexpected

Having an emergency kit in your vehicle is particularly essential in winter. Stock your trunk with water, a flashlight, flares, a first aid kit, warm clothing, nonperishable snacks, and a bag of sand or kitty litter for traction. You can also prevent unexpected problems by checking your auto’s vital parts, including its fluids, brakes, hoses, battery, and wipers. With such tactics, you can rest assured that you are well prepared for anything Old Man Winter throws your way.

LOVE YOUR HOME

even more

written by **ANDRE RIOS**

There's a major difference between a house and a home. Though the former is just a shelter, the latter expresses a comforting feeling, the inhabitants' personalities, and a welcoming spirit all at once. But to create such a heartwarming vibe in your own abode, you must invest a little affection into it.

Consider any of these sixteen steps to start, some of which are virtually effortless while others require a bit more work. By taking even just a few, you're sure to elevate your house to a place that perfectly represents you and your family—inside and out.

Give away five items

Somewhere stashed in your kitchen cabinets, garage, or utility closets may be objects that are simply taking up space. Commit to getting rid of or donating at least five; if you forgot you had them at all, you won't even miss them.

Freshen up your fridge

Similarly, it's time to throw away whatever is in those old cartons, jars, and containers that continually get pushed around or forgotten. For a truly satisfying project, organize what's left into neat, grocery store-quality rows.

Repair scuff marks

If these little annoyances on your walls are impacting how you feel about your home, clean them with a damp, soapy cloth—ideally one that's white and lint-free—and paint over them if necessary. Do your entryway walls first before moving on to other high-traffic areas like the kitchen and children's rooms.

By taking even just a few of these steps, you're sure to elevate your house to a place that perfectly represents you and your family—inside and out.

Refinish surfaces

Are your spaces suffering from etched marble, scratched hardwood, or cracked tile grout? Invest in refinishing these valuable materials to restore their original luster and ensure their longevity.

Restore an antique

Give a forgotten heirloom or thrift store treasure some love with a touch of paint, a rich wood finish, or modern hardware, then position it somewhere it can claim the limelight. Likewise, give a snapshot of an important moment the love it deserves, framing it and featuring it where you'll see it every day.

Schedule a deep-cleaning

For the ultimate refresh, consider enlisting the cleaning services of a professional to restore your home to like-new quality. You could also hire experts to tackle specific jobs like pressure-washing your siding and patios.

Layer lighting

You can enhance any room that has basic overhead lighting by bringing in options at various heights, including table lamps, tall floor lamps, and sconces.

Add a smart device

Amp up your hosting abilities with a smartphone-compatible Bluetooth speaker, install remote lights with adjustable color tones, or go practical and efficient with an intelligent home-security hub or digital thermostat.

Showcase your best dishware

"The good china" might be hidden away in a cabinet, but it's time to put it to use. If you don't have such keepsakes on hand, select a modern serving set that marries bold, compatible colors with tasteful patterns to ring in party time with panache.

Drop in a new doormat

Nothing says "Welcome!" (either literally or figuratively) like a charming mat by your front door. Go with a sophisticated option that resembles a miniature indoor rug, or pick a quirky piece that portrays your interests.

Roll out some rugs

These gorgeous pieces will instantly make rooms feel cozy and compact and can help split large, breezy spaces into smaller, more welcoming zones. Placing rugs in your living room, bedrooms, and dining areas can even pull together color and style motifs for major impact.



**Modernize your
throw pillows**

Muted hues, plush fabrics, and eye-catching prints—these are the principles that make pillows as stylish as they are squeezable.

**Buy a good bath
or shower kit**

Treat yourself to bath soaks, an invigorating shampoo, and other aromatic self-care concoctions, dispensing them into matching containers to enhance the luxury factor. Taking this small step will set you up to rejuvenate completely, marking the perfect start or end to each day.

Add a fragrance

Beyond the bathroom, a satisfying smell can revamp your entire home, making it almost as comforting as a plush sofa. Using wax melters, candles, or aroma diffusers, you can make an instant impact, especially on your guests.

Arrange flowers

Fresh bouquets add a touch of vibrant color and life to any space. Try adorning a cocktail table with proud birds-of-paradise or gracing your powder room with a sprig of peonies.

