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INSIDE EXQUISITE NEW JERSEY ESTATES:

HAMPTONS STYLE SHOWPIECE in FRANKLIN LAKES, **RIVERWIND** in **MIDDLETOWN**, A GOTHIC VICTORIAN in ENGLEWOOD, **THE ROANOKES ESTATE IN SUMMIT**, A CLASSIC COLONIAL in BERNARDSVILLE

ALSO: OUR DINNER GUEST is INVENTOR SAVRAJ SINGH DHANJAL, **MAKING DESIGN SENSE** of a **SUMMER RENTAL**, SHARING EXPERT EASE at HIGH POINT MARKET, **PAY IT FORWARD THIS SUMMER** at **SURFLIGHT THEATRE**, ASPIRE'S DESIRES

SUMMER Rentals

Written by **Anne Marie Soto**

REARRANGE THE FURNITURE.

"The way the furniture works in the space should suit the needs of you and your family," says Beth Insabella Walsh, ASID, owner of Insabella Design in Red Bank. "Don't be shy about changing things around."

Possibilities to consider: creating a more conversational grouping in the living room; a bedroom dresser that might function better as a dining area side board; chairs can be transferred from one room to another; porch/patio seating can be rearranged or supplemented to accommodate more people; lamps can be relocated to provide better reading or task lighting.

SUPPLEMENT THE EXISTING FURNITURE.

If it's a full season rental, adding small furniture pieces like an end table, a small chest of drawers, a storage trunk, or a rocking chair can increase the comfort quotient. These don't have to be fine furniture pieces. Consider new, but inexpensive, pieces. Garage-sale finds (from your garage or someone else's) are great venues for letting your inner artist come alive. A coat of white paint and interesting hardware or whimsical summer colors can turn the bland or ugly items into conversation pieces.

Whether your summer rental is for two weeks or two months, putting your own personal stamp on this temporary haven can help make a great vacation even better.

For some advice, we turned to three interior designers to share their design sense.

CLEAR OUT THE CLUTTER.

If the plastic flowers, sea shell art, knick knacks and more aren't to your liking, pack them up and put them out of sight until your rental days are over. "On vacation, the space you inhabit should impart feelings of calmness and pleasure," says Judith Chirico, ASID, owner of Interior Design Directions, LLC in Monmouth Junction. "Too much 'stuff,' especially when it's someone else's taste, can be a real distraction."

LET IN THE LIGHT.

If the landlord hasn't done it to your satisfaction, make cleaning the mirrors and windows a priority. If there are heavy curtains at the windows, pull them back out of the way. If privacy is an issue, add sheers on a tension rod.

UPGRADE WHAT'S UNDERFOOT.

Floors are generally wood or tile. An inexpensive indoor/outdoor area rug can add a punch of color. If there's wall-to-wall carpeting that's not to your liking, scatter small area rugs around (at the door, under the coffee table, by the bedside) to distract the eye.

PERK UP THE UPHOLSTERY.

Layers of color can add your personality to the rooms. "One size fits..." slipcovers are surprisingly inexpensive and an easy way to convert furniture that is either drab or just not-quite-to-your-taste into something surprisingly chic. Even if the existing upholstery is fine, the fabric itself is often generic. Throw pillows in bright, summery colors and a coordinating afghan or two will work wonders.

INVITE MOTHER NATURE INSIDE.

"Right from when you walk in the front door, things should look fresh and bright," says Ria Gulian, ASID, owner of Interior Design by Ria in Oceanport, "with a visual connection to the outdoors." She advises bringing in some greenery but, unless you're going to be there full time, you may want to avoid live plants. Reeds and organic palms are a good substitute. If the local farm stand carries fresh flowers, add them to your shopping cart.

ADD YOUR OWN BEDDING.

Regardless of what is supplied, importing your own pillows, blankets and sheets can make a rental feel much more like a cozy home-away-from-home.

This might be the time to break out and indulge in some brightly colored sheets and pillowcases . . . or go all white for a cool, crisp look.

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT?

If you plan to entertain, be sure your rental is well stocked with the requisite dishware and utensils and the appropriate serving pieces — all of the unbreakable variety.

Remember to keep a running inventory of what you've contributed to the rental so that, when the vacation is over, nothing is left behind. ■

The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) sponsors a referral service for consumers interested in obtaining the services of a qualified professional interior designer. For residential and commercial referrals, visit the ASID New Jersey Chapter's statewide designer directory at www.njasid.org/findadesigner.

SOURCES: Judith Chirico, ASID, Interior Design Directions, LLC • www.interiordesigndirections.com
 Ria Gulian, ASID, CID, Interior Design by Ria • www.designsbyria.com
 Beth Insabella Walsh, ASID, Insabella Design • www.insabelladesign.com



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