

Redesign your dining room

Before the holiday season

By Lesa Knollenberg

Holiday parties are approaching, and it's time to remember the formula for a successful party: one-third interesting guests; one-third good food; and one-third ambience. Serving the perfect orange pumpkin roulade to your book club won't go over well unless your surroundings are just as fantastic.

Break into a cold sweat when you picture your upcoming holiday dinners? Then making your dining room unique is a good way to start your party planning.

The centerpiece of the dining room is, of course, the table. Now might be the time to invest in a dining room table that adds to your décor, yet is functional and accessible. **The Montage**, a store in McFarland with decorating ideas for all tastes, has an upstairs filled with dining room tables and ideas for table-top embellishments. Among the collection

are Amish tables, which are custom-made and allow customers to choose woods and stains of all kinds.

When choosing the perfect dining room table, enlist the help of knowledgeable staff, like **Elizabeth Wright** and **Kristin Esguerra** of **The Montage**. "Depending on your space and the size of your family, there are many table options. For example, many of our customers are in the process of downsizing their homes. A good option for them is a smaller table with butterfly leaves, which are stored in the table," Wright and Esguerra say. These tables can store up to 12 leaves, which could extend into an adjacent room and provide comfortable seating for large holiday parties.

Once your table is set (yes, pun intended), it's time to look at the walls. **Suzanne Vinmans**, an artist in Albany, creates original paintings and drawings, murals, faux/fantasy

wall finishes, hand-painted tiles, mosaics and furniture decoration that would add drama to any dining room. She meets with prospective clients first. "We walk through connecting rooms so I can get an idea of their overall design schemes and colors," Vinmans explains. "If they don't know what they want I begin brainstorming with them. We often take design ideas from existing materials in their household—china patterns, wallpaper in the kitchen, designs from an area rug, for example."

The possibilities are endless. But if you find the holidays approaching faster than you can say "Martha Stewart," don't worry. There are some reliable quick-fixes for broad dining room changes:

■ **Paint.** A coat of paint does wonders for a tired dining room. For added pizzazz, try two tones of the same basic color. Alternate the tones on dining room walls, or put the lighter color on the top half of the wall, the darker on the bottom and separate the two with a bold chair rail. Changing the color of baseboards and trim also creates a new look in an old room.

■ **Slipcovers.** Tired of your boring dining room chairs? Try slipcovers. Choose a fabric that is unusual; in fact, choose a different fabric

Is your dining room ready for the upcoming holidays? This one is.



for each chair! **Kathleen Quade of House to Home Interior Design Services** has this suggestion: "One very festive way to change the look of the room is to have custom chair-covers made. You might even consider a fabric that would only be used during the fall holidays, like gold." If you're handy with a sewing machine, a slipcover is remarkably easy to create. If not, measure the dimensions of your chair and hire one of the talented seamstresses in the area to complete the job. Presto! New look.

■ **A large mirror.** Besides increasing the apparent size of the room, adding a large wall mirror to one dining room wall intensifies the mood of your party. Quade also recommends glass candle holders. "Glass candle holders are essential in varying shapes and sizes. Then you can change the color of the candles for the holiday."

It's a nice image: Your favorite people laughing in a fabulous candlelit room, adding sparkle to your perfect holiday evening.



Lesa Knollenberg is a local freelance writer who is going to attempt an orange pumpkin roulade. Family and the local fire department have been warned.

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