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100 YEARS OF (VISITING) NURSING

EMERGENCY: HELP ON THE WAY  
A KITCHEN FOR THE HOLIDAYS

# Ridgefield

MAGAZINE

**Katie  
Brown**

Thanksgiving  
At Home

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SENIOR  
LIVING

Guide





**Life. Home. Style.** It's that time of year when you start to think how you can make your kitchen look better for holiday entertaining. Celebrated designer Stephen Saint-Onge walks us through his latest makeover. See **page 46** for tips and ideas.



## features

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#### Katie Brown

The hugely popular host of the *Katie Brown Home Workshop* on PBS welcomes us into her home as she prepares and decorates for a Thanksgiving feast.

By JENNIFER MOORE STAHLKRANTZ

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#### Ten Minutes With

Jane Stern and husband Michael published *Road Food* 25 years ago. The perennial bestseller has helped propel regional American food into the cultural consciousness. Having recently moved to Ridgefield, Stern talks about being on the road and home in town.

By RYAN D'AGOSTINO

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#### Nightmare Volunteer

A plane crash is what first brought Dick Aarons and his wife Dee to Ridgefield in the 1970s. Despite the death and destruction of the fiery crash, the couple eventually moved here and have become key volunteers in the town's emergency operations.

By WILLIAM GARVEY

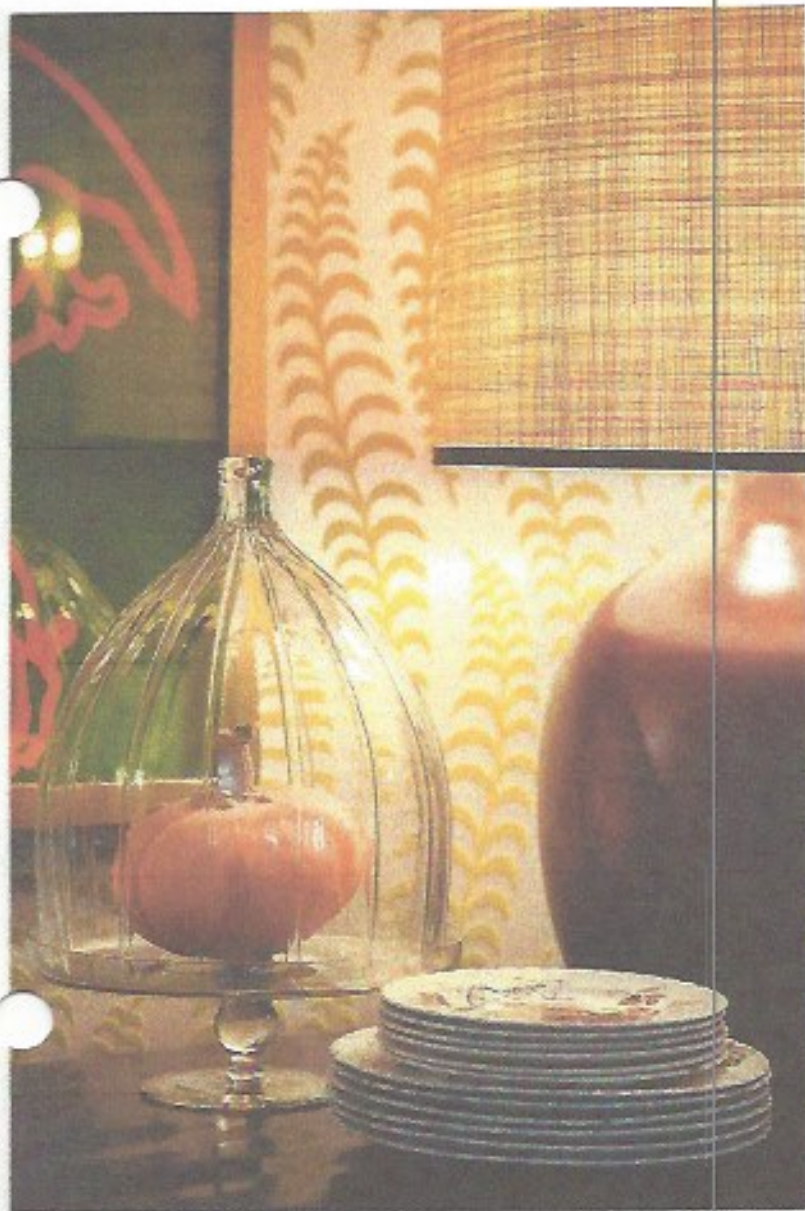




# katie

Katie Brown texted “Look for the big red chicken,” when sending directions to the 19th-century Colonial she shares with her family. While traveling along a country lane, I easily spotted the scarlet sign marking the entrance to her long driveway and wound my way to the front of the house. As *The Jetsons’* theme song chimed from the doorbell speaker, the domestic goddess herself answered the door.





**LOCAL COLOR** Katie found the vintage dishes (left) at the White Elephant tag sale in Ridgefield and the gourds at Young's. She made the T-H-A-N-K-S vases by filling mason jars with stones and branches from the property and topping them with spray-painted, wooden letters from the new Michael's store in Wilton. Daughter Meredith loved the pinecone turkeys featuring crayons for feathers.



