

Published June 4th, 2014

## Stylish Solutions

By Ann McDonald



On this covered entry porch we replaced pots that would normally hold high water use plants with graphic decorative pillows. Photo courtesy Couture Chateau LLC, photo Faryn Davis

covered porch at the back of the house so the theme would be consistent.

Use statuary where pillows won't work. Don't balk. Trust me, "Let's go buy a statue" is not the first thing out of this decorator's mouth. With careful thought to scale, color and type, I placed concrete formed pieces where piles of flowers would normally be. By purchasing two, I was able to repeat the theme from the entry walkway into an indoor/outdoor space for this season.

This simple tip is easily scaled or modified for the smaller space or contemporary design. No desire for concrete lions? Use a beautiful cast pinecone, the traditional welcome sign. Need a contemporary touch? Reflective orbs do nicely.

Take advantage of the drought to introduce whimsy. Good decorating is all about solutions to problems. When the weather gives issue, consider it an opportunity to be creative. Think outside the box.

Use strong graphic patterns on outdoor fabrics instead of solids. Go bold to focus the eye. Many of my clients purchase investment quality pieces and fabrics that tend toward traditional. This season in outdoor spaces, we had some fun. For our decorating projects in California especially, we are using strong bold and graphic outdoor fabrics. Making slipcovers allows for seasonal looks

Summer is fast approaching and that means outdoor decorating is in full swing, and it's time to refresh and update our front or back yard spaces for summer enjoyment. But with the current drought, how do we, as responsible residents of California, decorate our outdoor spaces for gracious and luxurious living on trend, without being wasteful? And what if your design aesthetic simply isn't compatible with some of the drought resistant flowers?

The good news: There is more to decorating, water-wise, than just using succulents on your outdoor tables. While I love the look of cactus, it isn't always a fit for me or my design clients.

Here are my Top Stylish Solutions for water-wise decorating anyone can implement:

Use brightly colored outdoor pillows instead of flowers. Replace pots that would normally hold high water use plants with graphic decorative pillows on your covered entry porch. The traditional design of the house does not lend itself to succulents on the front porch. I wanted a punch of color normally provided by masses of annuals and by purchasing these ready-made, low cost outdoor pillows, placing them where the pots of flowers would normally sit, I have the color punch without the water use.

Match patterns with the surrounding pieces to provide cohesion; for example, a trellis pattern on a pillow can match a similar pattern on a bench or pot. Look for repeating patterns in your own home, and try to match outdoor pillows to a detail. The best part? The pillows cost less than \$20 each, and can help carry the decorating scheme to an outdoor

without the commitment of reupholstering an entire suite of outdoor furniture.

An outdoor fabric slipcover removes easily for washing. An indoor chair, "shopped" from a consignment store locally, can be used in an outdoor covered patio. When the weather hits next fall, the chair simply comes back inside. For now, the inexpensive and fun slipcover carries us through the summer entertaining season. The bold pattern provides visual impact. Last season, this same space was all burlap and beige with masses of flowers in pots, here we simply traded fabric for flowers.

Cut and arrange dried flowers in pots. Have some fun. I literally went into the back yard and started cutting: flowers, herbs and sprigs. I made baskets and piles, hung them to dry and am using them in my summer table floral arrangements instead of purchasing annuals for my pots.

Whatever design element you choose, enjoy your summer and the great outdoors! Live a custom life.



This outdoor fabric slipcover removes easily for washing, and when the weather hits next fall, the chair will come back inside.



Take advantage of the drought to introduce whimsy. This lion is not something we would look at and think: perfect! Yet, when placed in context, one outdoor instead of flowers and then a mate in the indoor/outdoor room on a coir entry mat (used instead of a table runner), the scheme works. Photos courtesy Couture Chateau LLC, photos Faryn Davis



Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. If you are interested in chatting about your next decorating project, give us a call at (925) 386-0720 - we're here all summer. For a complete blog post including photos of the indoor/outdoor room, visit [www.couturechateau.com/blog](http://www.couturechateau.com/blog).

Reach the reporter at: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA