


7 Ways to Get Your Home Dinner-Party Ready

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Design

Interior designers dish out advice on prepping your home for entertaining.

by Heather Rabkin

In the seminal tome *Emily Post on Entertaining*, one of the key requisites of a successful dinner party is noted as “an attractive table [that] creates a welcoming ambience — with everything in perfect condition.” However, as any experienced host or hostess can attest, serving a meal or even simply hors d’oeuvres requires much more design planning than a table alone. The secret sauce to holding a successful party is in the interior groundwork one lays.

“For my clients who like to entertain, I ensure the space is welcoming and moves them aesthetically,” says interior designer Amy Lau, who has a penchant for mixing vintage and contemporary pieces together with aplomb. “A space must be about more than the individual pieces within, such as a dining table. It’s about the entire environment, where each piece tells its own story.” For the consummate host, a room should be able to go from a few occupants to dozens without requiring considerable furniture maneuvering and advance prep.

Here’s how to get your home in instant entertaining shape. (Just add food and cocktails.)

Define Spaces



East End Avenue dining room by Amy Lau. Photo by Thomas Loof

Lau aims to add a “special focal point” into her rooms, which can also help separate a large space into cozy sections conducive to entertaining. She suggests a screen, much like a custom bronze style she had made for a client’s Manhattan townhouse. “It helped maintain a cohesive grand room,” Lau says, “while defining the living and dining spaces, encouraging intimacy and allowing the light to pass through.”

Consider Custom Pieces



Park Avenue triplex living room by Amy Lau. Photo by Thomas Loof

Tailoring one's furnishings is key — and a crucial component of Lau's design work. "I often work with artisans to design a bespoke installation, item of furniture or piece of art to add warmth and individuality," Lau explains. In a triplex apartment, she commissioned a custom Vladimir Kagan sofa, which adds a new place for guests to perch in the expansive living room.