

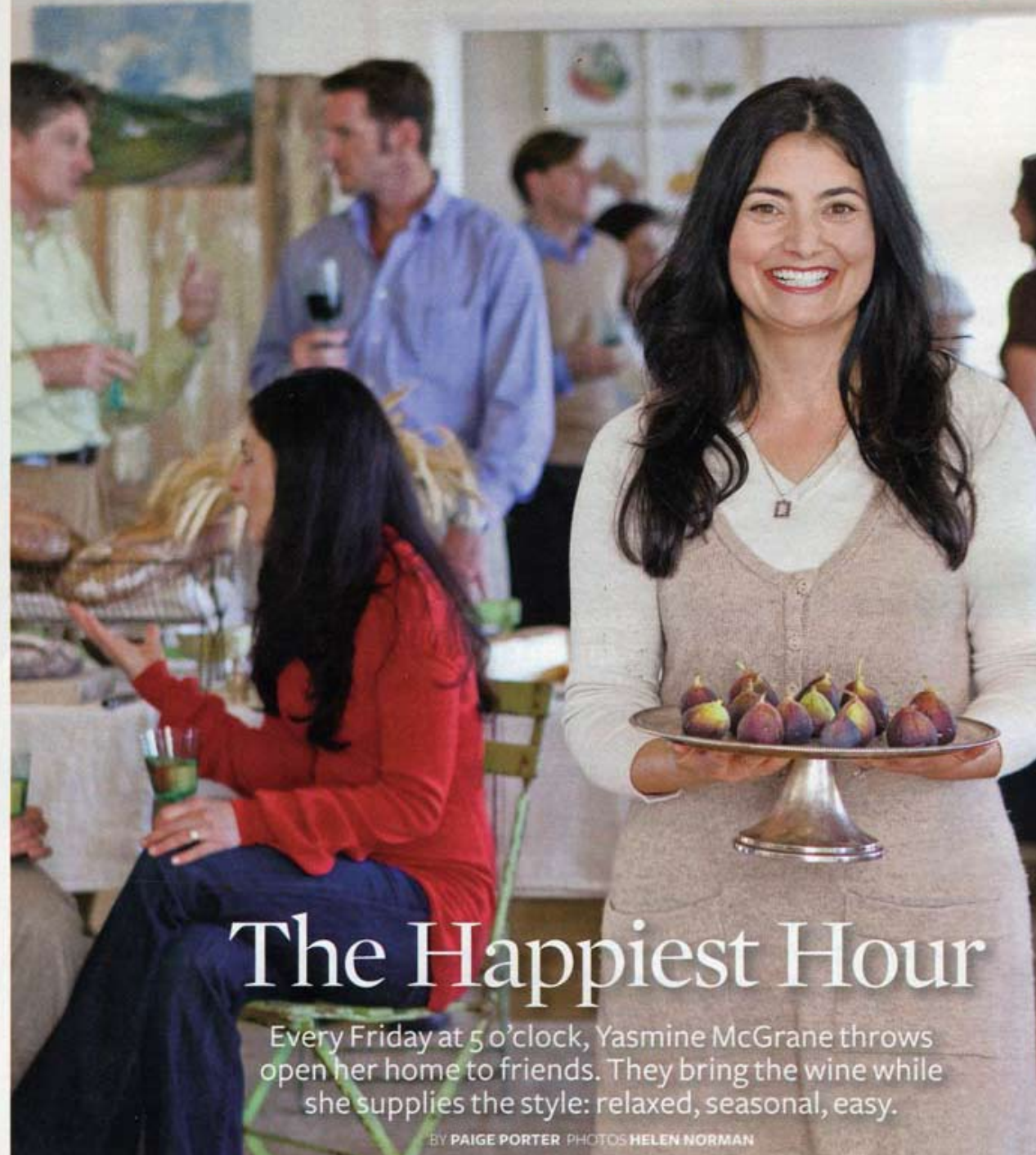
# Better Homes and Gardens.

