



STYLISH SERVEWARE

"Often, the dinner menu is inspired by what I can serve it on," says Jacqueline Fortier. Here, handmade earthenware bowls and pewter chargers offer an elegant contrast for the potato leek soup garnished with peppercorns.

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W I N T E R

*FOR THESE ST. PAUL FRIENDS,
SIMPLY ELEGANT ENTERTAINING AND OUR
COLDEST SEASON GO HAND IN GLOVE.*

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W A R M E R S

The real quiet sets in after December, when the sparkle of the holidays recedes and the dark cold whispers to burrow in until spring. But not all heed the call. Among those that resist are friends and frequent party co-conspirators Jacqueline Fortier and Kelly Dorow.

"Most people have a preconceived notion of what holiday gatherings should be," says Fortier, an interior designer. "But in January or February, there's more of an opportunity to offer guests a unique experience without the pressure of meeting anyone's expectations. Carte blanche, if you will."

The duo share an old-world aesthetic and eye for detail that makes their soirees sparkle. But they avoid complicating the festivities by collaborating on themes and décor and then each taking the lead in their respective areas of expertise.

Fortier is a skilled cook who plans the menu and prepares all the food (if there are crackers on the cheese plate, she probably made them),

while Dorow, a photographer, puts together the still-life-like bar, a special cocktail, and a preplanned playlist to set the mood.

Beeswax candles set in mismatched vintage holders are always part of the mix and often the only light source, especially when the friends host in Dorow's atmospheric 1863 Paris-inspired Cathedral Hill apartment. "Candles invite intimacy and warmth, which is delicious, especially in winter. Even the act of lighting a candle creates a moment," says Fortier. Silver, china, and linen are de rigueur for the pair, who believe formal and fun are not incompatible notions.

The spark to plan a party can come from the season, the realization that they haven't seen certain friends in a while, or even a run-of-the-mill weeknight takeout dinner with their teenage daughters. "Sometimes it's just the four of us, and it's the same thing with china, candles, and flowers," Dorow says. The ordinary made extraordinary. ■



A PAINTERLY SCENE

Find party décor inspiration from the season and the spatial setting. Vegetables (left) bring color and organic shapes, especially in the winter when flowers aren't abundant. ✂ Kelly Dorow's apartment, housed inside the historic Burbank Livingston-Griggs Mansion in St. Paul, is admittedly ripe with room inspiration, starting with the 18th-century boiserie panels that cover the walls. ✂ Pears baked with honey and vanilla are served in an elegant glass compote (below, left).

SELF-SERVE

Refined decadence is the mood of this lush and inviting bar (right) laid out on a gilded marble-topped table that sits below an antique mirrored panel and rock crystal wall sconces.



WINTER WHITE MENU

- Potato leek soup
- Roasted endive salad with goat cheese
- Biscuits with edible herbs and flowers
- Assorted cheeses served with pink grapefruit and champagne jelly
- Baked pears with honey and vanilla bean
- Butter pound cake with meringue, white strawberries, and rose petals

EASY ELEGANCE

An octagonal English scrubbed pine table that's been nicked, weathered, and worn warms the space and becomes an intimate setting for four. Use all of your fine tableware, even if you have to hand-wash them at the end of the night, Fortier says. "It keeps you humble and brings you closer to your belongings, particularly if they have a history." Dorow adds, "I turn on music and pour a glass of wine [while doing dishes]. I reflect on the evening."

Sumac branches, some still bearing bright red berries, add a sculptural element. “You can entertain with what you already have,” Dorow says. She pulls books and other decorative items from around the apartment to create an environment where guests feel relaxed and pampered.



SWEET AND SAVORY

Toasted endive (above) is served in a vintage copper gratin pan. A special cocktail (below) mixed just for the evening is a memorable note for guests. Dorow also spins vinyl to create a mood; her playlist often includes Sade, Bon Iver, and Ryan Adams. Winter sun splashes onto a window nook with an oversize ledge that doubles as a side table (left). A French antique lidded mustard pot acts as a sweet vessel for marmalade served alongside breadsticks, cheese, crackers, and fresh fruit.

MEZCAL WITH ROSEMARY ON FIRE COCKTAIL

Recipe courtesy of Seth Bellow, bartender at Estelle, St. Paul

- 1½ oz. mezcal
- ½ oz. lime juice
- 1½ oz. pineapple juice
- ¼ oz. simple syrup
- ¾ oz. yellow Chartreuse
- Charred rosemary sprig
- Dash of Angostura bitters
- 1 oz. Prosecco

COCKTAIL PREP

- Char rosemary on stovetop.
- Soak in yellow Chartreuse 2–4 days.
- Shake all ingredients except prosecco with ice.
- Add prosecco to bottom of glass.
- Pour mixed drink into glass from shaker.
- Add rosemary sprig.
- Light rosemary on fire for smoke.