**Start the project
you’ve put off**

You know the one—it’s likely been on your mind for weeks, months, or even years. It’s time to make it happen, either by getting in touch with a home renovation contractor or landscaper or setting aside a day for a DIY undertaking. With such commitment, you can finally make your dream-home vision come to life.



USING WAX MELTERS, CANDLES,
OR AROMA DIFFUSERS, YOU
CAN MAKE AN INSTANT IMPACT,
ESPECIALLY ON YOUR GUESTS.





WHAT TO DO NOW TO SELL IN SPRING

written by
CHRISTY MURDOCK

If you're a homeowner who's been waiting for the right time to sell, your opportunity may be coming up. Spring is typically the hottest real estate season, thanks in part to the warmer weather and longer days making it more enjoyable for buyers to browse. To better guarantee a smooth and successful process, check out this guide on how to get yourself and your house ready for what lies ahead.

Find your agent

A real estate agent is one of the biggest assets you can have when selling your home, and considering how busy they may be come spring, you'll want to find yours before then. First, do your homework—ask friends and family for any recommendations, and research the leading listing agents in your market, carefully reading through their online reviews and testimonials.

Once you've created a short list of candidates, schedule consultations with each of them to see what they might be like to work with. Verify that they have the experience you need and a solid marketing plan, and ask for details about their communication style, typical commission, and approach to the home sale process. And make sure to be forthcoming as well! The better your agent understands your wants and needs, the more capable they'll be of matching you with the right buyer.



Declutter & depersonalize

Similarly, you'll want to tackle your interiors to make them appealing to potential buyers. The two keys are decluttering and depersonalizing. With the former, the goal is to ensure that your home feels spacious and spotless. Focus on tasks like clearing surfaces, cleaning out drawers, cabinets, and closets, and emptying the garage. If you have oversized furniture, or just a lot of it, consider putting some pieces in storage to make your rooms look larger.

As for depersonalizing, remove items that are specific to you; these could include family photos, fan gear, and religious objects. By making your spaces as neutral as possible, you will turn them into blank canvases, enabling visitors to more easily picture themselves making a home there.

Assess your property

While winter weather may prevent you from taking on exterior projects to improve your home, you can still begin planning. Do a thorough walk-through around the perimeter of your property, keeping an eye out for any issues—minor or otherwise—that may be sticking points for potential buyers. You can also consider getting a pre-listing inspection to catch problems that could prove costly during a contract negotiation, giving you a chance to repair or upgrade them beforehand.

Additionally, there's no time like springtime to maximize your curb appeal, making your home look beautifully fresh and cheerful. Create a list of tasks that may help enhance its facade, such as adding potted flowers to your front porch, edging your lawn to give it sharp, clean lines, and pressure-washing your driveway, sidewalks, and siding. Once the temperatures warm up, you'll be ready to jump right into sprucing up your property.



Schedule your rollout

Work with your real estate agent to decide the timing of your listing. Do you want it to hit the market at the very beginning of the spring season or after it's in full swing? You should also establish a solid selling strategy, including the use of video and how to handle showings. If you have any concerns or specific priorities, they can help make adjustments that suit your needs.

Earning top dollar for your home means staying flexible and putting in the effort to get it in top condition. Stay focused on the exciting move that awaits after the sale, trust your real estate agent's guidance, and enjoy the journey—you'll be able to hang that Just Sold sign before you know it!

smart storage SOLUTIONS

written by MATTHEW BRADY

If you've ever looked around your home and wondered where all the stuff in it came from, you're certainly not alone. According to a survey from Talker Research, half of the respondents deemed at least one room in their place unsalvageable due to clutter. In fact, our houses are so overflowing that, per StorageCafe, an estimated one-third of us utilize self-storage.

One way to take control? Get creative. Here are some simple ways to maximize your spaces and prevent your belongings from becoming burdensome.

Box them in

For most people, sectioned-off areas—including drawers, shelves, and large receptacles—are big sources of mess stress, and basic boxes or bins are great for increasing their cleanliness. For instance, a crate would work well as a sturdy keeper of small tools on your workbench, while adding shallow bins to your freezer can make grouping, and thus finding, items easy. And if your drawers are too small for boxes, opt instead for organizers like dividers for a similar decluttering effect.

