



WINTER WHITE

PLAN YOUR PARTY LIKE THE EXPERTS



Friends gather together to welcome the New Year by a roaring fire. Pictured (standing left to right): John Karageorge and Heath Golden; sitting (left to right): Samantha Karageorge, Lauren Tutundgy, Adrienne and Jeremy Roth. Above: A pristine place setting in white, silver and crystal captures the winter season with splashes of color in the glass plates by Ross Neder lending pink and yellow hues to the cozy setting.

BY JANET DENGEL
Photos by Greg Pallante

It's party time! And Englewood is invited to the blast ... Karen Fierstein of Well Staged Home, Tenafly, and Samantha Karageorge of S&S Designs, Demarest, used their expertise in room design, staging and party planning to create a perfect New Year's bash. Next, they added the delicious cuisine of Rama Ginde from WannaBee Chef, Cresskill, with desserts from Linda Nagin of

Sweet Finale, and stunning floral creations from Anthony Vallone of Paul Anthony Designs, Cresskill. Then they stopped by for advice on champagne, wine and cocktails from Andrew Wellisch of Englewood Wine Merchants. Samantha and John Karageorge planned the soiree for friends from Demarest, Tenafly and Teaneck who met when their children attended preschool together. Join in their fun as we find out how anyone can throw a memorable party with the right planning. >



DESIGN AND STAGE YOUR SPACE

KARAGEORGE It's time to unclutter – remove excess pieces to free up floor space. You want the furniture set up so people have places for intimate conversation.

FIERSTEIN We can take an existing home and make it more party-friendly. Correct staging allows for flow because mingling is important, too. Include both standing and sitting areas.

SET THE MOOD AND ATMOSPHERE

FIERSTEIN Decide the tone of the evening. Is it fun, festive, elegant, sophisticated, low key or casual? Lighting is important. Candlelight and low, soft lighting is best; it's romantic and flattering. If you put hi-hats on, it looks like Times Square.

KARAGEORGE Music that fades into the background gives ambience and ensures that people don't have to shout over it. My picks are the soundtrack from *Something's Gotta Give* or Chris Botti's jazz. A piano is great to gather around.

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

VALLONE Flowers are always festive. Especially for New Year's when the colorful decorations disappear, flowers are an important accent. For parties, we do wintery designs – white, silver and ice crystals in arrangements. It's sophisticated, pristine and has that fresh look to start the New Year.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

GINDE Hors d'oeuvres make a party fun. Guests have a chance to mingle and try different types of food. You can serve a bigger array of items and they look beautiful. **NAGIN** Dessert is the pleasant ending you need at a party. There's always room for a special treat. All our desserts are bite-sized so there's no mess and no need for a plate to carry. The presentation is like artwork and they taste scrumptious.

WELLISCH A great champagne is Bollinger Special Cuvee non-vintage. For white wine, you can serve Lagar de Cervera Albarino; for red, Ornellaia Le Voite Sangiovese. A perfect holiday cocktail is Partridge in a Pear Tree. Mix Bacardi Light, Grey Goose La Poire vodka and pomegranate juice in a shaker; strain over a martini glass and garnish with lemon. >

Above: Host John Karageorge mixes a cocktail in the kitchen. Facing page, center: The entire group gathers for a toast before the food is served. Left to right: Lori Golden, Jeremy and Adrienne Roth, Samantha Karageorge, Karen Fierstein, John Karageorge, Paul Fierstein, Lauren Tutundgy, Robert and Elizabeth Simon, and (just outside of the photo) Heath Golden. Top of page: Hostess Samantha Karageorge gets smiles from Jeremy and Adrienne Roth as they enjoy mini lamb burgers with arugula, sun-dried tomato pesto and caramelized onions on potato buns from WannaBee Chef; Cookies from Sweet Finale make the perfect dessert. Bottom of page (left to right): A sterling silver punch bowl that's a family heirloom of Karen Fierstein's family adds tradition to the party plan; Lori and Heath Golden enjoy the food and each other's company.

OUR PANEL OF PARTY EXPERTS



WANNABEE CHEF

18 UNION AVE., CRESSKILL, 201-503-0335

WannaBeeChef is a new cooking studio in Cresskill that offers classes and parties for adults and children, healthy meals delivered to your doorstep and catering. For this New Year's party, owner Rama Ginde selected an array of delightful hors d'oeuvres. Shown is two-way salmon bruschetta, poached and smoked, with sesame wonton crisp garnished with avocado. Besides the mini lamb burgers also shown, guests enjoyed figs wrapped in prosciutto with minted goat cheese; and citrus marinated chicken kebabs with candy cane beets skewered on an eggplant.



S&S DESIGNS

DEMAREST, 201-321-9932

S&S Designs offers a full range of interior design and decorating services specifically tailored to each client's tastes, lifestyle requirements and budgetary considerations. "We have a unique ability to work within a range of budgets to achieve a sophisticated and elegant look," says Samantha Karageorge. "As a mother and daughter duo, our complimentary talents lend a fresh and unique perspective to each project." Understanding their clients' desire for perfection, S&S always pays meticulous attention to detail.



SWEET FINALE

201-615-0047

Owner Linda Nagin creates unique party platters, favors and hostess gifts. "If you can dream it, I can make it in chocolate," she says. From small packages to the-sky's-the-limit, the chocolates are geared to the theme and colors of the occasion. For the Karageorges' get-together, Sweet Finale added a white, delicate, fancy look to chocolate-covered Oreo and Milano cookies, dried fruits, potato chips and other delicious bite-sized treats.



WELL STAGED HOME

TENAFLY, 201-568-6292

Well Staged Home is a lifestyle company that stages to sell your home, to style your home and to entertain in your home. For holiday parties, WSH does seasonal makeovers and plans parties for 10-50 people. Services include setting your table, arranging and choosing flowers, selecting the menu and taking the anxiety out of entertaining. For a new style in 2009, owner Karen Fierstein can give your space a facelift by changing room colors, rearranging furniture, buying new accessories or ordering drapes. This creates a warm environment without overwhelming expense.

PAUL ANTHONY DESIGNS

8 UNION AVE., CRESSKILL, 201-816-1557

"We're more artist than florist," says Anthony Vallone. "What interior designers do with furniture, we do with plants." Paul Anthony Designs services homeowners, hi-rises and penthouses with upscale, elegant designs from urns and terraces to exotic indoor plants. To match the New Year's party atmosphere, Vallone used Casablanca lilies and seeded eucalyptus with silver-grey leaves dripping with ice crystals. A perfect backdrop as Samantha Karageorge plays the piano.



ENGLEWOOD WINE MERCHANTS

5 E. PALISADE AVENUE, ENGLEWOOD
201-568-8820

Owners Andrew Wellisch and David Gettenberg share their passion for fine wine and spirits by offering premiere selections chosen just for your occasion. From tastings to an online newsletter, customers receive special attention whether they're novice wine enthusiasts or connoisseurs. Englewood Wine Merchants recently paired with Food For Thought in Tenafly to open Grand Cru Wine Bar at 36 Van Brunt St., Englewood. ♦

Opposite page: Good champagne, delicious food, great company and songs enjoyed while gathering around the C. Bechstein baby grand piano guarantee that Elizabeth and Robert Simon will look forward to many parties with friends in 2009.

ORCHID: KAREN'S ORCHIDS, ENGLEWOOD; WOMEN'S FASHIONS: SEESAW, SMASH; TENAFLY: FREZ, ENGLEWOOD; HAMBURG, CRESSKILL

