

Southern Home

THE SOUTH'S BEST DESIGN AND STYLE IDEAS

EDITOR'S TIP

Wallpaper the ceiling to give any room more patina and depth of color.

THE SOUTHERN TABLE

Set a Gracious Tone

We visited the dining rooms of three Southern tastemakers to learn their secrets for setting a stylish and festive Thanksgiving table

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meet the hostess

MELISSA RUFFY

HOMETOWN New Orleans

ON HER PLATE Partnering on a new vintage home-furnishings store, Malachite; mmrinteriors.com

WHAT MAKES A DINING ROOM SOUTHERN?

Pressed linens, a few magnolia leaves, alcohol, and the inevitable taboo conversation!

DINING ROOM TABLE: ROUND OR RECTANGULAR?

Round. It makes parties so much more fun when all the guests can engage each other. And I can kick my husband under the table when necessary.

GO-TO FABRIC FOR UPHOLSTERING DINING CHAIRS

Hair-on hide. It's indestructible. Red wine? No problem.

HOST CHAIRS: DO OR DON'T? Don't. My mother always told me not to make guests feel different from you.

WHO'S ON HER THANKSGIVING GUEST LIST?

Anyone who will appreciate my cooking.

LAST WORDS OF ADVICE

Embrace the serendipity of making what you already have work.

"Never be afraid to mix your patterns."

Give your table a Big Easy feel with Melissa's ideas for creating a layered look.



PILE GOLD ON GOLD For a less formal place setting, Melissa uses wood Florentine trays as chargers underneath her gold Wedgwood dinner plates and vintage glass dessert plates.



CREATE A SHOWPIECE Melissa tucks stems of roses, succulents, pepper berry, and eucalyptus into the holes of an 18th-century glazed ceramic French brazier for a dramatic cascading effect.



MIX AND MATCH STEMWARE Add saturated color and eclectic style with a combination of colored and clear glasses. Bucking tradition, Melissa uses the small aubergine juice glasses for red wine.



START A THANKFUL TRADITION Hung on a festive fall garland, antique-textile pouches made by Louisiana artisan Becky Vizard hold guests' handwritten notes of thanks; bviz.com.