Go under

Do you have an alcove that's not currently being used? Mull over what you could potentially store there. Consider the space under your basement stairs: it can be used to neatly stack paint cans if the room is unfurnished, or you can add shelving if it is. In addition, the gaps beneath beds are a perfect place to keep items like seasonal clothes in covered bins. You can do the same below a sofa that has tall legs.

Go vertical

Sometimes, the answer to your problems is staring right at you—in this case, it's your doors and walls. Over-the-door hangers, for example, are convenient out-of-sight options for draping everything from robes to purses to ties in various rooms and closets; shoe organizers can also do the trick. Cabinet doors are similarly ideal for storing hair dryers, utensils, and the like using hooks or magnetic strips.

In addition, you can find inspiration in the classic pegboard. Normally hung in the garage, it can be added to a wall in virtually any room. Utilize one for impressive craft storage or even for organizing your kitchen's pots and pans.

The ongoing battle to keep your home clutter-free can be won with the right tools and a little ingenuity. You'll be amazed at the possibilities that exist when you make the most of your square footage to stow away your possessions.



Stay Warm, Save Money

written by **ANDRE RIOS**

Wintertime can inundate your home with snow, ice, or frigid winds, depending on where you reside. And while your first move may be to crank up the furnace, there are other cost-effective ways to keep chilly conditions at bay. Try these simple and impactful solutions throughout your abode, and you'll stay cozy all winter long.



Examine furnace filters

Check these heater accessories for cleanliness, and replace them at least every two to three months or as the manufacturer advises; if they're clogged, your furnace will have to work harder to circulate air. For whole-home efficiency, ask an HVAC technician to recommend cleaning times for your air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as well.

Address your ducts

Similarly, objects obstructing your registers, such as furniture or boxes, can interfere with your heater's ability to distribute warm air. Especially if you've redecorated this year, go room to room to ensure that nothing is blocking the flow of heat through any of them.

Install a smart thermostat

Adding this tool equips you to generate only as much heat as you need, potentially lowering your energy bills. For instance, you can set automatic schedules based on the time of day, creating more warmth when you're awake and reducing it while you're asleep or out of the house. In fact, adjusting your thermostat 7–10 degrees lower than its normal temperature setting for eight hours daily can help you save up to 10 percent annually on your electric costs.



Reduce your water temperature

There's a chance your water heater is overworking when you run your shower, dishwasher, or washing machine. The general recommended setting is 120 degrees, but to save money, consider turning the appliance down 5 to 10 degrees, testing it until you reach a temperature you can be satisfied with.

Check your chimney

While using a fireplace is a simple and satisfying way to get warm, its chimney can also allow heat to escape through it. Always shut the flue when your fireplace is not in use to prevent air transfer, only opening it right before lighting the hearth again. You can purchase a fireplace plug if necessary to create a stronger seal.

Deal with drafts

Does a pesky draft seem to seep from beneath your exterior or basement doors? Laying door snakes may help put a stop to this. You can find these weighted fabric tubes at many major retailers or search for a guide online to making your own. And for a more permanent solution to door and window drafts, seal any gaps around the frames using weather stripping or caulk.

Hang heavy drapes

Swapping thin curtains or drapes with thicker alternatives can preserve warm air inside your house and keep chilly outdoor air out; look for thermal options that are designed to provide insulation. However, you should open *any* treatments on bright days, especially those on south-facing windows, to invite sunlight into your rooms. Just make sure to close them at night to minimize heat loss.



Layer in textiles

Finally, don't overlook the impact of creating a cozy lounging atmosphere. If you have rooms with cold hardwood, ceramic tile, or laminate flooring, laying rugs will add a soft cushion to help keep your feet warm. And blankets, duvets, thick clothing, and slippers are perfect for warding off the chill—especially if you join a loved one for a heartwarming cuddle session. While this can't overcome subzero temperatures, you'd be surprised by how effective layering can be at alleviating cool winter nights and keeping your heating use in check.



WELCOMING FARE *for winter*



Adapted from *A Cookbook for Winter: More than 95 Nurturing & Comforting Recipes for the Colder Months*.
Published by Ryland Peters & Small.

