

## The Glorious Rent-Back

By Andi Peterson Brown

**W**ithout a doubt, the Lamorinda real estate market is currently a seller's market. Scores of qualified buyers continue to flock to open houses and inventory remains tight.

But many would-be sellers looking to make their next move feel stumped by the catch-22 of the current market: they want to move, but where will they go? They need the equity from their current home for their next down payment, but they are watching buyers write a few offers before finally securing a home. If they put their home on the market, how are they supposed to find and purchase their next home in the typical escrow period of a mere 30 days?

Thus enters the saving grace for this dilemma: the glorious rent-back. A rent-back is a contractual term that allows a seller to remain as tenant after the closing. And just why is this rent-back so glorious? Because it buys the seller time. Essential, priceless time. Knowing there's an option available that provides breathing room means that more sellers are bringing their homes to market, boosting our much-needed inventory. Many sellers today are getting 30, 60, even 90 day rent-backs. While eager buyers have to wait longer to move into their new home, a well structured rent-back is usually crucial in writing a winning offer and thus a vital component to keeping our market moving.



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## Stylish Solutions

# Making the Springtime Switch

By Ann McDonald



Use single-color accessories for a clean-lined spring home. You can always bring back the color in the fall and winter. Photo Couture Chateau LLC

**S**pring has sprung, and it's so beautiful, I'm tempted to move my desk outside. But since that's not possible, it's all about updating homes and bringing the spring feeling indoors.

I want to share updates you can use to refresh your home this spring. The main thing is what we in the studio call the "spring switch." Give yourself several weeks to plan and execute — this is not a weekend project, but more of a lifestyle switch. Have fun with it.

What is the spring switch? It's the walk-through of your home, where dark tapestry pillows are put away in cedar-lined boxes in favor of fresh linens and florals. Winter draperies head to the cleaners for restoration, repair and proper storage until the fall, replaced by simple linen or sheers. Even the furniture gets the quick slip with summer florals or white washable slip covers or tailored throws.

### Spring Switch Tips:

Slipcovers: I know, some people roll their eyes, but here's

the truth from a long-time interior designer: slipcovers save furniture. By giving your furniture a break seasonally, you extend the life of well-made furniture and extend the life of expensive fabric upholstery. I personally recommend clients spend to acquire well-made pieces and use the slip cover (tailored or flowy) to deal with mood and design changes.

A testimony: One of the sofas my husband and I have purchased in 1989 and is still going strong. The base fabric, a pricey linen velvet, held its own until just last year. That's 26 years. When you do the cost analysis, you see the value. It may have set me back a pretty penny years ago, as the fabric wholesaled at \$175 a yard in 1989. At the time I was working for a wholesaler and that same fabric retailed at over \$350 a yard. Here's the thing, it was a nubby neutral, and lasted well over two decades. That fabric more than paid for itself.

I watched as friends tossed their "budget" furniture, and even now, those same friends laugh as the couch we bought is still in style and going strong in Orinda. ... continued on next page