



LIVING WITH NATURE  
DECORATING WITH THE  
RHYTHMS OF THE SEASONS

*RIZZOLI*  
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spring

Nature resurrects; outside there's an explosion of green and a host of other colors. We're drawn outdoors, but I also start to itch to get started inside and change things, to follow the natural cadence of the seasons and bring nature indoors.



- LIVING STYLE -  
SHABBY CHIC

In spring the flea markets come back to life after the winter break. I can no longer count the number of markets I've already scoured at home and abroad. Each time it's a treasure hunt. I love sniffing, guessing the history of a certain item. And then there's that feeling of going home with something special and then giving it a nice place. And where this unique item is peeling, rusted, or scratched, it only increases the charm.

The style I fall for during this period of the year is shabby chic. Nature shows itself at its most playful. There's gradually more color in the garden, and my interior follows that natural evolution. The neutral basis of early spring can remain, but I remove the typical Nordic elements like the reindeer skins and black accessories, and replace them with flea market items and spring flowers.



The seating area has not changed significantly compared to early spring. I've simply added some flea market items. Glass bottles, an old white footstool, and the wire chair in the foreground.



TYPICAL FEATURES OF SHABBY CHIC:

## romantic

Shabby chic goes hand in hand with romance. The sweetness of outdoors, I repeat inside and on the terrace. Flowers, cross-stitches, crackled enamel, furniture with peeling paint . . . it's part of the casual and romantic style.

## personality

Even though the way we build our houses is evolving and today's interiors look completely different from the past, vintage items and antique furniture are an effective way to make your interior more personal. These are old things that cannot be found everywhere or are sometimes rare, and that too makes your interior special.



A bunch of anemones in an enamel can: a typical shabby scene. To keep everything sober, I place no other flea market items near this still life.





## nostalgia

Old, used things in the house have something familiar about them. They provide a homey atmosphere and remind me of days spent with my grandmother or of carefree childhood. I've a lot of things from my grandmother. As a teenager, I sometimes cajoled her into giving me things, and I still cherish all of them. I love old things. I also travel to Provence every year, where there's no shortage of flea and antiques markets. Such an antiques market is often educational for the children, and I like to surround myself with things that have a soul and a history. For me, there's also something beautiful in passing on cherished objects to the next generation.

## dosing

The danger with flea market material is that it can be fussy if there's too much. I know many people like the typical Laura Ashley-style and traditional English cottages, but that's not the style I'm aiming for. I certainly like a touch of nostalgia and romance in the house, but I don't want to feel I'm living in a film set or in a museum. That's why I'm careful with antiques and flea market items: dosing and achieving the right balance is the message.

## mix and match

The fact that your interior isn't purchased somewhere in a giant furniture warehouse or from a catalog as a finished set, but rather is the result of years of searching and bringing things together that are sometimes far apart in terms of geographical origin and period, creates a unique mix. Go by your feelings and prove that flea market doesn't have to mean old-fashioned. It's also a good idea to combine old and new. This way, you avoid the feeling that your entire interior dates from your grandmother's time.



One weathered old stool next to the linen cupboard, and the whole corner looks special.



## color

Blue, yellow, green, pink . . . these colors pop up in nature in the spring, and I therefore use them in my interior. Sometimes bleached by the sun, sometimes weathered and peeling from frequent use, creating the well-used look typical of the shabby-chic style.

## well-worn effect

There are many painting and sanding techniques to give a piece of furniture a well-worn effect. I found the French curved-back chairs on a secondhand site. They were originally dark brown. I wanted them white and a little weathered, so I first applied some wax to the edges so that after painting them I could easily sand off some paint for a well-used look.



Layer on layer: first paint a layer in a dark color, then paint a light color over it, which you remove here and there with some sandpaper so that the dark background shows through.

- INSPIRATION -  
STYLING  
WITH FLOWERS

To play out the spring feeling in full, I like to use lots of flowers. The floral theme is also inextricably linked to the shabby-chic style. Personally, I prefer real flowers to floral wallpaper or floral curtains, because then my neutral basis will be compromised and I'll be unable to switch quickly to a different atmosphere in a few months' time. But anyone who wants to go all the way in shabby-chic style has to be serious about flowers.