Serves 6

CROÛTE CHOCOLAT

recipe by **LOUISE PICKFORD**

photography by **IAN WALLACE** © **RYLAND PETERS & SMALL**

Bread and chocolate are an ever popular combination in Switzerland, and this sweet spin on the classic *croûte fromage* (melted cheese on bread) makes a great finale for any meal. Serve it with lashings of vanilla custard on the side.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon butter, for greasing

14 oz. panettone, brioche or raisin bread
(approx. 12 slices, about 4 inches square
and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick)

2 bananas, sliced

9 oz. strawberries, hulled and halved

4 tablespoons amaretto

5½ oz. dark/bittersweet chocolate, grated

Vanilla custard, to serve

A 2-QUART BAKING DISH, GREASED

Instructions:

1/ Preheat the oven to 350°F.

2/ Arrange the slices of panettone, brioche or raisin bread in overlapping rows in the prepared baking dish.

3/ Insert the slices of banana and strawberry halves between the slices of panettone. Sprinkle with amaretto and then add a layer of grated chocolate on top.

4/ Transfer to the preheated oven and bake for 25 minutes until puffed up and the chocolate has melted. Serve with plenty of vanilla custard.

Scan the QR Code
for the full cookbook.



Serves 4

BAKED FRENCH ONION SOUP

with Gruyère topping

recipe by **LOUISE PICKFORD**

photography by **IAN WALLACE** © **RYLAND PETERS & SMALL**

Slowly braised onions are truly one of life's pleasures, especially in this classic, comforting soup, with its topping of melted cheese.

Ingredients:

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 lb. 4 oz. onions, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 teaspoons freshly chopped thyme

½ cup fruity red wine

4 cups vegetable stock

½ French baguette

⅔ cup grated Gruyère

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Instructions:

1/ Preheat the oven to 400°F.

2/ Heat the oil in a 4-quart Dutch oven over a medium heat and gently fry the onions, garlic and thyme with a little salt and pepper for 25 minutes until really soft and lightly golden, stirring frequently to prevent the onions from burning.

3/ Add the wine, bring to the boil and boil for 5 minutes or until evaporated, then pour in the stock. Bring back to the boil and season to taste.

4/ Cut the bread into slices ½ inch thick and arrange over the top of the soup. Scatter over the Gruyère and Parmesan cheeses and transfer the pan to the preheated oven. Bake uncovered for about 10–15 minutes until the soup is bubbling and the cheese melted and golden. If you wish, you can brown the top of the cheese under a hot broiler/grill.

5/ Cool for 10 minutes before serving.





Serves 8 to
share, 4 as
a main

ROAST SQUASH & LENTIL SALAD

recipe by **THEO A. MICHAELS**

photography by **MOWIE KAY © RYLAND PETERS & SMALL**

This is simple to make and such a satisfying dish to eat on colder days. Butternut squash contrasts nicely with the dark and earthy lentils and if you've got some feta lurking in the fridge, throw a few crumbs on top to serve.

Ingredients:

2 lb. 4-oz. winter squash, such as
butternut, pumpkin, hubbard or acorn

About 4 tablespoons olive oil

A couple of pinches of dried oregano

A few sprigs of fresh rosemary

6 garlic cloves, unpeeled and halved

9-oz. packet of cooked Puy lentils

9-oz. packet of cooked green lentils

½ red onion, thinly sliced

3½ oz. cooked beetroot/beet,
cut into wedges

A small handful freshly chopped
flat-leaf parsley

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Sea salt and freshly ground
black pepper

Instructions:

1/ Preheat the oven to 400°F.

2/ Peel and deseed the squash and cut the flesh into 1-inch slices (if you are using butternut, you can leave the skin on as it will cook okay). Put the squash pieces in a bowl and add a glug of olive oil, the oregano, rosemary and garlic, then mix well.

3/ Tip into a roasting pan and roast in the preheated oven for 30 minutes, or until the squash is tender and cooked and starting to brown at the edges.

4/ Tip both the Puy and green lentils into a large bowl and add the red onion, beetroot wedges and chopped parsley. Dress the salad with a generous amount of the remaining olive oil and a splash of red wine vinegar—taste and adjust the balance of olive oil and vinegar to taste. Season with salt and pepper.

