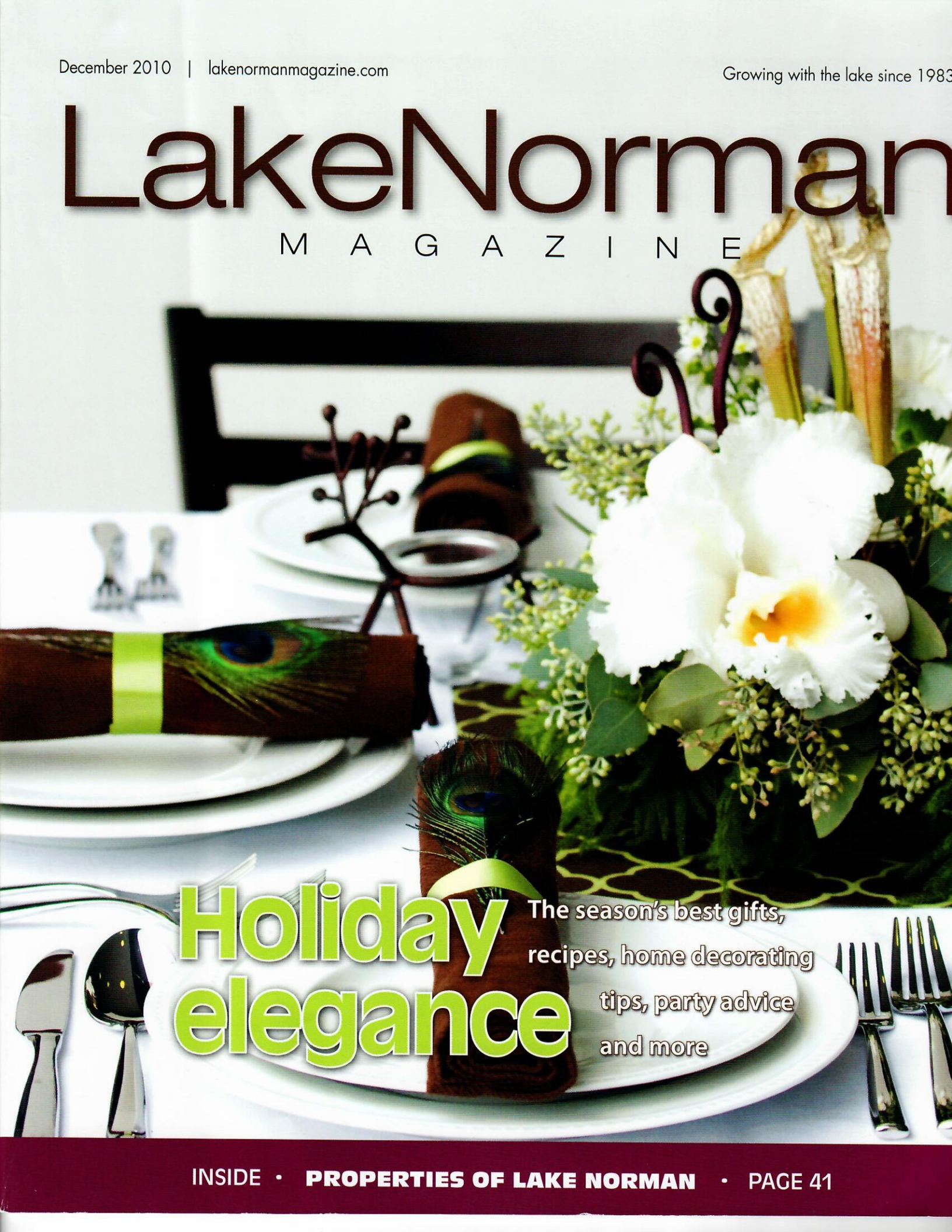


# LakeNorman

M A G A Z I N E



## Holiday elegance

The season's best gifts,  
recipes, home decorating  
tips, party advice  
and more



# Tabletop treasures

## Welcome your holiday guests with a festive look for your table

Whether you're hosting a party or a family get-together, your table will surely be the center of attention this holiday season.

And that's the way it should be, says Judy Armstrong of Albertine Florals and Gifts in Denver. A welcoming and inviting table makes things special.

"It's going to bring in the spirit of the holidays," Armstrong says. "It brings back a tradition too many of us get away from...Every evening, you sit down to a beautiful table. It's nice and calming."

Armstrong should know – her design is the winning look at this season's "Over the Tabletop" at River Run Country Club in Davidson. The holiday and themed tabletop event Nov. 3 showcased the

looks of more than 25 area designers.

Her first-place "Fantastical, Fanciful Feast" theme uses vibrant pinks and greens with pops of turquoise. A lime tablecloth, trimmed in gauzy pink, wired ribbon, plays off hot pink napkins dressed with colorfully decorated poinsettias. Jewels add flair to the transparent dinner plates, where playful swatches of pink fabric are tucked underneath for visual interest. (See it on p. 26).

