

Easy Breezy Living

Inspired by nature's palette, Katie Brown refreshes her home with an easygoing style that knows no boundaries.

BY SUSAN HEEGER | PHOTOS DAVID A. LAND
STYLING STACY KUNSTEL

style wise

WHO

Katie Brown

WHERE

Amagansett, New York

MY STYLE IS

Casual and simple chic

WHAT INSPIRES YOU

Mother nature and my family

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

My kids and Diet Coke!

STYLE ADVICE

When I decorate, I sit in every corner of every room in the house and sleep in every bed to study where I'd want to put my feet up or set down a soda, so I can see and feel what would make people comfortable.

FAVORITE ESCAPE

Les Cheneaux Islands, Michigan





As the last weeks of summer hit the shores of Amagansett, New York, Katie Brown, host of the PBS *Katie Brown Workshop* and the author of five books on domesticity, swings into party mode. Her specialty? Gatherings that celebrate the Sunday afternoon “magic hour” when thoughts tip toward the week ahead. “A Sunday get-together starts the week off happily,” Katie says, “especially when you break bread with those you love.” Beginning and ending early, her Sunday meals are casual, with friends drifting in and outdoors.

Providing the ideal stage for this ebb and flow is the recently remodeled home that Katie shares with husband, William Corbin, and their two daughters. Built in the 1970s, the modest size ranch now has an open floor plan and wraparound patios with multiple French doors. It’s quite a change from its former status as a run-down house divided

Open shelves near the kitchen, *above*, keep serving pieces organized and ready for entertaining.

A self-serve sandwich bar, *top right*, lets guests dish up an easy meal of flank steak on flat bread and a choice of three toppings—chimichurri, onions and peppers, and horseradish.

Katie tucks flowers in the ice bucket bowl, *right*. After the ice melts and drinks vanish, the blooms float in water as colorful decoration.

The pergola planted with wisteria shelters the route from driveway to house. Here, a table holds a warm welcome for party guests—to enjoy sweet treats, such as apple cider doughnuts.



into apartments. “I always tell realtors, ‘Find me the cheapest, ugliest house,’” Katie says. “That’s the one I want. I love to bring houses back to life.”

Inside, the couple brightened rooms by painting the walls white and pairing comfy slipcovered chairs with rustic wood pieces. Katie, a Michigan native with small-town, big-family roots, is budget-minded, practical, and has a soft spot for imperfection. “Most of what I do is by necessity and accident, and somehow it works,” she says. “I really like a surprise, something you don’t expect, like a funky lampshade that doesn’t quite fit.” If there is one constant in Katie’s home, it’s that it is always changing, growing with the family. “My mother says, ‘If you ever stop reworking your rooms, you’re probably done with that house; it’s time to move on.’”

To bring guests together, Katie joins two of her teak dining tables, *above*, which she designed for the Michigan-based company Meijer.

The entry, *right*, shows two of Katie’s decorating tenets: Every room needs a piece of furniture or accessory that is black for a touch of elegance, and something reflective, such as the mirror, to bounce light around the room.



“When you have a white room with big glass doors, you bring in the colors of Mother Nature. We decorated with colors that look good with the greens and browns outside.”

Katie Brown



Katie and William lounge in their back yard with daughters Prentiss, at left, and Meredith.

In the master bedroom, Katie blended old and new: her grandmother's chest of drawers on one side of the bed and a crisp white Ikea chest on the other. ■

