

Entertaining Ideas

Ideas For Stylish, Easy Gatherings

(NAPSA)—Whether hosting a festive potluck party with friends or attending a family-filled holiday dinner, there are many ways to create an unforgettable party meal. To help make your gatherings not only stylish but easy, some of the country's top entertainment experts offer these tips:

Christine Ansbacher, author of "Secrets From The Wine Diva," shares these secrets for planning a potluck party:

- **Delegate responsibility:**

Assign guests various tasks to help plan the meal. For example, if the host is preparing the main course, ask guests to bring appetizers, accompaniments, desserts or a favorite wine.

- **Forgo the traditional sit-down supper:** Create a fun, contemporary, buffet-style meal. Arrange clusters of chairs around the house or arrange heaps of floor pillows wherever you have space.

Wine expert Leslie Sbrocco likes to bring warmth into her home by setting fall-themed tables. For a table setting that's hard to forget, she advises:

- **Create an all-natural centerpiece:** Purchase fall produce, such as baby pumpkins, persimmons, apples and pears. Then, pile them in a low glass bowl or in several vases that vary in height. Add foliage, pinecones or fall flower buds for a gorgeous centerpiece that will last for days.

- **Think beyond the pumpkin:** Hollow out the inside of an acorn squash and, using a skewer, poke small holes in the rind. Dry



Elegant table decorations can help make your next turkey dinner something guests will talk about.

overnight and then place a votive candle inside to add a touch of warmth to the dinner table. Perhaps the best, and tastiest, part of this centerpiece is that nothing goes to waste. The scooped-out squash can be cooked and enjoyed as a side dish or soup.

Nicole Hitchcock, Turning Leaf Vineyards' Winemaker, encourages people to trust their taste buds and experiment with food and wine pairings. Here are some of her favorite recommendations:

- **An unexpected wine pairing:** While turkey is often served with Chardonnay, the bird can also be enjoyed with such nontraditional matches as Turning Leaf Pinot Noir or Riesling. Both are excellent choices for enhancing the myriad flavors in the traditional turkey dinner and will add unique character to the meal.

Remember, there's no wrong way to pair wines with food, so have fun planning the menu.

For more tips and recipe suggestions, visit www.turningleaf.com.