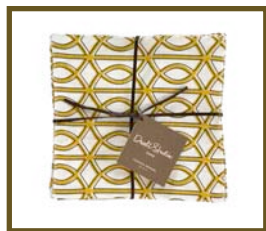




DECEMBER 2009



**GATE**  
COCKTAIL NAPKINS  
sun



**GATE**  
COCKTAIL NAPKINS  
java



**WOODBLOCK**  
COCKTAIL NAPKINS  
lake

EDITOR'S PAGE



# Imperfect Perfection

A few weeks ago, I was chatting about the newest trends in entertaining with a girlfriend who runs a catering company. We both agreed that relaxed, personal and casual are today's three essential ingredients. Gone are the days of hiding the party prep work behind closed kitchen doors. Now, the inner workings of the party are the main attraction.

At my very intimate wedding this past fall (the best party I've ever thrown, by the way!), our caterer, Rodney Bowers, was key to making the event a success, not just because his food was unbelievable, but because our 22 guests could watch him at work in our cottage's open-concept kitchen. While we dined on an eight-course harvest meal that included locally raised Kobe beef, a ceviche trio of P.E.I. yellowfin tuna, wild B.C. salmon and Ontario pickerel, and organic arctic char, Rodney filled us in on the farms the food came from and how he made each dish. It was like stepping onto the set of the hottest new food show — and so much fun.

And while we hired a phenomenal wedding planner (Tara O'Grady of Bliss Events) to help us pull it all together, I knew navigating an off-the-grid cottage wedding that was only accessible by boat would mean going with the flow ... a lot. Regardless of where a party takes place, and no matter how much planning you do, no party is 100 per cent flawless. We lost all power in the middle of dinner, because I overtaxed our solar-powered electrical system with too much vacuuming and too many curling irons earlier that day. Instead of having a meltdown, we kicked into high gear, lighting even more candles and rerouting the iPod to our backup generator (Arriz had made various playlists of our favourite music). Rodney donned a head-mounted flashlight to barbecue, and plated the dinner by pillar candles in sand-filled cylindrical vases. The composting toilet was off limits at that point, so everyone detoured to the old outhouse down the hill. My heart did stop for a minute, but looking around, I could see no one cared — we were having too much fun. The candlelight was magical and even visiting the loo became an outdoor adventure. Sure, our careful planning made the event fantastic, but it was the things that went wrong that made it truly memorable.

I hope you all have a happy party season, full of fabulous imperfections.

*Suzanne*

### My Entertaining Essentials

These few simple additions make a big impact.



1. Patterned napkins keep the vibe festive. Woodblock and Gate cocktail napkins, \$30/4, DwellStudio.



2. Candles in rich colours make any room dreamy. \$33/10, Colonial Candle; holders, from \$57, William Ashley China.



3. You can never have too many white platters — big or small. Oslo plates, platter, from \$23 each, Danica.

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