

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

By Deborah Fabricant

YES, I WROTE ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS last column, but knowing what party animals lurk in Orange County, I thought you might like some more ideas ...

Every time I give a party or design a tablescape for one of my clients' parties, I file it away so I can share it with you. This idea is no exception. Planned for one of those hotter than hot celebs, our holiday table is not only unusual, but fun, fun, fun. And it can be used over and over again with different colors, candles and flowers. A basic table done many different ways. Don't you just love it?

This party, planned as a Christmas buffet, is centered around a big buffet table placed against a wall. The client wanted something really spectacular ... "something that glowed" ... so I came up with a glass block tree that was decorated with snow, red Christmas balls and a beautiful red satin tablecloth. Since the room was fairly big, I could get away with a tall "tree," which gave new meaning to the words "Wow Factor!"

To start, I covered the buffet table with white linen to the floor, then covered that with yards of red satin, kind of scrunching it up, almost messy-looking. You can use any kind of red fabric. Some of my favorites are doupioni silk, silk shantung, silk linen and velvet. Then off to Home Depot! Yep! Some of the best tables are Home Depot originals! At Home Depot I purchased 21 large glass blocks, the kind contractors make walls out of. Back to the buffet ...

I started with six glass blocks lined up end-to-end with the lines in the blocks all vertical. The blocks were secured with earthquake sticky tape, which can be found at Home Depot or any good hardware store. Next, I placed five blocks on top of the first row, centering them to create a ledge on either end. Again, secure top, bottom and edges with earthquake tape. The next layer was three blocks, then two and finally one, each time making sure they were secured. I now had a "tree" with little ledges on each level. On the ledges, I put small round votive candle holders nestled in a little round sprig of holly. On top of each votive holder I placed a red satin Christmas ball. (You can place votive candles in the holders and forego the balls.) Next, I attached a crystal wreath using fishing line, which was threaded through the blocks and weighted with a fishing weight. This made the wreath look as if it were floating on the glass blocks.

Now, what about that "glow?" Tape a string of white (not green!) twinkle lights to the back side of the glass tree, using transparent tape. You can attach in vertical or horizontal lines

or follow the shape of the tree, as we did. To complete the tablescape, cover the base and each ledge with fake snow, surround your Christmas china with a wreath of red berries, and place red, silver and clear Christmas balls in and around the snow. Tie white linen napkins with red bows and berries or your favorite Christmas napkin rings. And there you have it — a spectacular table for holiday entertaining!

For New Years, simply change the colors to silver and gold!

BE A GOOD GUEST. MIND YOUR MANNERS!

- **RSVP!** God knows your host has gone to a lot of trouble to plan this party. It's your *duty* to RSVP. No excuses, puleeze! Just pick up the phone or email!
- **ATTIRE:** LA or OC laxness in dressing is not acceptable. If the invite says "Casual Elegant" or "Dressy Casual," for heaven's sake, don't wear jeans or T-shirts. Respect the occasion.
- **Arrive on Time:** Standard for a dinner or cocktail party is 15 minutes late ... MAX!
- **START A CONVERSATION:** Forget about "What do you do?" It's like asking, "What can you do for me?" Try: "How do you know the hosts?" or "Who is your fave athlete?"
- **WHAT TO BRING:** If you bring flowers, bring them in a vase! Better yet, a nice wine, candles or something edible.
- **REMEMBER NAMES:** "Please tell me your name again," is perfectly acceptable. Or be generous and reintroduce yourself if someone is struggling with your name.
- **BE ENTERTAINING:** You've been invited to join in on the party and your host will be pleased when guests take a liking to each other. Be "present," not just a guest.
- **THANKING THE HOST:** Again, your host went to a lot of trouble to entertain you, so the least you can do is say "thank you," either by phone, handwritten note (preferable) or email. Just do it. **GT**

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