

LIVING FLORAL

*Entertaining and
Decorating with Flowers*



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Foreword by
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RIZZOLI
NEW YORK

GARDEN PARTY

*Cornelia Guest
New York, New York*

Gracious living can be learned but in Cornelia Guest's case, it's part of her DNA. With design and gardening maven C. Z. Guest for a mother and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor as godparents, one might imagine a head start in the style department.

Some of Cornelia's childhood memories include doing her homework after school in Halston's New York apartment and playing games with Andy Warhol when he would visit Long Island. But her childhood also featured horseback riding and romping with family pets, both of which engendered in her a fierce love of animals. As an avid vegan, she has turned her passion into commercial ventures including "cruelty-free" fashion and vegan catering.

Though Cornelia moves comfortably through the worlds of high fashion and high society, she is also a self-confessed homebody, hosting small dinner parties where she cooks organic and vegan meals served on heirloom china and silver; and garden gatherings where she culls from her mother's collection of D. Porthault floral-printed tablecloths and cuts flowers from the garden for table arrangements.

Cornelia is devoted to living a flower-filled life. Lilly Pulitzer sundresses with vibrant floral patterns, bloom-covered linens, and fresh arrangements are mainstays of her summer style. She gathers peonies, dahlias, and roses from the garden and artfully places individual stems in antique apothecary bottles on a windowsill or marching down a dining room table. When asked about the orchids in the green plastic pots in the windows at Templeton, her family home, she quips, "My mother always left the orchids in their original pots—I figured, if it was good enough for her, it's good enough for me." She is very down-to-earth about her gardening skills. "When my mother died, I knew nothing about flowers and gardening. I turned to her experts and asked them to teach me. It's been a labor of love, and I think of her whenever I'm in the garden—and other times, too."





CORNELIA'S PICKS FOR LIVING FLORAL ENTERTAINING

Don't redecorate a room or put your pets elsewhere—your guests are coming to your house, and it's where you live. Sharing a glimpse into your life is part of entertaining and is as important as all the other aspects of your party.

Since I am a committed vegan, my guests know that I'll be serving vegan meals. It's important to me that I serve delicious food, and whether you're vegan, vegetarian, or even a carnivore, be sure the food tastes and looks good.

Linens are like clothes—they're an opportunity to express one's taste and personality. I've been able to cull from my mother's extensive collection of linens through the years, from specially printed Porthault tablecloths for a playful outdoor feel to more formal Frette and Yves Delorme pieces. I'll even throw an Indian-print spread over a table if I'm having a casual party.





ABOVE: Cornelia Guest sets a summer outdoor luncheon with a vintage Porthault tablecloth, family silver, and informal stemware, all crowned with luscious garden roses, casually arranged in a Majolica-type lettuce-ware pitcher. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Heirloom Dodie Thayer lettuce ware pairs well with Cornelia's more formal floral china and keeps things casual. Cornelia peruses her collection of Porthault tablecloths, which both her mother, C. Z., and she have collected through the years. A fulsome bed of roses just beyond a bay window at Cornelia's ancestral home, Templeton. PREVIOUS SPREAD: For an alfresco feast in the oak allée, Cornelia threw a matelassé spread and cloth from Les Indiennes over the middle of the table just to soften the effect.

HAMPTONS HOSPITALITY

*Richard Keith Langham
Water Mill, New York*

I n an era when almost everything, including design, is widely accessible via the Internet and social media, and trends come and go before some even have time to acknowledge them, interior designer Richard Keith Langham is a refreshingly established name with a rich and timeless style. There is an erudite gravitas to his works balanced by the adamant refusal to take himself too seriously. His roots are in the Deep South—Brewton, Alabama, to be exact, which he credits in part to his interest in interiors. “I used to say that when you grow up in a small town, there isn’t anywhere to go but your own house, so it better be pretty. But there were actually a number of beautifully appointed houses that piqued my early interest,” he says. Keith’s resume includes Parsons School of Design, an early and invaluable apprenticeship with the design legend Mark Hampton, a significant stint with the English country house aficionado Keith Irvine, and a year spent studying in England.

So it’s no surprise that his interiors speak with a decidedly British accent. When asked about his country house on Long Island, he breezily responds, “Oh, the ‘Witch’s Hat’ house? It’s nothing fancy, just a place for me to spend weekends and have casual suppers with friends . . . My house is a mishmash of castoffs from jobs, some heirlooms that need slipcovering, and the very first pair of Christopher Spitzmiller lamps.” The design is like the essence of that nonchalant, faded elegance so unique to British sensibility. Tucked behind a signature Hamptons hedge, the chocolate-shingled, salmon-shuttered American Queen Ann-style “Witch’s Hat” trumpets a sense of playfulness, charming all who approach.