I don't make complicated flower arrangements and I've never taken a flower-arranging course. To do something creative with flowers, you certainly don't need any special flower-arranging techniques. Nor do flowers have to be expensive. Many or few, picked, bought, or received as a gift—that doesn't matter at all, because flowers always immediately bring color and life into the home.





CREATIVE TIPS

*There are numerous options for working flowers into a styling. Very soberly, for example, to decorate a napkin, but you can also brighten up an entire corner with them.*

*Any time you have a mixed bouquet inside the house, there will always be flowers that wilt faster than others. If the remaining ones are too few to fill a large vase, then I happily transfer them into bottles. And you don't have to buy these specially: empty soda bottles are great for this.*

*At times there are sprigs in a wilted bouquet that you can dry and keep and then use as extra decoration, sliding them into a gift wrapping ribbon, or just sticking them on with washi tape as a playful detail.*



Styling with flowers requires no special skills. However simple, it's essential for bringing the spring feeling into your home. A spring atmosphere simply begs for flowers. Certainly when the basis in the home is neutral, you need these sorts of things to create a different atmosphere. Flowers also play a crucial role in my Easter and Mother's Day stylings.







- THEME STYLING -  
EASTER

I enjoy working around a theme, and Easter is one of those recurring themes. I usually try to process a theme in a subtle, unflashy way, and with natural materials, of course. For me, the Easter table doesn't have to be in bright yellow and lime green, with rabbits and chicks à gogo. I don't really like figurines, which is why I prefer to work with branches, eggs, and flowers for Easter decoration.

CREATIVE TIPS

*A wooden tray on which I've placed a branch from a fruit tree. This was already mounted on a little base. I hung miniature glass vases on it and filled them with freesias and white daffodils. At the thrift store, I looked for some white egg cups and filled them with grape hyacinths. On a bed of moss, I placed quail eggs and a few egg-shaped candles.*

*The old enamel basin fits nicely into the shabby-chic style. I arranged some empty chicken and goose eggs on a layer of moss. Inside them I placed lovely pink and white spring flowers—violets, clematis, and wax flowers.*

*A small but nice homemade idea as an alternative to the kitschy Easter trees you so often see here. A twig of willow catkins with an egg hung on a string and filled with small white flowers.*



- TABLE STYLING -  
EASTER

A table styling with a touch of the flea market. I used my grandmother's silver cutlery and festive glasses. Yet it's not a classically laid table, partly because the tablecloth isn't ironed. Nowadays it doesn't always have to be stiff, and—with stonewashed linen, for example—you can safely opt for the natural look. After all, the crease is specific to the material.

Otherwise, it's the flowers that especially stand out. I cut the heads of a few dozen "bridal crown" daffodils for a playful Easter table effect. They're an eye-catcher: remove the flowers, and the table suddenly looks quite bare.



- TABLE STYLING -  
MOTHER'S DAY



“A single flower he sent me, since we met. All tenderly his messenger he chose, Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet, One perfect rose.”

-DOROTHY PARKER

Roses and peonies are my favorite flowers, especially the white ones. My mother's name is Marie-Rose and my daughter Juliette Rose, and my wedding bouquet consisted of white roses. This makes them the perfect choice for a Mother's Day brunch.

Roses play the leading role in this styling. Not only did I put a lot of them in vases, they also inspired the other table decorations. White, green, and wood are the elements of this table styling. This way, the natural decoration—that is, the flowers—and the remaining decoration fit together perfectly.

This table styling was again given a touch of shabby chic: here I used old green bottles and a few plates with antique motifs. For the flowers, I chose ones from our rose tree that were almost losing their petals, for that “shabby” feeling. Because it's a climbing rose, the stems are twisted and uneven. Long-stemmed roses would be too stiff, and I'd rather evoke the atmosphere of romantic paintings of the past than of a tightly bound bouquet.

The green isn't a bright grass green or lime green, but a slightly tempered green. The napkins, for example, are gray green and the glassware varies from light green to blue green. The wood as well has many yellow pigments in terms of color tone. Yellow, blue, and green always form a nice combination, since yellow and blue together form the color green. This way, you get a still life where everything melds together nicely.