Three years ago, Brown, host of PBS's *Katie Brown Workshop*, was living with her family in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, and taping her art-of-living show in nearby Red Hook. Her husband, William Corbin, meanwhile, was commuting to Norwalk. "His commute was pretty brutal. He left before our daughters woke up and got home after they'd gone to bed. We all missed him terribly," she says. "Since I can work from anywhere, I blithely said, 'Let's move to the suburbs.'"

"To be honest, I was a little nervous about moving to Connecticut," Brown continues. "I worried that everything would be beige—the houses, the people, the way of life—after all, I'd been living in New York and LA for 20 years." Brown's search in Greenwich, New Canaan, and Silvermine failed to produce her dream homestead where she could raise her family and film her show. "I was looking for a wreck because I love bringing houses back to life."

Eventually, a friend suggested Ridgefield, and Brown discovered that Connecticut wasn't so beige after all. In fact, one of the first things she realized that she liked about Ridgefield was the natural beauty. "As I was driving around looking for a house, I became obsessed with the stone walls. It was literally the grounding that made me stop and say, 'maybe this is going to be okay.'"

When Brown found her quirky antique house, she fell in love. "Homes were so gracious in the way they were laid out years ago. This house kind of unfolds as it rambles. An added advantage was







**WELCOME HOME** Katie created the pine-cone swag and three-tiered welcome basket from materials found on the property and in local shops. Prentiss and Meredith greet guests.











**TABLE TOP** Katie has at least 65 sets of china that she has collected for work and home. Here she placed dishes designed by friend and colleague Colin Cowie, on top of homemade placemats she made from water color paper. The place-cards are tagged burlap bags with pen and ink for personalizing the mats with gratitude lists.



that without a lot of structural changes, I could really put my stamp on it." At lightning speed, she installed a brand-new kitchen, updated the bathrooms, and applied her signature eclectic style to the decor. "Some of my previous homes had more neutral palettes, but to avoid being too beige, I infused a lot of color into this house," explains the author of five best-selling books on the domestic arts.

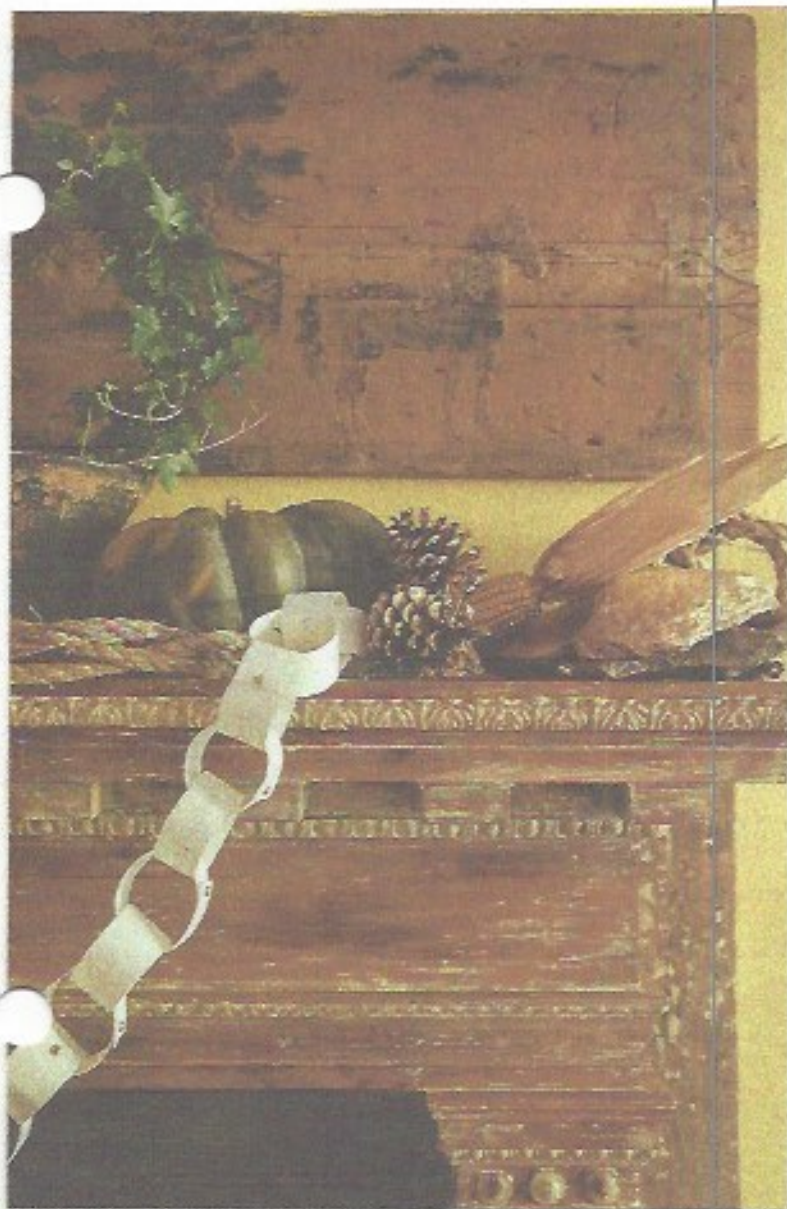
Not unlike her landscape, Brown's adjustment to suburban life was a little rocky. When she and William moved to Ridgefield with daughters Prentiss and Meredith, she was disappointed that no one stopped by with a cherry pie to welcome the family to town. Not missing a beat, the Michigan native realized the Connecticut Yankees might appreciate some midwestern hospitality themselves, and she threw her own "Welcome to the Neighborhood" party.