LEFT: The painted white porch of Richard Keith Langham's "Witch's Hat" home nods to his growing up in the South, where light colors are used to cool things off in the summer. OPPOSITE: Antique wicker furniture was painted chocolate brown to match the exterior of the summer house, and the cushions are covered in a lively salmon stripe. PREVIOUS PAGE: Keith sets a cool and inviting table for one of his summer suppers, with an informal cluster of clematis spilling over the top of a pitcher.

On a spring or summer evening, the designer favors dining alfresco. The soirée generally begins with cool drinks and light hors d'oeuvres in his tented pavilion overlooking a pool framed by four plastic pink flamingos—a decidedly not-too-serious touch. Then guests amble over to the wraparound front porch and gather at a gracious round table for one of Langham's delicious and simple suppers of fresh cream of squash soup with scallions, chicken paillard, arugula and tomato salad, and asparagus—and for dessert, mango sorbet and gingersnap cookies.

There are always flowers on the table and throughout the house. The host either cuts from copious drifts of hydrangeas in the garden and

loosely arranges the blooms in an assortment of witty and artistic containers, or calls in Bridgehampton florist Michael Grim to work his magic for a more elaborate look. The table is always dressed in one of the designer's many exotic textiles found in his travels or a cheerful floral-print fabric repurposed as a tablecloth.

Keith's alfresco evenings are a rich stew of ocean breezes, candlelight, and a playlist of standards, jazz, and Motown, as well as good food, pretty flowers, and a steady stream of lively conversation. "I love an ambience that wraps its arms around you, where everyone feels welcome, and special, and just a little bit spoiled," says Keith. It's Southern hospitality on Long Island to a T.





ABOVE: The pool house, situated at the end of the lawn facing the pool, is dressed in blues and whites and provides a cool respite on a summer's day. LEFT: Pre-dinner drinks are often served in the tented pavilion by the pool. The plastic pink flamingos keep things playful and fun. FOLLOWING SPREAD, LEFT PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Keith loves the Southern accent of a magnolia bloom floating in a bowl paired with seashells and starfish from New England. Keith awaits his guests on the front porch. Peaches, a piece of coral, ceramic oyster shells, and plates await the staging of dinner on the porch. RIGHT PAGE: Michael Grim, of Bridgehampton Florists, created an informal arrangement of viburnums and mock orange for the pool house.



KEITH'S PICKS FOR LIVING FLORAL ENTERTAINING

Entertaining out East during the summer months calls for really refreshing but simple drinks. I'll have a swath of juices and sparkling waters for those who don't partake in stronger drink, and a full bar and good wine selection for those who do. Occasionally, I'll come up with a fizzy, festive specialty cocktail that can also be served as a "mocktail."

People are the secret sauce. I like to have a guest list that's mixed and interesting. I also like to laugh and have fun, so I include friends who are clever and witty and a few who are beautiful. I do not include unpleasant people. I don't think anyone goes to a dinner party hoping to find themselves in the middle of a heated argument—and for those who do, they can host their own soirée. I do enjoy a lively discussion, but it cannot degenerate into verbal fisticuffs—that's just not good manners. Lighthearted nonsense is my favorite topic.





IN THE GARDEN

Charlotte Moss
New York, New York



fter a hectic week that could easily entail everything from a house installation to a presentation on her latest book to scheming new designs for her various product collections, interior designer Charlotte Moss pulls into the driveway of her second home in East Hampton. In what seems like a New York minute, she kicks off her heels, slips into comfortable clogs, and makes a beeline to the flower room to grab a basket and a pair of clippers. “Before I even go upstairs to unpack my bag, I head straight for the garden,” she says. Daisy and Buddy, Charlotte’s faithful Cavalier King Charles spaniels, usually scamper alongside, as happy as their mistress to leave city life behind for fragrant English roses and boxwoods, meandering pathways, and plenty of nooks and crannies that demand further investigation. “I stroll the garden to see what’s happening and in bloom, and start cutting to make arrangements for the house,” says Charlotte.

Not only fresh flowers, but also translated ones flourish throughout the spaces Charlotte creates. They can be as delicate as lilies of the valley rendered in porcelain, as exuberant as a chintz or block-printed fabric enveloping a bedroom, or as refined as a chinoiserie wallpaper of blooming branches in a dining room. “I’m Southern, so flowers run through my veins. I was raised in Virginia by women who had them all around,” she says. “It was not necessarily about bringing the outdoors in; it was about making a home feel welcoming and gracious.”

