## 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.

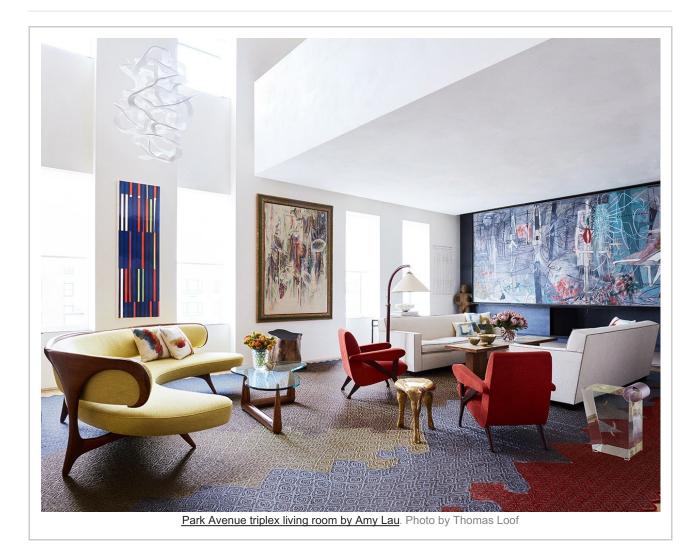
Here's how to get your home in instant entertaining shape. (Just add food and cocktails.)

## **Define Spaces**



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**



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 <a href="Vladimir Kagan">Vladimir Kagan</a> sofa, which adds a new place for guests to perch in the expansive living room.