

Home Style



'Fiesole: A Modern Vision of Tuscany'

by Donald Doskey, Donald Doskey Design, Shaker Heights.

Doskey created a leafy, private bower around a long table to suggest a fall outdoor dinner party in Tuscany. "I really wanted olive trees — that wasn't going to happen," he said. So he settled for three potted Atlas fir trees, branches bearing red and yellow leaves and tiny pears (real ones!) attached to dogwood branches. On the table, he wove bittersweet branches around the place settings.

"It's like we're out on the land," Doskey said. His imaginary dinner party is "for fun-loving eccentric people who like to laugh and eat good food."

Inspiration: His personal collection of Richard Ginori "Fiesole" china.

Cooler touch: Marbleized bookbinding paper folded and used as placemats; no two were the same. "The book paper gave it quirkiness that kept it fun and kept it from getting too serious," Doskey said.

Best theme tie-in: Classical bronze sculptures, such as the reproductions that wealthy travelers bought as souvenirs of their grand tour of Europe.

Steal this idea: Don't be afraid to make each place setting a bit different.

Partial product list

Bronze candlesticks and ceramic rocks: Ackland Museum Store, Chapel Hill, N.C. (Doskey has a home there.)

Richard Ginori "Fiesole" china, crystal wine goblets and Czech water glasses: Doskey's personal collection.

Classical bronze sculptures, mirrored 1940s column urns, classical urns and silver: Greenwald Antiques in Beachwood, junegreenwaldantiques.com.

Dining table and chairs, large white ceramic urn and pendants: Thomas Pheasant collection for Baker Furniture.

Floral and trees: Charles Phillips Beautiful Flowers, Cleveland, 216-583-9076.

Runner fabrication: Cleveland Cushion and Custom Sewing, Beachwood, 216-921-2668.

Tabletop dreams

Place settings dazzle at Design Centre fundraiser

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIE E. WASHINGTON
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Setting an attractive table can be a stressful part of entertaining.

Hours before my guests are due, I'll dig through an overstuffed drawer of table linens, only to find three matching but wrinkled napkins (I need six), a full set of napkins that go with a stained tablecloth, and two random place mats. Forgive me for wanting to tear off hunks of paper towels (with flowers!) and call it quits.

Entertaining by Design, an Ohio Design Centre event devoted to spectacular themed tabletop vignettes, recently demonstrated how — with some extra effort and imagination — it's possible to create a mood and theme for any gathering by setting a beautiful table.

More than 30 area interior designers created tablescapes for the event, which was a fundraiser for the North Union Farmers Market. They pulled together floral arrangements, china, antique pieces and unique touches to create extravagant displays on themes, including the masculine Havana Nights, a winsome Beatrix Potter-themed children's table, festive Thanksgiving tables and an exotic "Eat, Pray, Love" spread.

Students from two colleges participated: University of Akron interior design students created "Evening in France: Sunset on the Seine," and students from Virginia Marti College of Art and Design contributed "Somewhere Over the Pantone Rainbow: Dinner in the Emerald City."

Local design experts judged the entries and awarded Best in Show to "Bubbles, Brunch and La Boheme: Elegant and Fun Brunch" by Barrie Spang of Lee Meier Interiors Inc. in Westlake. She imagined a table set for a leisurely brunch in a 1920s Parisian apartment.

"An Intimate Wedding Affair: Bespoke Nuptial Celebrations" by Dawn Cook Design in Shaker Heights won the Most Over-the-Top Award. Best Interpretation of Chosen Theme went to "Eat, Pray, Love: Adventurous Dining" by Weave Ideas in Mayfield.

The People's Choice Award, chosen by a vote of attendees, went to "Evening in the Enchanted Forest: Dinner Party Under the Stars" by Reflections Interior Design of Cleveland Heights.

Here's a peek at some of the standout designs, along with partial product lists. Be aware that some stores sell only to professional interior designers.



'Garden Party: Entertaining in the Formal Gardens'

by Carolyn Hammerschmidt, Carolyn Marie Designs, Vermillion.

"It all started with the dishes," Hammerschmidt said about her extravagant garden-themed tablescape that was a riot of colorful flowers, floral prints pillows trimmed with glass beads, multicolored water glasses and a large flower arrangement accented by miniature bird cages hanging from contorted hazelnut branches.

"I wanted something grand," she said. "The [flower] arrangement feels like it's growing out of the table."

Ornaments that said Serendipity, Dream, Wish and Believe adorned the napkins. Table runners, pillows and napkins were custom-made in her shop. "I thought the florals were fabulous," she said.

Inspiration: "Alice in Wonderland."

Cooler touch: Miniature silver chairs were the placecard holders.

Best theme tie-in: Butterflies perched on the centerpiece made from sheet music.

Steal this idea: Bring comfy pillows outdoors to encourage guests to linger around the table.

Partial product list

Dinnerware, large glasses and centerpiece: MacKenzie-Childs collection, Hammerschmidt's personal collection.

Fabrics: Designers Guild (Gregory Alonso Showroom,

Ohio Design Centre, Beachwood).

Florist: Off Broadway Floral and Gift in Lorain.

Glass-beaded trim: Duralee line of fabric and trimmings (Gregory Alonso Showroom).

Linens: Custom-made by designer Raquel Hall.

Name cards and menu graphic design: SassyRae Expressions.

Purple florals, crystal vases, glass urn, sparkle ornaments, placecard holders and napkin rings: Carolyn Marie Designs.

Silverware: Golden Crown (Reed & Barton collection).