However, when Charlotte and her husband, Barry Friedberg, first spotted what they now call Boxwood Terrace, it didn’t immediately say “welcome,” either in a Southern accent or a Long Island one. It was a somewhat unremarkable spec house on three sprawling acres that featured no landscaping





LEFT: One of the designer's favorite spots to unwind is by the pool in a generously scaled McKinnon and Harris sofa. "I love that moment when you get that blast of sun and the light is fabulous. It's just me, the birds, and the dogs." OPPOSITE: The designer refers to her flower room as her therapy room. "It's where I go to putter, select a vase, listen to music, and power down," she says. PREVIOUS PAGE: On summer afternoons, she often sets a beautiful table on the terrace with her extensive collection of linens and tableware.

to speak of other than a handful of oak trees, a pear allée, and an abundance of arborvitae. "It was the view from the living room window to the backyard that captured me. I imagined what could be," says Charlotte. Given her skill for creating houses that are as livable as they are beautiful, it was no surprise that Charlotte would transform the house into a place that feels like home. But it was the idea of the garden to come—the first of her own—a blank canvas where her artistic touch and passion for detail could really take root, that excited the designer most.

Charlotte enlisted the husband-and-wife team of Lisa Stamm and Dale Booher—she, a garden designer and he, an architect—to guide and assist in bringing her vision to life. Similar to Charlotte's interiors, the garden unfolds in a series of rooms

and moments. "I didn't want one big reveal," she says. "By having a hedge or a walkway or a structure with something behind it, you are constantly making discoveries." Stamm strongly encouraged Charlotte to develop a long-range plan. "It sounds a bit trite, but it's so important, because of the way things grow. Above all, a garden requires patience, something that hasn't always come naturally to me," says Charlotte. More than two decades later, her vision has been firmly established, albeit it's one that has shifted and sharpened its focus, whether due to necessity (Mother Nature sometimes has other plans in store) or the designer's never-ending quest to research and implement new ideas.

"Ultimately, we want to feel that we haven't just arrived at a house, we've arrived at *the* place—where we can really unwind," says Charlotte.





Often the couple has weekend guests in tow, and the designer's love of entertaining slips into gear. On summer afternoons, she'll plan for a buffet-style meal on the terrace. Although the mood may be decidedly low-key and the attire caftans and swimsuit cover-ups, she'll still arrange a dining-room-worthy tablescape with china (often of her own design), colorful linens, and casually composed garden flowers in pieces from her extensive collection of baskets, vases, and jardinières. "If the flowers look spontaneous and relaxed, they make people relax," says Charlotte.

But just as in the richly layered houses she decorates, nothing in the garden escapes her notice—even an errant dead leaf will be plucked and tossed before she finally sits down with cocktail or iced tea in hand. "I tell everyone in my design office if they're not thinking about the wastepaper basket that goes underneath that beautiful George III writing table, they're missing the boat. The same principle is true in the garden. Paying attention to the smallest of details is what I do."

Boxwood Terrace, Charlotte Moss's weekend getaway in East Hampton, New York, provides a much-needed respite from her fast-paced life as a designer, as well as allows her to create beauty in her downtime with pursuits she is passionate about—gardening, entertaining, and flower arranging.



CHARLOTTE'S PICKS FOR LIVING FLORAL GARDENING

Patience is rewarded. Gardens can't always be about instant gratification. I remember Lisa Stamm, who collaborated and guided me on our garden, saying, "Let's do climbing hydrangea on the oaks and in five years it will look great." I thought, are you kidding—that long?

I eventually realized I was going to have to grow old slowly with some of those trees. Now it has been more than twenty years, and the climbing hydrangea rocks on.

Stylistic tastes, like the garden, evolve. In the beginning, I wanted that perfect English herbaceous border—my Gertrude Jekyll moment—with undulating color and a riot of blooms. The maintenance made me crazy. As time went by, I wanted to simplify my life, and the more gardens I saw, the more I appreciated the glory of green, and what could be done in shaping it and the architecture of the garden.

Everything doesn't have to be a lifelong commitment.

Change can happen in pots. It doesn't have to happen in the ground. A cluster of containers in the right place allows me so much freedom to experiment with color, texture, and height.





ABOVE: Charlotte is continually inspired to bring ideas from her travels home. She was so enchanted with the willow structures at France's Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan that she asked the head gardener, Gilles Guillot, to create similar features in her own garden, including what she calls the hickory pavilion. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A porcelain basket holds roses from the garden. "When the roses are in bloom, there's a lot of pink in the garden," says Charlotte, who finds relaxation in tending them and clipping blossoms for arrangements. A Chinese fretwork piece that once belonged to Bunny Mellon is filled with potted ferns and large-leaf begonias.