After three years, the Brown-Corbin family is fully entrenched in Ridgefield life. Prentiss and Meredith are happily enrolled in the local schools; Corbin has a dream commute; and the neighbors just threw a 50th birthday party for Brown.

Back at the homestead, phase two of the renovation is underway. Architect John Downs is designing an on-site studio for shooting the fourth season of the Katie Brown Workshop, and the house has been gussied up for Thanksgiving by Brown and her design assistants, Liz







**THANK YOU** Daughter Prentiss starts a gratitude garland, to which relatives and friends have added links. "I just feel so lucky every day, and Thanksgiving is a great time to talk to the kids about what we're grateful for," says Brown, nuzzling the family Labradoodle, Noah.



Carboni and Liz Ciavarelli. Brown's motto is "Keep It Simple," so she and the Lizes gathered materials from around the property and local retailers to create the charmingly-down-to-earth holiday decorations.

Inside, a wide gallery leads to the living room where Katie discovered an intricately carved mantel under a century of brown paint. She and Ciavarelli glammed up some rocks and pinecones from the yard by spray painting them gold and arranged them on the mantel along with evergreen boughs and gourds from Young's of Ridgefield. A gratitude garland, draped among the glitter and greenery, has been growing in the days leading up to Thanksgiving, with family and guests each adding a link featuring a hand-written message of thanks. Up a few steps, the dining room is ready for guests to arrive. The table, set for eight, features vintage metal trays filled with layers of hay, golden rocks, berries, and dried corn cobs. "I was going to build a rock wall on the table as the centerpiece, but my family would have laughed at me," Brown says with her characteristic enthusiasm. "But, I really think the local rocks are Ridgefield's gold, so I used them as inspiration and mixed in other seasonal elements."

Mouth-watering aromas draw us to the spacious eat-in-kitchen where the feast is being prepared. During Brown's catering days, her communal table dinners in Los Angeles were legendary, drawing celebrity guests and creating a buzz in national magazines. Eventually, she was offered syndicated shows on Lifetime Television and then









# A Celebration of Life and Hope

... with a splash of art and a healthy dose of comedy

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Proceeds from the gala will be used to open our first facility serving  
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## Featured Entertainment

### ARTPROV

ArtProv is a uniquely entertaining show that brings together live comedy and live art. The ArtProv cast of comics will create improvised scenes and musicals based on a featured artist's work. The artist will, in turn, create an exciting new painting based on the comics' scenes.

Expect to laugh out loud!

### Gillian Neff

#### Emcee

News 12 Connecticut anchor  
and "12 on Health" reporter

### Thomas Lynch, MD

#### Presentation

Director of Yale Cancer Center and Physician-in-Chief,  
Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven

## Musical Performances

### Garnet Trio, Musical Performance

The Garnet Trio has performed throughout Connecticut and  
captures audiences with its energy and passion

### Michael Mugrage

Michael has performed with Orleans, James Brown, Felix Cavaliere,  
Ronnie Spector, Bruce Hornsby, and other noted artists

Who we are: The Cancer Support Community of Southern Connecticut is an affiliate of the Cancer Support Community - a network of independently chartered nonprofits that provides professional programs of emotional support, education and hope for people impacted by cancer so that no one faces cancer alone.

For tickets, sponsorships, or more information,  
please visit [www.csc-sct.org](http://www.csc-sct.org) or call 203-212-6799  
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PBS which led to product design and endorsements, online programming, and of course, those best-selling how-to books.

"I spent the summer writing my next book, *A Happy Home Guide*," Brown says, as she samples the soup with satisfaction. "I decided to share what I've learned over the past twenty years about finding happiness through cooking, nesting, and gardening. You know, I've found that as I get older and I am swamped with family and work responsibilities, what really becomes important is happiness. I just want to be happy. And, I want my family and friends to be happy, too." ■

## TRY THIS AT HOME



## Golden Glaze Rock Arrangement

### MATERIALS

- 3-4 separate platters
- Hay
- Rocks no bigger than a cantaloupe
- Spray paint
- Seasonal flowers
- Pine cones
- Wheat grass
- Plastic sheet

- ▶ Brush rocks with a stiff brush, getting off any loose dirt or residue to ensure paint will adhere
- ▶ Lay down plastic sheet, place in a well ventilated area
- ▶ Spray rocks, let dry
- ▶ Lay down a base of hay in each tray
- ▶ Place rocks randomly in trays
- ▶ Fill in with pine cones, wheat grass, and flowers for a pop of color

For information on other featured décor in this article, go to [townvibe.com](http://townvibe.com)