

HOUSE & GARDEN

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO STYLISH LIVING

**PUTTING
YOUR
HOUSE IN
ORDER**

**THREE
PROFESSIONALS
COME TO
THE RESCUE**

**STEP
OUTSIDE**

**FABULOUS ROOF
GARDEN BY
DAY AND NIGHT**

**CLEVER WAYS
TO LIGHT
OUTDOOR SPACES**



BE INSPIRED

**THE MOST STYLISH DECORATING IDEAS | THE LATEST FABRICS
AND WALLPAPERS | THE BEST COLOUR-BLOCK FURNITURE**





From the editor

The other day Michelle Obama described herself as a swan that appeared to be gliding serenely on the surface of the water, but in reality and out of sight, was paddling fast. I know the feeling, as I think most people do. Out of a mixture of self-preservation, pride and good manners we present an ordered face to the world, whether it's by setting a welcoming table for guests, keeping a tidy desk in the office or wearing appropriate clothes for a wedding. What we don't advertise is the occasional – or not so occasional – chaotic scramble that goes on behind the scenes.

To maintain an ordered life requires discipline and constant vigilance, which entails being either superhuman or a Buddhist monk. The young and very young could, if they were so inclined, lead ordered lives without too much effort, because they have few

possessions or responsibilities; but youth positively relishes disorder. By the time anyone is old enough to see the point of a tidy cupboard, their life has become too full for that to be easily achieved.

Disorder, in whatever sphere, can be overwhelming and it often takes a disinterested outsider to see what needs to be done to make a difference, and have the practical experience to set to and do it. In this April issue of *House & Garden*, our features editor, Hatta Byng, interviews three 'order restorers' who between them have reorganised everything from a designer's linen cupboard to a country-house archive; a businesswoman's wardrobe to the display on a client's kitchen dresser. Turn to pages 138 to 143 for more reassuring evidence that other people get into muddles too, and that there are miracle-workers

Quality of the highest order: this issue of *House & Garden* is full of ideas to help you put your house in order, and to allow your imagination to run wild

To maintain an ordered life requires discipline and constant vigilance

only a phone call away who can sort it out.

There are two houses in this issue whose owners have needed to take very different approaches to possessions. The first is the Horizon House (pages 124 to 127), a famous building by the Japanese architect Shinichi Ogawa that sits on a cliff above the Pacific Ocean. There is very little inside this house to distract the eye from the beauty of the vista stretching to the horizon. There is the bare minimum of furniture, no art on the walls and very few objects on display.

By contrast, the small London mews house featured between pages 166 and 169 is positively brimming with things. The owners downsized from a much larger house and with great ingenuity have fitted in a quantity of books, antique mirrors, chandeliers, pictures and ornaments without creating any sense of clutter. The rooms are also full of flowers: generous bunches in shades of lime green and cream are placed artlessly in jugs, decanters and vases, and are a masterclass in ordered abundance □

Susan Crewe



THIS PICTURE Sophie March stands next to designer Ann Boyd's linen cupboards. She first helped Ann with a house move and now returns whenever she is needed. OPPOSITE One of the cupboards demonstrates Sophie's 'terribly logical' attitude to organising, with each shelf and box labelled neatly with its contents



CALLED TO ORDER

Spring approaches and with it – for many – the urge to RATIONALISE, CONSOLIDATE and EDIT their houses, lives and belongings. Hatta Byng meets three PROFESSIONALS who can help

PHOTOGRAPHS JOAKIM BLOCKSTRÖM

SOPHIE MARCH & CO THE ORDER RESTORERS

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We all have a room or a cupboard that we avoid, and this is where Sophie March – whose talent is to see order where her clients can't – steps in. She prefers to refer to her work as 'organising' rather than 'de-cluttering', which for her has negative connotations. 'It's about keeping things terribly logical – finding obvious places for things that suit my client.'

Sophie began 'order-restoring' in 2004 when she returned from two years of travelling. A friend, well aware of Sophie's organisational abilities, put her in touch with a man who owns a large Gloucestershire estate, and was in desperate need of some help. A month – and eight skips – later, the family history from 1700 was filed, boxed and catalogued, and cellars' and stables' worth of miscellaneous items had been restored, found a home or sold.

Her clients and the sort of help they need are hugely varied. They're certainly not all rich; often just lacking in time. Helping people to move house is a frequent request, as is sorting paperwork, cataloguing collections, or even packing away Christmas decorations. Sophie has been referred to as 'the personal trainer' by a man whose personal filing she puts in order each year, and one elderly client

even named Sophie in her will, to sort out her belongings when she died. Whatever their individual needs, clients often become regulars. For designer Ann Boyd – next to whose

linen cupboards Sophie is photographed – she came first to help with a house move and has since worked in Ann's office, returning whenever she is needed. Ann, who is far from messy,

hates the idea of things running out of control, and 'knowing that behind the cupboard doors there is order gives me such pleasure. I dread the idea of Sophie moving out of my life,' she admits.

Sophie's initial meeting is free; as she explains, 'it's vital to know you get on.' Then she sends a follow-up letter setting out what she feels her client wants to achieve, and subsequently arrives armed with a toolbox that includes everything from labels of every kind, to moth-repellent sachets.

She's not cheap, but she's fully focused and, as Ann points out, 'she works fast.' Belongings are placed in piles so that the client can triage them for charity, tip or storage. Effective storage is the key, and to this end, Sophie makes maps and allocates those miscellaneous souvenirs we all possess to a strictly edited memory box. She may sound dauntingly efficient, but Sophie treads cautiously, adamant that her job is about 'giving confidence rather than instilling dread'.

