

MAY 2020 BHG.COM

# Better Homes & Gardens®

*bring  
on the*  
**ZEST**

[THE FOOD ISSUE]

*OUR FAVORITE  
WAYS TO  
ADD FLAVOR TO  
YOUR TABLE*

Be Your  
Own  
Florist  
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Smart  
Kitchen  
Renos  
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«  
Treats  
for Mom  
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home/better living

# good connections

Open-plan houses are great for family togetherness, but it takes a few decorating tricks to make a single space work for lounging, dining, and cooking.



A FUNKY TREE-TRUNK LAMP IS A SURPRISE IN A FORMAL SPACE.

four years living on the sunny Caribbean island of St. Kitts taught Allison and LeGrand Elebash an important lesson for the future. “We wanted a simpler life, something closer to what we had experienced there,” Allison says. Back in Charleston, SC, they reduced possessions and looked for a house that would support a tight relationship with their then 11- and 13-year-old kids.

Allison, a designer, loves how her home’s open floor plan promotes family togetherness even when they are engaged in different activities, but open plans have their decorating challenges. “Because you see every room at once, you need to create moments of visual rest,” she says. To do that, Allison carried light colors through



## ▲ LIGHT AND BRIGHT

For her living room, which is open to her dining room and kitchen, designer Allison Elebash chose neutral-color furniture with exposed legs to keep the space looking light and airy. A barely-there console table behind the sofa marks the boundary of the living area.

## ▲ PORCH LIFE

Covered porches on both levels of the home express the local vernacular.

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BY KATHY BARNES PHOTOS ANNIE SCHLECHTER

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**COZY RETREAT**

Allison enclosed a screen porch to create a den. Wall-to-wall sisal covers the painted porch floor; a rug on top adds softness.



Allison designed the den around the vintage campaign dresser. Its hardware inspired the black side table and trim on the curtains.

the spaces via wall colors, upholstered or slipcovered furniture, and sisal rugs that define the living and dining areas. Another piece of advice: “You don’t want too many knickknacks or small pieces of furniture.” Note that she limited the mantel decor to one large painting flanked by sconces and a plant. Finally, Allison uses color to connect spaces. For example, bold accents appear in each area: Rich purple, poppy orange, and deep blues repeat in accessories and artwork; gold-tone metals brighten fixtures, frames, and furnishings. “When your rooms relate, it helps the spaces look larger than they are.”

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“You have to consider an open-plan space as one large room when you’re planning where to put furniture, art, and accessories.”

ALLISON ELEBASH,  
homeowner  
and designer

► **HOT SPOT**

The Elebashes installed a bluestone patio out back to expand living space. A custom top for the gas firepit makes it look and function like a coffee table when not in use.



◄ **NEUTRAL GROUND**

Kitchen island seating encourages family members to gather for casual conversation (and to assist the cook) during meal prep. “Dinnertime is sacred in our house,” Allison says. “We come together every night and spend 30 minutes catching up.” Roman shades with a subtle pattern team with white marble countertops and clear barstools to minimize visual distractions in this hardworking space.



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“YOU WANT TO AVOID TOO MUCH CLUTTER AND USE COLORS COHESIVELY IN OPEN ROOMS.” ALLISON



1



2



3



4

## VISUAL UNION

1

### FORM AND FUNCTION

A round dining table smooths traffic flow from the living room to the kitchen. A pair of matching pendants—one over the table and a second in the living area—underscores visual continuity.

2

### LOCAL COLOR

In an open-plan space, Allison suggests creating colorful vignettes to give the eye spots to land. The painting is by Atlanta artist Sally King Benedict.

3

### NATURE'S PALETTE

Allison took cues from the master bedroom's view of the garden, woods, and wetlands when choosing the greens of the upholstered headboard and bench.

4

### STYLE MIX

Allison loves the way the rustic pine dresser and the ornate mirror play off each other. Both pieces made the trip to the Caribbean and back. A pair of sleek candle sconces and an acrylic resin lamp introduce a modern style contrast. ■