



Ruth Duke's Room Service

Spring Cleaning? Rather regroup your stuff in style for the summer ahead



This Month's Mission

TRY A LITTLE LARDER: If the kitchen is the heart of the home, the pantry surely is the soul. Store foods by category, with Asian, Indian or Italian ingredients grouped together. Rices and grains belong together, as do different flours and sugar types. Condiments should go on a central, easy-to-access shelf. This way, you can see at a glance what needs replenishing.

Keep a stash of emergency hors d'oeuvres like interesting olives, pickles and my latest find, wasabi nuts. They are toasted, dried peanuts with a bright-green crust that delivers an eye-watering kick of wasabi. Perfect with a martini. *Available at leading Asian food stores.*



LINEN CLOSET Group each room's linen together and tie the separate bundles with coloured ribbon to avoid unfolding heaps of ironed linen to find the right item. Allocate a colour to each bedroom and not only will you save loads of time, but your closet will look pretty too.

SIGNATURE GIFT Make one giftwrapping style your signature look for all occasions. Buy ribbons, boxes and tissue paper in bulk and store them with your stash of emergency gifts. I've stocked up on brown boxes, rolls of gold and fuchsia ribbon, tissue paper and little blank cards. There will be no more rushing to the corner café for ugly emergency wrappings.

WARDROBE ORGANISING

Sort chaotic wardrobes by re-merchandising biannually. Store current clothing in your everyday cupboard and the rest in a spare. Pack out-of-season cashmere and wool garments in plastic bins with clip-on lids - a better option than horrible-smelling mothballs.

Separate brights and neutrals with jackets and coats in one cupboard and keep evening-wear together with matching heels and clutch in hanging storage bags. Use canvas shelving-units to store accessories like flat shoes, smaller bags and rolled-up belts. Big handbags and shoes with heels should go below hanging clothes.

If your underwear is all over the place, buy one basket each for bras, panties, swimwear, hats, gym clothes and hosiery.

Organisation means easy dressing but if you're pressed for time get the professionals in. Visit www.mylifeorganised.co.za

Now is the time to clear the winter clutter and get your gear in order. Sorting, colour-coding and checklists can make life easier

COCKTAIL TRAY Cocktail parties are less of a commitment than a sit-down dinner, and more fun. Have your bar or cocktail tray stocked with a bottle each of gin, whiskey, tequila and vodka. Add a bottle of Rose's Lime Cordial, some Angostura bitters, and small tins of tomato juice, tonic and soda.

As guests arrive, slice a lemon, fill an ice-bucket, and you're ready to roll.



TRAVEL LIGHT You can spot a seasoned traveller by the tiny amount of luggage they have and how calm they look. Store all your packed-to-go travel essentials together, right next to your luggage. I have packing checklists taped to the inside of my travel cupboard, one each for overseas summer and winter trips, as well as a weekend beach-cottage list. This saves me a lot of time and needless stress. ■