5/ To serve, add the roasted squash to the bowl and fold it into the lentils, along with any cooking juices in the pan.

Serves 4

HARVEST PIE

recipe by **THEO A. MICHAELS**

photography by **MOWIE KAY © RYLAND PETERS & SMALL**

This harvest pie is packed with canned lentils and vegetables and uses potato and leek soup to bring everything together for a hearty and savoury supper. If you were short on time, you can mix the filling directly in the pastry case and just top with a pastry lid, then into the oven for a quicker fix.

Ingredients:

1 lb. 2 oz. ready-made puff pastry

1 egg, whisked

2 x 14-oz. cans green lentils,
drained and rinsed

14-oz. can baby carrots and petit pois,
drained and rinsed

14-oz. can green beans, drained and rinsed

14-oz. can potato and leek soup

3 tablespoons plain/all-purpose flour,
plus extra for dusting

1 tablespoon butter, diced

1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

½ teaspoon curry powder

AN 11 X 8 INCH BAKING PAN

Instructions:

1/ Preheat the oven to 425°F.

2/ Cut the block of pastry in half and roll out one half on a floured work surface to about ⅛ inch thick. Use this to line the baking pan, allowing the pastry to overhang the top lip of the pan. Line with baking parchment and baking beans (or raw rice, etc.) and blind bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, remove the parchment and baking beans, then brush with some of the whisked egg and return to the oven for another 5 minutes.

3/ In a mixing bowl, gently fold all the remaining ingredients together. Pour into the baking pan on top of the cooked pastry and level out with the back of a spoon. Roll out the remaining pastry to cover the top, crimping around the edges to seal.

4/ Pierce the top with a sharp knife to help the steam release, brush with the remaining egg and season the top. Bake in the oven for a further 30 minutes or until the top is golden. Leave to rest for at least 15 minutes to allow the filling to set before serving.





A DESIGNER'S GUIDE TO WABI-SABI

interview with **LAUREN LERNER** / *written by* **ALLISON GOMES** / *photography by* **LIFE CREATED**





LAUREN LERNER,
FOUNDER AND CEO OF
LIVING WITH LOLO



IN AN AGE WHEN SLEEK MINIMALISM AND PERFECTLY curated spaces often take center stage, a more grounded, authentic alternative has recently emerged as a quiet force—*wabi-sabi*. Rooted in ancient Japanese philosophy, this aesthetic embraces imperfection, impermanence, and the beauty of natural materials, celebrating the soulfulness that comes with genuine elements.

Because of its increasing popularity, many experts are now incorporating the style into their work, including Lauren Lerner. Known for her elevated yet approachable designs, she is the founder and CEO of Living with Lolo, a top-rated firm based in Scottsdale, Arizona. She shares how she interprets wabi-sabi and how people can bring its calming energy into their homes.

Tell us about yourself and Living with Lolo:

My career path started in business and sales, but I have always loved dabbling in design any chance I could get. Taking a huge leap of faith, I started Living with Lolo in 2017, aiming to focus on how a room makes my clients feel rather than simply how it looks. Today, we offer white-glove interior design services nationwide, have designed for many celebrities, athletes, and busy executives, and have been featured in national publications for our unique style. I was also recognized as one of Arizona's top ten interior designers and named to LUXE Interiors + Design's Next in Design 99.

Would you describe your design philosophy?

No matter the style—from eclectic to wabi-sabi—I always bring in my core philosophy of blending warmth, functionality, and a sense of ease. I love mixing textures and playing with contrast, working to find those special pieces that make a space seem elevated yet approachable. Even when using different aesthetics, my goal is to create a home that feels thoughtful and cohesive, with layers that reflect both the client's personality and our signature look.

How do you define wabi-sabi?

Wabi-sabi is a design concept that embraces natural materials, imperfection, and simplicity, often featuring a muted color palette. It shares common threads with styles like minimalism and Japandi, but while the former tends to feel clean and curated and the latter leans refined and modern, wabi-sabi is softer and more soulful. Imagine a crack in a handmade vase, a vintage chair with a little patina, or the quiet character of a textured wall—these are the kinds of details wabi-sabi celebrates. It's about infusing areas with emotional warmth and an organic ambience; there's even a hint of hygge in its love for nature and serenity. And yet wabi-sabi carries a subtle elegance all its own.



