



STORY & STYLING BY PIP MILLER
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS HYDE

In a contemporary departure from traditional Christmas décor this year, why not try adding a cool, eco vibe to your Christmas table. Say goodbye to hot and heavy reds, greens and golds and hello to lighter, earthier tones with a glamorous splash of silver, grey and blue.

And remember, the global financial crisis and interest rate hikes are no excuse when it comes to decorating your Christmas table. It's all about being clever and creative; make a splash without flashing the cash.

First, take stock of your dining table – or wherever you plan to be enjoying the festivities. Try and work with what you have. In other words, choose decorations and tableware that work with your surroundings.

Start with your colour palette and then bring it to life with a dash of metallic, silver or glass. This year the trend is all about going au naturel. Expect to see string, felt, timber and glass baubles and decorations.

Consider a blend of three colours such as white and silver with mauve or olive.

For my table, I went to Haven & Space in Spence St. Owner Lisa Slatyer was extremely knowledgeable about the latest trends and together we created a table fit for a tropical Christmas.

Like dressing for a special occasion, start with the undergarments – or in this case, the tablecloth. Perhaps use two for contrast.

For example, dress the table in a heavy white cloth (a crisp white bed sheet always comes in handy) and then, if your table is rectangular, fold a contrasting cloth in an earth or silver tone, running it right down the centre. You can create the same effect with round tables.

Next, add the glassware, cutlery, placemats and napkins. These are another way to add colour and texture. Myer has a great choice of tableware

from cloths and napery through to cutlery and glassware. I drew on stock from both Myer and Haven & Space.

Keeping to your colour theme, be creative with your napkin holder, which you can always fashion yourself using string or ribbon or perhaps some nice leaves from the garden. This is one of those details you can have a little fun with and gives your table a personal touch.

Remembering it is Christmas so don't forget the bon-bons (these sell out, so buy early). Try and keep to the colour theme. For a nice, subtle touch, use a flat tree decoration like the wooden snowflake (\$5.95, from Haven & Space) as your coaster. The little decorative gift boxes (\$9.95, from Haven & Space) are a glamorous addition, however, most craft, gift or stationery shops have small cardboard boxes you can fill with treats like a handmade chocolate, sweets or something more extravagant. What about a fun pair of boxer shorts for the boys and knickers for the girls? Try Cotton On Body, Peter Alexander online or any one of the department stores that are big on 'small's'.

With all the important parts of the table set, it's time to add your statement piece that will form the centre decoration. Take a wander through the garden and harvest some hibiscus, bougainvillea or frangipani flowers as well as dried twigs, sticks and large green leaves. Or, if budget permits, have something made with a florist like Ivy Floral Design in Sheridan St.

For my table, I used a hand-made candelabra (made to order) from Elefantus Wrought Iron and Glass in Sheridan St flanked either side by decorated glass bowls filled with dry twigs and branches. This was another great tip from Lisa. I added glass ornaments for colour. Be sure to keep the arrangement short so people can easily see across the table.

Finally, think beyond the table in your home decoration. It doesn't need to be flamboyant or expensive. If you are over the heavily adorned Christmas tree, start afresh with a silver or white stick tree which is the perfect hanger for glass hanging tea light holders (\$3.50 small, \$5.50 large) and (white glass owls \$6.95 each) which I found at Haven & Space. You can make your own tree with a pot, some pebbles, a branch and some spray paint. Other welcoming touches include hanging door wreath and, of course, the festive music playing.

Table set! You are now ready to celebrate so pour the wine, serve the food and enjoy.

entertaining AT HOME A TROPICAL CHRISTMAS

SO IT'S YOUR TURN TO HOST A FESTIVE FEAST THIS CHRISTMAS BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE WHERE TO START. CAIRNSEYE STYLIST PIP MILLER AND PERSONAL CHEF CHRIS BUCKLEY PROVIDE ALL THE INSPIRATION YOU'LL NEED TO PULL OFF THE PERFECT SUMMER SPREAD...



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