

avenue

Perfect Suburb

A utopian look at the best ideas in our new communities

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'80s cover girl **Lisa Kauffmann** talks fashion, business and what brought her home again



Flat-out Fantastic

The art of tabletop arranging

An artfully arranged tabletop, such as a coffee or side table, can be an interesting and beautiful focal point in a living space. However, a neglected tabletop, used to haphazardly display the remote control, old magazines or an empty beer can, sets a cluttered and unruly tone.

Rethink those surfaces; they are blank canvases, ready to reflect your personal style. Our design experts offer easy and effective tips for artful arranging, including layering, adding height and using repetition because, while your tabletops might be flat, your arrangements don't have to be.

LeAnne Bunnell, principal at Elle Design, on designing a stylish surface

CLASSIC STYLING

Large tables need large objects — tiny items, unless grouped, will get lost. Also, varied heights are more interesting, so think high, medium and low. I like to repeat at least one element found elsewhere in the room. And it's always best to mix smooth, rough, reflective and matte textures and finishes to create visual interest.

MODERN ARRANGEMENTS

Repetition and restraint rule the day when it comes to modern arrangements. Sleek interiors still need personality, so I use colour, texture and shapes to add flavour. And then I edit until it's right.

MUST-HAVES

Every table vignette must have one quirky or unexpected item. These set the stage for a lively conversation and keep vignettes from feeling "perfect." Perfect is boring.



Arlene Ladner, design principal at M Projects Inc., shares her golden rules for achieving an artfully arranged tabletop

▲ Choose objects that can be layered. And, when layering, consider varying heights, shapes and sizes to create contrast and drama.

Keepsakes and ornamental objects, including small statues, rocks, shells, small vases, lidded jars and candles, add a personal touch.



◀ Lacquered boxes look great and can be used for storage.

▲ You can fill up the table for a “more is more” approach, or you can be as minimal as this Martha Sturdy resin bowl (available at Domaine Fine Furnishings & Design).

► Create an elegant display with orchids, boxwood, green florals, succulents or even spring branches.



Alykhan Velji, of Alykhan Velji Designs, shares his tips for creating the perfect tabletop arrangement

1 Books, I think, make the perfect accessory on any table. Coffee table books are everywhere and a great way to get inspired about design, fashion or art. Not only do they look great, but they also make a fabulous read.

2 Groupings of three are a must. Rather than just having a lamp on your side table, style it with an accessory such as a small vase that can also hold flowers or a simple bowl. Vary your heights to create interest.

3 I love a good tray. Placed on a coffee table or side table, it helps to ground a stylish vignette. Lacquer trays are *de rigueur* and available in many hues to provide the perfect pop of colour. 🍷