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housekeeping: what the pros know

Designers share their low-tech solutions for maintaining a spotless home



BROOKE GIANNETTI

"Mrs. Meyer's Geranium cleaning products make my kitchen smell like a garden. I use the counter spray and the liquid dish soap, which doesn't leave my hands feeling dry. The packaging is classic, and pretty enough to leave on the counter." Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day liquid dish soap, left, and counter-top spray in Geranium; mrsmeyers.com.



MILES REDD

"Cape Cod metal polishing cloths are excellent for cleaning objects that you can't drag over to the sink. They're soaked in polish, which eliminates the hassle of messy silver creams, making quick shines a breeze. I use them on my sterling doorknobs, lamps with silver fittings, and silver hardware." Cape Cod metal polishing cloths, left; capecodpolish.com.



CLODAGH

"Lemon juice is especially good for cleaning surfaces like stainless steel. I also use it on my butcher block. It's natural, fresh, and biodegradable. I love the smell. And when I'm done cleaning, I make marmalade out of the lemon rind." To make your own lemon cleaner, try the Full Circle natural cleaning set, left; fullcirclehome.com.



MARGUERITE RODGERS

"I keep Goof Off stain remover spray in my personal toolbox. I use it to get makeup off my daughter's vanity when she plays dress-up, to get rid of scuff marks from wood floors, and to remove labels, tape, and decals. It also cleans candle wax from candlesticks and table surfaces." Goof Off remover, left; gooffstainremover.com.



AMANDA NISBET

"My dream cleaning product is Rosey the Robot Maid from *The Jetsons*. Until she becomes a reality, I'll use the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser mop to clean my bathroom floors. It's perfect for mosaic or pieced stone floors and gets grout clean and sparkling. Best of all, it's inexpensive and easy to use." Magic Eraser mop, left; mrclean.com.



UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

The latest trend in housekeeping products: old-fangled cleaning tools that wouldn't be out of place in an English country manor. Former beauty executive Barbara Harman researched Edwardian homemaking traditions before launching the Butler's Closet. Her offerings include covers, made from chemical-free cotton, that protect furniture from sun and dust, as well as a horn wardrobe brush that spruces up clothes between dry-cleaner visits; thebutlerscloset.com. Meanwhile, the Laundress has teamed up with German brushmaker Redecker to offer a line of classic cleaning tools, from a horsehair broom to the new Duster for Small Spaces, right, with black goat-hair bristles ideal for cleaning lampshades, blinds, books, and vents; thelaundress.com.

BULK UP

Former Australian magazine stylist Sacha Dunn, now based in Brooklyn, has created Common Good, a line of biodegradable household cleaners. The products—from dish soap to laundry detergent, right, to all-purpose cleaner—come in stylish containers that can be refilled at Common Good's bulk stations. "We designed our bottles with the hope that people would like them enough to keep them," Dunn says; commongoodandco.com.



POLISHED TO PERFECTION

How do the experts maintain wood furniture? Newel Antiques' Guy Regal starts with a proper refinishing (waxed or French-polished), then wipes as needed with Goddard's furniture polish; goddards.com. Decorator Melissa Ruffy swears by Pate Dugay paste wax, available from thefurnitureconnoisseur.com. "It's like eye cream for furniture," she says. Designer Timothy Corrigan sells his own—Luster, a wood polish and cleaner scented with sandalwood and citrus, and Restore, a wood preserver; timothy-corrigan.com. Antiques restorer Christophe Pourny offers Color Reviver, which restores worn finishes and hides scratches. Up next: a furniture wax; christophepourny.com.

clean slate

Adam Lowry and Eric Ryan, founders of Method home-care products, are making over a staid industry



Q: As you explain in your recently published book, *The Method Method*, these are not your parents' cleaning products. Why did you create them?

A: People are busier. They want to get the job done quickly, with the same results as if they had deep cleaned. For specialty surfaces, like wood, granite, and fabric, they are still willing to invest the time to clean.

Q: Do you think that the economic downturn has affected the sales of eco-friendly cleaning products?

A: The customer who is authentically green is here to stay, but among mass retailers, who were initially ahead of the curve, there is less support for green brands. We're green, but we've never worn that uniform. Design is important to us. We make the only one-handed pump laundry detergent. We design products you don't have to hide when guests come over.

Q: What new products are you excited about?

A: We're proud of our fabric softener, which, unlike many others, doesn't contain beef fat—just like our dryer sheets, for which we won an award from PETA. Our Daily Wood Cleaner smells like almond and can be used several times a day. We're excited about an upcoming line of containers made from ocean plastic: We've joined with beach-cleanup organizations to recycle discarded plastic into new containers.

BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH