

An elegant, neutral palette sets a sophisticated tone for this holiday dinner.

Meet the Host

WHO: Lynn Easton Andrews of Easton Events

WHERE: Charlottesville, VA

THE LOOK: earthy elegance



Lynn crafted chic place mats with inexpensive wallpaper. **BELOW:** A hollowed-out log is filled with roses, hydrangeas, and Leyland cypress.



The menu card features a silver emblem reminiscent of a pineapple, a symbol of Southern hospitality.



CHRISTMAS DINNER

Fourteen years ago, Lynn Easton Andrews planned a Charlottesville, Virginia, bride's nuptials as a favor for a friend. The very next day, her phone began ringing with requests from wedding guests impressed by her keen eye and impeccable organization. Today Easton Events executes everything from small country weddings to swanky corporate functions. The elegant Christmas dinner seen here has a dressy but approachable atmosphere featuring a neutral palette of golds, silvers, and creams and emphasizing texture. "I wanted the soiree to feel organic yet luxurious—sophisticated without putting on airs," says Lynn. The juxtaposition of earthy elements, such as cedar logs and bare tigerwood branches nestled in the chandelier, with more lavish touches, such as mother-of-pearl napkin rings and gold-edged china, makes for a fancy gathering with a cozy undertone. In the corner, a graceful Christmas tree continues the effect. Lynn kept the look minimal and organic by forgoing clunky ornaments and decorating the Fraser fir with burlap ribbon and paper cones filled with balsa wood flowers. ⇨



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Get Lynn's Look

- 1 Showcase heirloom decorations.** The informal hutch is decked with tonal, vintage pieces such as the glass-bead wreath, reindeer figurine, and mercury-glass candlesticks that call to mind past generations and gatherings.
- 2 Mix mirrors and candlelight.** An antique mirror maximizes the pretty light cast from votives nestled in birch candleholders and puts a fresh spin on the common centerpiece combo. To replicate the mirror's patina, ask your local glass shop to distress a new one by applying boric acid to the surface.
- 3 Serve a signature beverage.** To finish on a comfy note, Lynn offers a spicy after-dinner eggnog garnished with

whipped cream, cinnamon, and nutmeg and served with cookies on a silver tray.

- 4 Add a touch of couture.** The lustrous mother-of-pearl napkin rings (fashioned from taffeta ribbon looped through vintage belt buckles) offer a sleek counterpoint to the room's cedar logs, birch wood votives, and distressed mirrors. Varying the size and shape of the napkin rings keeps the effect from feeling too stuffy.
- 5 Reimagine household objects.** Repurposed drawer knobs make eye-catching place card holders. (To secure the cards better, replace stock washers with wider ones.) Balancing the left of the knobs, the cards themselves are inscribed in a light, casual hand. 

GREET GUESTS WITH:
Spiced Eggnog

MAKES: about 3 ¼ cups

- 4 egg yolks**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 2 cups milk**
- 2 whole cloves**
- Pinch of ground cinnamon**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 1 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 2 Tbsp. bourbon**

Garnishes: sweetened whipped cream, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg

- 1.** Beat egg yolks in a large bowl until thick and pale. Gradually beat in sugar until blended.
- 2.** Stir together milk and next 2 ingredients in a 4-qt. saucepan. Cook mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly, 8 to 10 minutes or just until mixture begins to bubble around edges of pan. (Do not boil.)
- 3.** Gradually stir half of hot milk mixture into egg mixture. Stir egg mixture into remaining hot milk mixture in pan. Cook mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly, 7 to 8 minutes or until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon and a candy thermometer registers 160°. (Do not boil.)
- 4.** Remove from heat, and stir in cream. Pour mixture through a fine wire-mesh strainer.
- 5.** Let cool 1 hour. Stir in nutmeg, vanilla, and bourbon. Chill 1 hour. Garnish each serving, if desired.

TEXT: CAROLINE MCKENZIE; STYLING: LINSEY ELLIS BEATTY