



The way you live in your house and the way you prepare it for sale are two different things, says home stager Maureen Henry.

imagination to accessorize—think fresh flowers, pretty napkins, or candles.

SOURCE Rosenthal china is available at The Mango Tree of New York (236 S. Main St.; New City; 638-9668), or for the budget-conscious, pick up Royal White dinner service at Target (4120 Palisades Center Dr.; West Nyack; 348-6440; target.com). For one-of-a-kind accessories, Viviane swears by Ned Kelly & Company in Piermont (458 Piermont Ave.; 359-4480).

PLAN B Take a cooking class with Viviane, and you can see first-hand how she dresses up her table—plus, you'll come home with a host of wonderful recipes that, like your table setting, are also sure to impress your dinner guests. To sign up for a class, call 365-1599, or visit foodandstyle.com.

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

DESIGN DILEMMA Friends stop by unexpectedly, and as you usher them in, there they are again: piles of shoes, muddy footprints, soccer balls, and mail strewn on the hall console. It's not like you don't clean, but the constant parade of kids, pets, and significant others streaming through the front door leaves this first-impression space less than desirable.

THE RESCUE The front entrance is what gives guests their initial taste of your home, so it should be unobstructed, clean, colorful, and welcoming, says Janis Kowalski, of Organizers to the Rescue. It should not be a convenient drop zone for keys, books, and shoes. The key is to find homes for all the stuff now littering the area and make it understood in the family that there's a place for everything and everything should be in that place!

A few simple changes—adding mirrors, colorful pictures, and easy-to-access storage—can do the trick. Look for benches, pegboards with hooks, and inexpensive cubbies to hold keys, cell phones, gloves, and even garden tools. Since everyone has different clutter issues—moms vs. singles vs. empty nesters—choose solutions that fit your life. “One of my clients used a giant fireman's boot to hold umbrellas,” says Kowalski.

FIRST STEP Get rid of the drop zones by putting something else in their place. If your husband continually drops the mail and his wallet on the hall console table, remove the space by adding beautiful candles and framed photos. Kids leaving their cleats on the floor? Add a big potted plant. When there's no space to drop stuff, they'll figure out they need to leave it somewhere else.

START HERE The Christmas Tree Shop (32 Spring Valley Marketplace; Spring Valley; 371-4449) is Kowalski's pick for inexpensive storage containers (and not just for the holidays). Then, once you've stowed the clutter, find a great-looking area rug. Finnish paper-yarn rugs may look too expensive and stylish to take the wear and tear of your entry hall, but they're affordable and resistant to water, soil, and oil (Ethan Allen, 300 E. Rte. 59, Nanuet; 623-8900; ethanallen.com is a great source for similar rugs).

PLAN B Janis Kowalski and Darlene McDermott are the brains—and the brawn—behind Organizers to the Rescue (organizerstotherescue.com; 753-8080). Both are members of the of NAPO (National Association of Professional Organizers). Give them a call and they'll start organizing for you—hanging shelves, finding storage bins and benches, and even installing additional closet rods.

clutter busting

Although you might want to cave in to the clutter, it's worth the time and the effort to get the mess under control. Not only will you feel better, but a clutter-free environment saves time, too. Cleaning professionals—more specifically, the National Soap and Detergent Association—say that **getting rid of excess clutter eliminates 40 percent of the housework in an average home.**