Why do you think this style has grown in popularity?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the constant pressure for things to be perfect, and wabi-sabi offers this beautiful reminder that imperfection can actually be what makes something feel special and meaningful. People are craving more authenticity and simplicity in their homes, which is why many clients come to us wanting to incorporate wabi-sabi. Unfortunately, the architecture doesn't always reflect the style, but we're still able to pull in small elements that nod to it. We find a balance so that the space not only feels cohesive but also speaks to the lived-in vibe they are drawn to.

What elements do you typically use?

It's all about natural, organic materials that feel warm and a little imperfect in the best way. I love textures that have a bit of soul to them, whether it's a nubby textile, a plastered

wall with movement, or a vintage piece with a bit of wear. The color palette is usually soft and earthy, featuring warm neutrals and muted tones—shades that feel calming and grounded. When I design in a wabi-sabi style, I stay away from anything too shiny or polished and instead go for matte or brushed finishes that are more relaxed.

Do you have any tips for people wanting to incorporate wabi-sabi?

Start with texture and character, adding in a few pieces like a handmade ceramic, a vintage wood bowl, and a linen throw that's a little rumpled. And let go of the need for everything to match perfectly. Some of the most beautiful moments come from contrast and the feeling of things being collected over time. Even just simplifying a corner by clearing out the extras and letting a few special items breathe can shift the energy of the space. It doesn't have to be a big change—it's more

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IN PRAISE OF *PLYWOOD*

written by **MATTHEW BRADY**
photography courtesy of **GARNICA**

When it comes to building shelter, wood has been the framing go-to for the past several centuries, with everything from fir to oak being used. But don't undervalue another versatile option—plywood. Discover more about this amazing material, the many reasons it is beneficial to construction and home decor projects, and its role in the future of homes.



A multilayered history

In one form or another, plywood has been around virtually forever. Many experts credit the ancient Egyptians for creating the first type, a durable, multilayer substance for furniture and even coffins. However, you have to fast-forward to the Industrial Revolution to find the origins of the modern version. In 1797, a British engineer secured a patent for laminating layered veneers, and the first one for plywood itself was granted in America in 1865.

The Pacific Northwest then became a hub of sorts for plywood advancements. A three-ply type was introduced at the 1905 World's Fair in Portland, Oregon, and an Aberdeen, Washington chemist created a waterproof adhesive in 1934—a particularly important breakthrough for timber used in structures. Around that same time, Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto changed the furniture game by introducing his bent-plywood Paimio armchair, showing the world just how elegant the material could be inside the home.

Today, plywood is still in great demand. The National Association of Home Builders says that over 90 percent of new homes are constructed with wood, and in most of these plans, plywood a key material in the building process. And looking ahead, market research company MarketsandMarkets estimates that plywood sales will reach a whopping \$73.3 billion worldwide by 2027.





How it's made

To put it simply, think of plywood as an interlocking combination of several sheets of wood. Three or more thin layers (or plies, hence the name) are glued together, each placed at a right angle to one another for added stability, and cured under heat and pressure. The end result is a sturdy, ready-to-use product that largely remains unchanged over time—a big benefit to construction workers and homeowners alike.

Plywood is composed of either hardwood (from deciduous trees like oak and maple) or softwood (from coniferous varieties like pine and fir), with the respective heartiness of each dictating its use. The former timber is more beautiful and durable, making it ideal for cabinetry and the like, whereas the latter is often preferred for structural applications thanks to its weight-bearing capability and versatility. In addition, the different types are classified into a range of grades and ratings to help both builders and consumers determine the right ones for specific projects.



Plywood in general is also super easy to work with and manipulate and can be made to resist weather, humidity-induced warping and shrinking, and insects.

Advantages

Strength

The aforementioned hardwood variety is particularly renowned across the construction industry thanks to it having strength in numbers—with up to seven layers bonded together, it can be stronger than natural wood and even steel in some respects. Plywood in general is also super easy to work with and manipulate and can be made to resist weather, humidity-induced warping and shrinking, and insects.

