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Stylish Solutions

By Ann McDonald



Photos courtesy of Couture Chateau

How has your summer been so far, Stylish Suburbanite? I hope it's been refreshing, relaxing and filled with fun gatherings of friends and family.

While you're basking in the summer sun, I am excited to share this month about what goes on behind the scenes during this time of year for me, from late July to September, that very few know about. However, this makes fall and winter especially enjoyable and peaceful. The whole thing has to do with "Planning, to Prevent Panic."

For what are we planning? Well, just like we till soil for our gardens and plan retirement accounts for a financial season down the road, this part of the year is all about preparation for the Holiday Season.

I can hear you, and see you say "Hold on....No!"

But wait. Give me just a minute, and please don't disconnect. I said planning! Not decorating.

This is important. Do you plan your finances? Okay. And what happens when you don't? Precisely.

Now, what is more important than the atmosphere in your home? Especially around the holidays? Can you imagine if this year, there was actually peace? And no overspending last minute on décor items you didn't really need, or even want? Then planning, Stylish Suburbanite, is the key, and the time to use that key is now.

The Design Calendar: A Little Insider Information

Every year in January, there are runway shows for materials to be used in holiday collections that designers will debut in late July and August.

My team and I work in mid-December on next season's designs. Come January, we are in Atlanta, making sure we are on track with what is dropped into our hearts to design, via those runway shows.

In the retail world, you find holiday items popping up as early as August for purchase. Why? Because people are actually buying them. My counsel to clients who are offended when they see items in the store? As Disney Princesses sing, "Let it go." Don't be moved by someone else's calendar, but DO take hold of your own. That's why we are always planning! It's to provide peace. Remember the financial example? Now, consider your home atmosphere again...for the upcoming holidays.

Planning also prevents overdoing the décor. If we are able to create a beautiful aesthetic on paper ahead of time, there is no last minute super tacky add-in. If we love whimsy, we can plan for a singing reindeer, in a very specific place.

Every year at this time, my team and I are busy designing and fabricating custom holiday items to

be manufactured in August and September, and delivered to clients' doorsteps, in October and November. You can plan the same way we do.

How fun would it be if, when the holidays arrive, you were all planned out? While friends are in a panic rummaging through storage to find items, you can be enjoying the season, knowing a little bit of planning during the summer earned you free hours during the fall to work with a little less stress, and get in an evening tennis game.

So what can you do?

First, it's simple. Walk your home today. Ask yourself some very simple questions:

1. Where will I decorate this holiday season?
2. What colors do I want to use?
3. What can I do ahead of time?

Second, plan out the rooms you want to decorate and call out, to the best of your ability, each item and type. Source those items now. If they are in storage, where are they? Make a folder, write it down.

If you love to shop in the middle of the "season" for fun and to see what's out there, that's great. But do so by leaving only a few unplanned portions.

For our projects and clients, we are designing now. Orders go in no later than Aug. 15. If you think this might work for you, email me today, ann@couturechateau.com.

If you are more of a casual workshop learner, we host friends in September, after school is back in session, and show a hands-on method, complete with samples to learn with. You can find more on these workshops on my website.

The final way we recommend clients learn is from our online course, "Stress Free Holiday Homes." When our workshops kept selling out, this online course was the result. It provides true insider information, down to budgets and planning. What's nice? You enjoy in the privacy of your own home, on your own timeline.

The best part of being a Stylish Suburbanite? You get to decide.

Until next month, live beautifully and peacefully, and get to planning!



It's not too early to start planning for holiday decorations. Photos courtesy of Couture Chateau





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