

The perfect Christmas table

If you're stuck for inspiration for your table this year, fret no more. Our experts show you how to create a range of settings, from warm and welcoming to cool and summery



A family affair

The expert

If anyone loves a large family gathering at Christmas, it's interior designer Sharon Nicolaci of Spegash. Married to Salvatore, an Italian, their Christmas is a combination of South African and Italian traditions. Everyone gathers at their home for Christmas Eve dinner where antipasti and pasta such as stuffed ravioli are followed by the traditional roast, Christmas pud and panettone. It's both a family and spiritual occasion.



A sumptuous spread

The experts

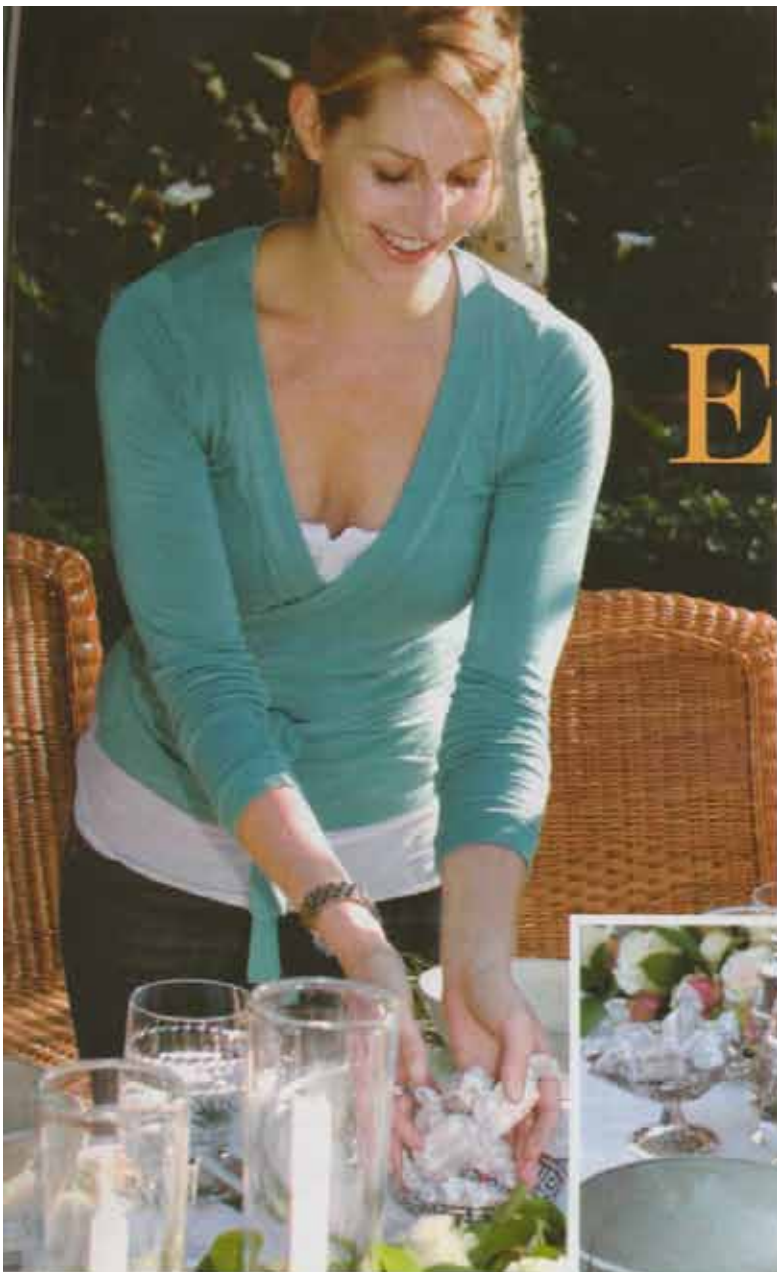
Interior designers Engela Smith (seated) and her daughter Martine Aird (right), of Pretoria, are well known for their classic style, excellent taste and ability to create the perfect settings for special occasions. They teamed up with avant-garde flower designer and events co-ordinator Brenda Fraser of Photosynthesis, who does the flowers for the famous Melrose Arch Hotel, to put together this exciting mix of old and new.



Evening stars

The experts

Good friends and business partners, Jacci Samios and Ockert Snyman are the new decorators on the block, so to speak. After a few years working for a couple of top Johannesburg design studios, they went on their own and opened Jacket Interiors earlier this year. They concentrate mainly on the interiors for private homes but are currently busy designing the decor for two exclusive hotels in East Africa. >>



Evening stars

For a midsummer Christmas keep it cool and simple with lots of fresh white in a pretty garden setting



The look

Jacó and Ockert wanted to create something cool and simple, perfect for Christmas dinner on a beautiful, balmy summer evening. They set their table in the garden where established trees and a tinkling fountain create a cool, romantic feel. "We kept to a white theme as it always shows up wonderfully in the evening light," they explain.

Their style

Their style is contemporary but with a classic foundation. "We love interiors that don't date, that can be added to and can evolve over time." They specialise in homes that are uncluttered, but still interesting, through the use of bold shapes, subtle colours and contrasting textures.



1. CENTRE STAGE

Stuck for ideas for a centrepiece? Jacó and Ockert made theirs by first spreading a sheet of heavyweight foil down the centre of the table. On it they placed a series of hurricane lamps then filled in the spaces between with presoaked squares of florist's foam. The edges of the foil were turned up to form a shallow container and hide the florist's foam into which they inserted roses and foliage. Hurricane lamps: R300 each, White on White Interiors

2. MATCHMAKER

Beautiful crockery and cutlery is a must whatever the occasion. Complementing the stylish look of the bowls and plates are dishwasher-proof cutlery and generous linen napkins. Bowls: R105 each, dinner plates, R125 each, Polish linen napkins, R185 each, Polish water glasses, R225 each, all White on White Interiors. Spoon: R120, knife: R120, butter knife: R95, La Petite Maison

create the mood

Your table

It doesn't matter whether your garden is large or small, there is nothing nicer than celebrating with friends and family under the stars. Jacci and Ockert covered their table with a full length cloth which means you could even use a hired trestle table. The woven chairs, rustic plates and bowls add a natural element and break the expanse of white.

Woven dining chairs, Great Zimbabwe Trading Post with

For where to buy, see page 134

