

Country Decorating Ideas® presents #102

Spring/Summer 2009

# ROMANTIC Country®

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Frugal Look Fabulous

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French Country,  
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ENGLISH  
COTTAGE  
GARDEN BY  
SUMMER

125  
Beautiful  
Ideas for  
Pennies

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Vintage Pillows ❀ Dreamy Hammocks

**SPECIAL** ❀ Antique-Look Memory Board To Make

Display Until June 15, 2009





# PEOPLE & PLACES

## party perfection

ELAINE ROSENBERG'S  
dinner parties are visual feasts  
—and you are invited!

BY BUNNY MACINTYRE



**CREATIVE SPIRITS**  
Elaine and Anita gather  
inspiration from Aspen's  
beautiful snow-capped  
mountains.



1 Birds of  
Paradise

In Aspen, Colorado, when two people meet, the first thing one of them will ask is, "How long will you be here?" The second is "Have you had dinner at Elaine's yet?"

Newcomers to this fairytale resort might think it strange that in a town filled with celebrity-owned restaurants, fashionable bistros and fancy honky-tonks, the most coveted invitation is to a weekly Thursday night dinner party hosted by a longtime resident. Locals, however, know better. They understand that an invitation from artist, designer and antiques shop owner Elaine Rosenberg guarantees a superb meal, cooked by Chef Michael Rueggeberg, in the company of an eclectic mix of fascinating people.

1 Usher in spring with a whimsical wine and cheese party. "For a fun tropical mood, I set the table with colorful parrots and dancing hula girl candles," says Elaine. An arrangement of tall bird of paradise blooms accentuates the vivid color scheme.

2 A black and gold table always looks opulent. Napkin rings fashioned from bullion cording and clusters of amber pearls echo the gold placemats, pearl-rimmed chargers and sparkling candlesticks.

2 An Elegant  
Affair



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARL WOLFGANG





#### MIDNIGHT AT THE OASIS

A trip to Morocco inspired this royal caravan setting where Chef Michael Rueggeberg served North African fare, including red lentil and chickpea soup, grilled leg of lamb with apricot chutney, and Moroccan date pudding with dried fruit and pistachio.



#### A FRENCH TWIST

This classic clafouti is an adaptable dessert. Diced apples or pears can easily be substituted for the sour cherries.

## Dessert is Served

A SPOONFUL OF VANILLA SAUCE AND A SCOOP OF ICE CREAM ARE THE PERFECT TOPPINGS FOR THIS CUSTARD-LIKE CLAFOUTI.

### CLAFOUTI

1/4 CUP PLUS 3 TABLESPOONS SUGAR

3/4 POUND SOUR CHERRIES, HALVED AND PITTED

3/4 CUP MILK

3/4 CUP LIGHT CREAM

3/4 CUP FLOUR

2 EGGS

1 EGG YOLK

1/3 TEASPOON SALT

1 FRESH VANILLA BEAN, SCRAPED

VANILLA SUGAR, FOR SPRINKLING

Preheat oven to 400 F and butter one large springform pan or individual baking forms. Sprinkle the forms with 3 tablespoons of sugar and distribute the cherries over the sugar.

In a blender, blend the milk, light cream, flour, eggs, egg yolk, and salt for 2 minutes. Add the 1/4 cup of sugar and the scraped vanilla bean. Blend the mixture for a few seconds and pour it over the cherries. Bake clafouti in the middle of the oven for about 30 minutes or until puffed and golden. Dust with vanilla sugar and serve with the vanilla sauce and vanilla ice cream. Serves 6.

### VANILLA SAUCE

4 EGG YOLKS

1/2 CUP SUGAR

2 CUPS HEAVY WHIPPING CREAM

1 FRESH VANILLA BEAN, SCRAPED

While the clafouti is baking, prepare the vanilla sauce. Beat the egg yolks and sugar together with a wire whisk, rotary or electric beater for 3 or 4 minutes, or until the yolks are thick and pale yellow. Scrape the vanilla bean, add to the cream, and bring cream to a boil in a heavy 2- to 3-quart saucepan. Let sit for 20 minutes to get the flavor from the vanilla. Then, beating constantly with a whisk, pour the cream in a thin stream over the yolks. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a spoon, until the sauce is thick enough to coat the spoon lightly. Do not let the sauce come to a boil or it may curdle. Remove the pan from the heat and strain through a fine mesh strainer.



#### A TRIP TO TUSCANY

A warm palette of orange and gold was the starting point for combining paisley print napkins with Italian pottery. Elaine used small vases as individual wine decanters.





*"When you bring family and friends together, you owe it to them to create a touch of romance."*

## An Invitation to Dinner

GATHER AROUND THE TABLE. ELAINE SHARES HER SIGNATURE STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PARTY.

### MAKE A GUEST LIST

And, make sure it's eclectic! Mix and match people from all walks of life—an eye surgeon, a contractor, a billionaire and a pre-school teacher, for example.

### CHOOSE A MOTIF

Spark conversation with an interesting theme. Choose a special place that has meaning for you, such as Tuscany or Morocco, a motif from a popular movie, or your favorite season.

### PLAN A MENU

Whether you are doing all of the cooking yourself, re-plating food from a take-out counter or hiring a caterer, always choose dishes that work with your theme, while relying on what is fresh and local.

### SET THE SCENE

"If you get excited and have fun creating your table, your guests will enjoy it, too," says Elaine. Always build an engaging focal point. You can create layers of interest using flowers, candles, and even breadsticks.

### GIVE A PARTING GIFT

Look for something fun and inexpensive, like dime-store bracelets or tiny racing cars, to give your guests to take home. Little details that don't cost much are often what make the evening special.

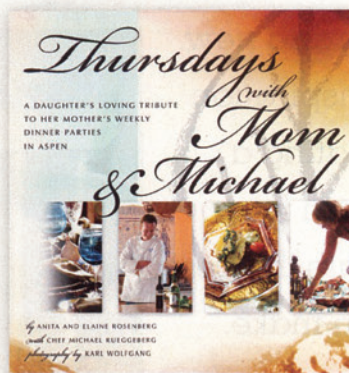
### PARTY PLANNERS

Elaine and Michael share the duties for making each party a success. She selects the theme and creates an artful setting. He produces the dazzling meal.

"My mother's parties are fun because they revolve around a theme," says Elaine's daughter Anita. "Mom is always on the lookout for unique and inspirational details—sensual table linens, unusual candlesticks and handcrafted drinking glasses—that might transport her guests to somewhere exotic."

According to this creative mother-daughter team, designing an enchanting table does not have to be expensive. "Setting your regular dishes on larger decorative charger plates adds color and drama to your table," Elaine notes. "They are like a frame for your plate and create an elegant look. You can buy plain ones and paint them yourself."

Napkin rings are also very easy to make out of all kinds of objects, using ribbons for texture and color. "Because love is in the details, adding napkin rings is like throwing a kiss to your guests," says Elaine. "When you bring family and friends together, you owe it to them to create a touch of romance... and memories that will last a lifetime."



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For a behind-the-scenes peek at one of Aspen's most well-known and wildly popular social traditions—the weekly dinner parties hosted by Elaine, you'll want a copy of "Thursdays with Mom and Michael." Co-authored by her daughter Anita with recipes by Michael Rueggeberg, the book is available online at [www.AnitaRosenberg.com](http://www.AnitaRosenberg.com). All author royalties will be donated to Evelyn Lauder's Breast Cancer Research Foundation.