Additionally, Garnica, a leading manufacturer of premium sustainable plywood, notes that because of modern manufacturing advances, the material is stronger, more durable, and more lightweight than ever. As a result, it says, plywood has become suitable for a wider range of applications, including transportation and furniture.



Cost

Even though plywood prices have gone up in recent years, it remains an overall cheaper option in relation to solid timber. (Note, though, that the savings are dependent on factors like the type of wood and its quality.) And since it's incredibly versatile and ideal for a variety of purposes—home builders use it for everything from sheathing to subflooring—it can be a huge time and money saver when it comes to construction costs.

Eco-friendliness

You may be wondering, “All this sounds great, but is plywood a green option?” The answer, typically, is yes, as long as it's composed of eco-friendly wood such as spruce, Nordic birch, or pine and isn't produced using VOC-emitting adhesives. For instance, Garnica plywood is primarily made from sustainably grown poplar, which absorbs approximately twenty tons of carbon dioxide per hectare per year, making it a powerful tool in combating climate change. Every cubic meter of Garnica's plywood captures about 650–700 kilograms of carbon dioxide, resulting in a net positive carbon footprint. Furthermore, plywood production tends to maximize the amount of wood used from the original source, resulting in less waste.

Disadvantages

Plywood may sound like the perfect building product, but it does have some potential drawbacks. For example, even though it mostly stands tall in humid conditions, it's not completely waterproof. Over time, it can warp or swell, so if you live in a high-humidity or flood-prone area, you may need to use a type that's built for these conditions, such as a marine plywood or Garnica Duraply. Plus, the wood's strength tends to dissipate toward its edges, resulting in cracking or splitting; this may require some fine-tuning from builders or homeowners, including sealing the edges.

All in all, plywood is a contradiction of sorts in the world of timber: a manufactured material made of natural resources that's thin yet strong and can be used for both interiors and exteriors. As a result, it continues to be a staple for homeowners and pros in the construction industry, marrying a time-tested method with twenty-first-century sensibilities and advances.



THE *transformative* POWER OF TEAL

written by **ALLISON GOMES**

Every year, experts unveil their color picks to set the tone for design trends, and 2025 brought a varied palette—from Pantone's cozy Mocha Mousse to Behr's moody Rumors to HGTV Home by Sherwin-Williams' soft Quietude. But for 2026, the spotlight shifts to a hue that's already turning heads on international runways: teal. Chosen by the trend authorities at WGSN and Coloro (who dub it "Transformative Teal"), this captivating option may be just what you need to inject new life into your home for the months ahead.





Why teal, and why now?

Teal is a perfect example of how the right color can impact the function and feel of a space. By blending the calming depth of blue with the revitalizing energy of green, it strikes a unique balance that can either soothe or invigorate depending on the ratio and tint. A lighter teal, for instance, can add a burst of fresh energy to a playroom or living room, encouraging creativity and movement. Meanwhile, a darker shade can promote clarity and focus in a home office or introduce a softer, more serene vibe in a bedroom, helping to craft a peaceful retreat. Wherever it's used, teal shapes the mood, offering a dynamic backdrop that brings harmony and purpose.

But the color's impact isn't just emotional—it's environmental too. Sustainability is an increasingly important aspect of fashion and interior design, and teal nods to this eco-consciousness by evoking lush landscapes and ocean depths, making it feel connected to the earth and a more mindful way of living. And while the color may be trending now, it is no passing fad. It has history and staying power, looking just as stylish in 1920s art deco as it does in modern minimalism. That timelessness makes the hue a smart choice for anyone seeking a color with longevity.

THIS CAPTIVATING OPTION MAY
BE JUST WHAT YOU NEED TO
INJECT NEW LIFE INTO YOUR
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How to use Transformative Teal

Unlike picks from brands like Behr and Sherwin-Williams, you won't actually find Transformative Teal in the paint aisle. Instead, you can use the trend as inspiration for your next project, selecting paints, fabrics, and accents in various shades of teal. Whether you're interested in doing a complete overhaul or just a subtle refresh, there are several ways to bring a cool-toned update into your home.