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## *Winning Ideas*

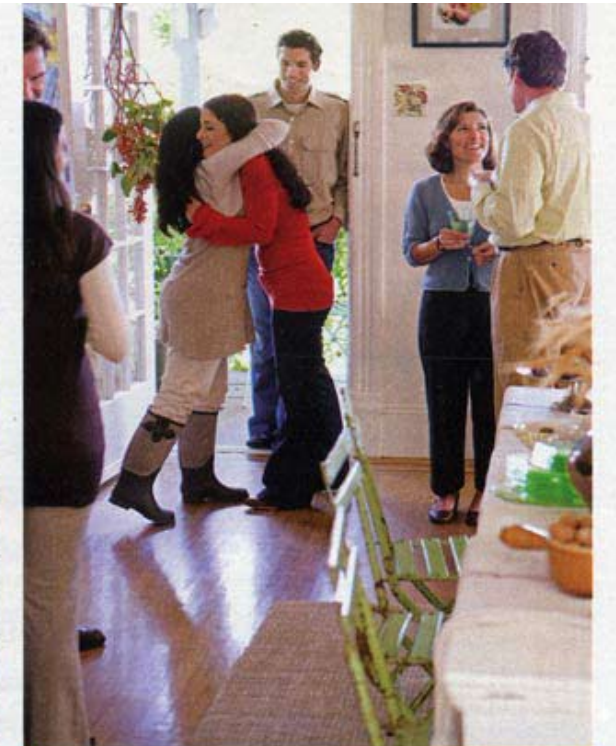
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## The Happiest Hour

Every Friday at 5 o'clock, Yasmine McGrane throws open her home to friends. They bring the wine while she supplies the style: relaxed, seasonal, easy.

BY PAIGE PORTER PHOTOS HELEN NORMAN



### Natural woman

To both decorate her home and feed her friends, Yasmine stops at the local farmer's market on the way from work,

taking a chance on whatever the season is serving. She'll fill an antique dish drying rack, left, with hearty loaves of bread.

After I had a baby, so much of my social life changed, and my husband and I weren't able to meet people out after work like we used to," says Yasmine McGrane, a vintage housewares shop owner. "So we had to find a fun way to get them to come to us." That's when Yasmine began stopping off at the farmer's market after work every Friday, bringing home the bounty, then inviting friends to stop by. "I like to think of it as a different kind of happy hour," she says.

A self-confessed Francophile, Yasmine has adopted a European casualness in the Sausalito, California, home she shares with her husband and baby son. "The French know how to slow down and enjoy life, to savor all kinds of simple pleasures, and that's our goal with these get-togethers," she says. Yasmine doesn't cook for her Friday afternoon gatherings; she simply sets out a beautiful

display of fresh fruits, nuts, artisan cheeses, olives, and breads and asks her guests to bring a favorite beverage. "People sometimes fear entertaining because they think things should be elaborate," says Yasmine. "But to me, the less elaborate a party, the more entertaining it can be. I don't even send out invitations. I never have. I just spread the word and everyone knows to call a friend and tell them that our door is open for company on Fridays at 5."

She fills her farmhouse table with repurposed everyday dishes and never goes overboard with cut flowers. Grain sacks make stylish runners along the table, and a few fresh dahlias mixed with stems of colorful leaves from her yard compose simple arrangements throughout the house. Yasmine opts for comfortable rubber boots rather than heels, greeting her guests as if she just stepped out of the garden. "After all, the point of a proper happy hour is to relax and unwind."



**Fresh figs** make a statement when grouped atop a silver cake stand, top left. Giant dahlias anchor a handmade bouquet that looks especially sweet and effortless in an old sap bucket, left.

**A worn cutting board** makes a perfect serving tray for desserts in the living room, above. Yasmine displays small cakes on a green cake stand, the same one used at her wedding.

**Casual cakes** Yasmine serves almond-flour tortes, above, from FlourChylde Bakery in nearby Novato, [flourchylde.com](http://flourchylde.com). To make your own tortes, our Test Kitchen suggests baking your favorite cake mix or recipe in 3-inch cake rings (from cookware stores or [surlatable.com](http://surlatable.com)). Spray rings and foil-lined baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Set rings on pan, fill each one-third full, and bake 15 minutes at 350°F until toothpick comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; loosen and remove rings.



**The simplest statements** are made with the simplest autumn produce piled in a garden urn. "It's that blend of freshness and weathered character that adds such interest," she says. A bucket holds a big bundle of branches. "I literally drop the branches in and they always fall just right."

For more on Yasmine's style, visit her shop, Maison Révé, 11 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley, CA, 94941, 415.985.7000, [maisonreve.com](http://maisonreve.com)

For buying information see page 266.

