HAMPTONS

Alec Baldwin

PRESERVING THE EAST END'S ARTISTIC LEGACY

Plus:

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Nathan Turner provided a mouthwatering picnic lunch to keep the moving team refreshed.

ON THE MOVE

Interior decorator Mary McDonald turns a friend's moving day into a chic afternoon affair.

BY CARRIE DOYLE KARASYOV PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC STRIFFLER

Mary McDonald. ABOVE: Colleen Foster, Eric Hughes, Nathan Turner, McDonald, Carrie Doyle Karasyov, Jack Deamer and Chesie Breen enjoy an indoor picnic in Karasyov's solarium.

Leave it to Mary McDonald to make moving day both fun and glamorous. After selling the house that my sisters and I had lived in for 36 years (originally with my parents) on Lily Pond Lane, I relocated three blocks north to Georgica Road with my husband, two sons, puppy and boxes filled to the brim with all of the possessions that had been acquired over those years. The atmosphere was daunting, overwhelming and a little bit desperate. Enter Mary, my friend and decorator. Zesty, chic at any hour and in any location, armed with a barrel of one-liners and bursting with enthusiasm that would make the Energizer Bunny seem lazy, Mary knows how to turn any situation into a lively affair. I knew at once this wouldn't be just any moving day.

"We need to say hello to the house," she commanded. "The best way to start is to open everything and take a trip down memory lane. And let's get rid of the husband, two boys and puppy for the day."

The family was dispatched to a friend's place and the wine uncorked. Immediately, Mary assembled a gaggle of stylish friends to witness the unearthing of my treasures. All of those items that seemed so essential when packed for the move were examined and evaluated, with Mary and her friends weighing in and rating things as severely as an East German ice skating judge at the Olympics.

After several hours, we were hungry. An outdoor lunch had been planned, but when the weather didn't hold up, Mary changed tack. Under her direction (but free to add their own touches), decorator Eric Hughes and Jack

Nathan Turner serves pound cake with lemon glaze topped with fresh raspberries, whipped cream and a raspberry coulis.

Bright yellow blossoms complemented the blue-and-white linens and place settings.

Savory deviled eggs

Heirloom tomato salad with basil and shallot vinaigrette

Mary McDonald fills glasses with sweet summer rosé.

Even a casual get-together should have a theme. This picnic utilized a blue-and-white palette.

"OF COURSE YOU ALWAYS NEED TO CREATE A VIBE FOR EVERY EVENT, EVEN IF IT'S JUST A PICNIC ON THE FLOOR."

Chesie Breen examines her hand.

A farmers' market harvest was transformed into zesty bowls of gazpacho.

Deamer, owner of Sag Harbor's chic antique and design store JED, were enlisted to help set up the indoor picnic. Because in Mary's world, every occasion needs a scheme, a blue-and-white theme prevailed, down to the plates, ikat napkins, and even the rug we dined on. "Of course you always need to create a vibe for every event, even if it's just a picnic on the floor. It's what separates us from the animals."

Nathan Turner, Mary's castmate on Bravo's hit show *Million Dollar Decorators*, who is as renowned for his gorgeous Hollywood store as he is for his chic soirées, immediately set to work preparing delicious fare made from a farmers' market summer bounty. Ripe tomatoes, gazpacho, grilled corn on the cob, fried chicken and deviled eggs were devoured within minutes, followed by lemon cake with fresh raspberry sauce. Chesie Breen, founding editor-in-chief of clovermag.com and a *House Beautiful* contributing editor, and our friend Colleen Foster rounded out the group. We gathered in my solarium—the house's selling point after the realtor told us that it had been shipped in from Europe and was a source of pride for the previous owners—and discussed decorating possibilities and how to turn my new house into a home.

After the lunch was gobbled up and a lazy round of cards was finished, we all rose to continue unpacking. I asked Mary if she had a better sense of what she wanted to do with my house. "I'm glad we had today to get a sense of the place," she said with a smile, "because now I know the first thing I'm going to do is knock down the solarium." H

Chesie Breen

Jack Deamer

Turner's buttermilk fried chicken

Fire-roasted corn on the cob