Swap accent pieces

Sprinkle in teal through decor you can easily switch out: think ceramic vases, abstract artwork, and planters that feature it as a primary or accent color. Even more functional items like desk organizers, coasters, and candleholders can bring a subtle yet impactful pop of the hue. Try grouping teal objects together on a shelf or coffee table for a curated, intentional look. You can also use a variety of materials, like painted metal and colored glass, to add depth and texture while keeping the color palette cohesive.

Tie in textiles

One easy and effective method for incorporating the bold color is utilizing textiles. For instance, a reading chair or ottoman upholstered in teal velvet can be a showstopping piece in your living room, while a teal rug in your dining room can ground the space and complement any new blue-green accents. In a bedroom, use the shade throughout the bedding, including your duvet cover and pillowcases; you can even throw a quilt at the foot of the bed. When picking items, consider how you can mix patterns, like stripes, florals, and even geometric prints that feature teal, for another layer of visual interest without overwhelming the space.

Refresh your walls

For a more drastic change, you can't go wrong with adding a coat of teal paint to instantly transform a room. Paint a single accent wall behind the headboard in a bedroom to turn it into a cozy sanctuary or one in your home office to create a stunning background for your video meetings. You can then pair it with white walls and trim for a modern contrast or paint the ceiling, trim, and rest of the walls in the same shade, drenching the room for greater drama.

Ultimately, one of the best things about teal is that no matter your style, it's bound to work with your home's existing design, easily complementing everything from bright neutrals to shades of red and yellow. So whether you go big or start small, integrating the color into your home is a beautiful way to give your spaces a look that's both trendy and timeless.





LAUNDRY DAY *the natural way*

written by **REBECCA POOLE**

Once a week, you put a capful of detergent in the washing machine and throw your dirty clothes in. It's such a mundane activity that you probably rarely think about all the chemicals in the products you're using. However, it may be time to break up with your laundry routine and start incorporating more natural ways of doing your weekly load.



REPLACE FABRIC SOFTENER WITH VINEGAR

You may be thinking, "Vinegar smells bad, so why would I add it to my laundry?" But distilled white vinegar will actually neutralize odors rather than cause an unwanted scent. Plus, it can remove stains, reduce static cling, and break down excess detergent to prevent stiffness. Simply add half a cup to the rinse cycle to enjoy these benefits.

Note that some sources, though, only recommend using vinegar every other week to protect delicate fabrics. Also, aim to avoid it with elastic or exercise clothing altogether since its acidity could make these items lose their stretchiness. And *never* mix it with bleach products—the result could be highly toxic.

DITCH THE DRYER SHEETS

If you currently use dryer sheets instead of fabric softener, another eco-friendly alternative could be switching to wool dryer balls. They are reusable for up to five years, don't contain the chemicals found in traditional one-use dryer sheets, and may even dry your clothes faster by creating space between them to improve airflow.

USE NATURAL STAIN REMOVER

On top of the negative environmental impact, chemical-filled products can mute the colors of your clothes and irritate your skin. To tackle unexpected messes, look for a stain stick with an eco-friendly formula. Target brands without dyes, synthetic fragrances, sulfates, or petroleum solvents, and feel good that you're staying clean without harming the earth.

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Front of Tear Out Card 2



**CROÛTE
CHOCOLAT**



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Back of Tear Out Card 2

CROÛTE CHOCOLAT

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp. butter, for greasing
- 14 oz. panettone, brioche or raisin bread (approx. 12 slices, about 4 in. square and ¾ in. thick)
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 9 oz. strawberries, hulled and halved
- 4 tbsp. amaretto
- 5½ oz. dark/bittersweet chocolate, grated
- Vanilla custard, to serve

A 2-qt. baking dish, greased

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/** Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- 2/** Arrange the slices of panettone, brioche or raisin bread in overlapping rows in the prepared baking dish.
- 3/** Insert the slices of banana and strawberry halves between the slices of panettone. Sprinkle with amaretto and then add a layer of grated chocolate on top.
- 4/** Transfer to the preheated oven and bake for 25 minutes until puffed up and the chocolate has melted. Serve with plenty of vanilla custard.

SERVES 6

Adapted from *A Cookbook for Winter: More than 95 Nurturing & Comforting Recipes for the Colder Months*. Published by Ryland Peters & Small. Recipe by Louise Pickford. Photography by Ian Wallace © Ryland Peters & Small.

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