The showstopper, though, is the floral centerpiece – a tall vase filled with roses, hydrangeas, lilies, pepperberry, honey bracelet greens and orchids.

As attention-grabbing as her look may be, Armstrong and other local designers agree that you don't have to be an expert to craft a lovely look for your home. Their tips will help you create a spectacular table – and make sure your holiday gathering is stylish and successful.

### "A Bird In a Pear Tree,"

designed by Gorgeous Gems for the "Over the Tabletop" show at River Run Country Club in Davidson, includes Patti Jackson's personal china collection, as well as jewelry she creates. "I like things that have a little bit of sparkle," she says.



### All Natural

Amber makes a new appearance for table settings this season, says Starr Miller, of StarrMiller Interior Design in Davidson. Whether it comes in glass, candles, lights or accessories, the color really warms up the room. Also strong this season is the natural look of greenery and washed out driftwood. "These natural elements can be paired with glistening silver balls or white seashells and red ribbons for a festive look that is easy, light and airy," Miller says.

Laura Massie, of Head Over Heels Event Planning & Décor in Lake Norman, Monroe and Charlotte, says that she's seeing a lot of do-it-yourself projects this season. Instead of an arrangement of plain white candles for a centerpiece project, try dusting each candle with glitter and putting them on glass cake stands surrounding the base of the candles with faux snow. Another is wrapping hurricane vases with decorative paper with seasonal cutouts. "We are also seeing a lot of people choosing to cluster together several small vases or bud vases," Massie says, "instead of having one oversized floral arrangement."

Miller suggests combining amber and purple to create a regal Christmas table, using many candles for an opulent look. She reminds people to never have scented candles on a table, as they can kill the aro-

"The Night After Christmas," by StarrMiller Interior Designs, Inc., is a table setting devoted to Santa and his elves after a long night's work.

A place setting from "Nutcracker Sweet," designed by Andrea E. Haritan.





**"Fantastical, Fanciful Feast,"** designed by Albertine Florals, won first place at the "Over the Tabletop" show presented by the North Mecklenburg Woman's Club at River Run Country Club in Davidson.

**"Mirror, Mirror on the Wall,"** designed by Blacklion-Northcross. This design and others at the "Over the Tabletop" show showed off stylish looks for the season.



mas of your food. For a more natural look, a moss table runner is always special. Tie raffia around napkins and wrap a small gift or candy in burlap with a raffia ribbon and small Christmas flower to put on each place setting. Layering candles and Christmas ornaments will bring the sparkle, she says.

For another natural – and frugal – look, Miller likes bringing the outside in. Use evergreen boughs on a burlap tablecloth and pile on Christmas balls or sea shells. "You can even spray paint your shells with gold or silver to make a table that shimmers," she says. An additional festively frugal look can be created by buying many inexpensive Christmas ball ornaments in one color and piling them up or layering them all over the table, then hanging them from the chandelier and sconces.

Massie also recommends incorporating natural elements for an inexpensive and eco-friendly table setting. Utilizing fruit or nuts in your centerpiece will create a beautiful conversation piece that can provide healthy snacks for the kids afterwards, she says. Try a basket full of pears, a glass vase of apples or filling a glass bud vase with

cranberries and a single bloom. Massie reminds families to look around the house to see what can be reused before spending a lot of money on new decorations.

### Easy décor, and more

This time of year families are trying to make their homes festive and fun for kids of all ages, Massie says. She recommends a project for the whole family:


- Clean out several soup cans. Take the lids and labels off.
- Fill the cans with water and put in the freezer.
- Once the water is frozen, draw seasonal clip art on the cans. Snowflakes work well.
- Use a nail and hammer to punch out the design.
- Melt the ice.
- Put a tea light inside the can.
- Place several cans around the house or along your sidewalk as fun, festive and inexpensive luminaries.

If you're throwing a holiday party this year, event-planner Massie suggests starting the planning process early by creating an invite list, setting a budget and picking a

theme. Once you have a theme, the food, music, activities and decorations will revolve around it. Think of fun games to keep your guests occupied and to help them get to know each other. "Everyone will relax and have a good time once they have something in common, even if it is laughing over a goofy game," Massie says.

Relaxing is Miller's number one tip for hosting a holiday party. If you don't have time to decorate, have a cookie party, she says, and ask everyone to bring their most festive cookies to exchange. Layer the table with boxes at differing heights covered by a tablecloth and let the cookies be the table décor.

Massie reminds hosts to not go overboard. "You want to enjoy the holiday and not spend the entire day setting up decorations and missing out on the fun," she says. Get your kids to help, Massie recommends, as arts and crafts projects will not only help the kids feel a part of the holiday, but will provide some great quality family time.

"The one thing you can be sure of," Miller says, "is that everyone is glad to be there and happy that you went out of your way to open your home. Friends and smiles are always the best décor." 

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