Spring Cleaning
101 Getting started on your spring cleaning

Restoration Breakdown
How to restore your property after a long winter

Floral 411
Kelli Ellis from HGTV celebrates the sights and scents of spring
Celebrity designer celebrates the sights and scents of spring

Kelli Ellis is an interior designer for all seasons. But when spring rolls around each year, she is truly in her element. An award-winning celebrity interior designer, textile designer and design psychology expert, Ellis’s work is everywhere, from television (as a featured designer on TLC’s “Clean Sweep,” HGTV’s “Takeover My Makeover,” and Bravo’s “Real Housewives of Orange County” as well as guest spots on NBC, CBS and ABC) and the Web (as eHow.com’s interior design expert) to print media (as the monthly design advice columnist for the Orange County Gazette). Known for her love of flowers and floral design, Ellis also serves as a spokesperson for the Society of American Florists.

For Ellis, spring offers endless opportunities to update and refresh interior spaces with touches of color. While she always recommends starting with a neutral foundation that includes walls and major pieces of furniture in shades of white, beige or brown, Ellis loves to add seasonal flourishes by changing up accents and accessories.

“With a neutral foundation,” explains Ellis, “you don’t have to invest a lot of time or money to refresh. Once you have the basics — those pieces of furniture that you absolutely love and will stand the test of time — the sky’s the limit in terms of changing accents such as valances, pillows, rugs, candle holders — even the matting on a picture. A neutral foundation opens the door to a new look with minimal changes.”

According to Ellis, one of the best — and easiest — ways to add seasonal color and refresh a living space is with fresh flowers displayed in a variety of containers. Fresh flowers not only enliven a room and bring in the sights and scents of the outdoors, they are perfect for playing up color and color combinations.

“A lot of people are afraid of color in their décor, so a less scary way of introducing color is with flowers and vases,” Ellis notes. “Fresh flowers can go with any type of décor and generally last as long as your mood, so there are endless opportunities to experiment without making a long-term commitment.”

Decorating with flowers begins with choosing a container that is in sync with the season and the style of your home, counsels Ellis.

“There are so many container options for every type of décor,” Ellis says. “If your home leans toward country, think about using old decanters, tins or even wooden boxes. For contemporary homes, glass vases with clean lines work best. And for traditional homes, go with urns or ornate vases.”

The same principal applies to the flowers themselves. Mixed flowers tend to be more traditional; bunches of local flowers lend a homely, just-picked quality to a casual or country home; and monochromatic arrangements ooze modern. The key, notes Ellis, is to pair flowers with both their containers and the indoor environment in which they will be seen.

Next comes color. While Ellis leans toward monochromatic arrangements of white flowers — stargazers, lisianthus, roses and orchids are among her personal favorites — she nevertheless appreciates the “pop” of color that can be achieved with bolder blossoms.

When choosing flowers for a particular spot or room, Ellis advises looking at complementary colors — those that are on the opposite side of the color wheel. For example, if the walls are a warm shade of yellow or gold, a container filled with blue flowers, such as hydrangeas, delphiniums or sapphire orchids, makes a bold statement. And in the green room? Try flowers in shades of purple and violet.

“I think the greatest thing in the world is to bring your own vase or container to the florist and ask for something special that works with it,” she reveals. “Not every florist has a vase that suits your taste or will work in a particular spot, so I take in my containers and say, ‘I want something blue.’ Then I’m both surprised with the result and certain that it will work with the décor.”

To learn more about Ellis and her latest projects, visit her online at kelliellis.com.