



SET THE TABLE FOR THE FEAST

Bath interior designer Clair Strong has four themes to inspire your dining table this Christmas

The dining table is the centrepiece of Christmas celebrations; it's where friends and family gather for delicious food and good conversation over the festive period. Make these events even more special with beautiful tablescapes that are sure to wow your guests.

If we can't indulge in sheer opulence at Christmas, when can we? This tablescape is positively theatrical; the perfect way to celebrate the festive season. Inspiration for this look comes from Bath's newest import OKA (newly arrived in Milsom Street). I'm thrilled to see another fantastic interiors retailer set-up shop in Bath and can't wait to explore the store. But let's move onto the really good stuff; creating a decadent table for your Christmas events. A colour scheme of red and black with

hints of gold is always effective, but other rich hues like emerald green and inky blue have an air of opulence too. Decorate the table top with candles, handmade Christmas crackers and vases of festive blooms. I love metallic accents and coloured glassware as it reflects the light in the most glorious way. Ultimately, luxury is subjective but one thing we can all agree on is that it's all in the details. It's using the finest materials, carefully selecting the most evocative colours and spending time on the finishing touches that make it truly special.

A TOUCH OF COLOUR: below left, table accessories, glasses, cutlery, all from OKA. Available instore or visit: okadirect.com and below left, the opulent red theme, green is a popular alternative.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT: Main image: Broste Ceramic Ornaments from The Scandinavian Shop. Below, use your usual plates but add accessories such as snowflake decorations, sprigs of fir and pine cones to bring a stylish wintery feel to the Christmas table. thescandinavianshop.co.uk

LUXE DRAMA



WOODLAND WONDERLAND

This is a celebration of Britain's beautiful winter wildlife and is a very family friendly option; kids will love the sweet animal motifs while adults will appreciate the cool colour scheme and chic design elements. Who better to turn to for the essentials to create this look than British designer Sophie Allport? Her Winter Wonderland collection includes home textiles, fine bone china and more, all embellished with a falling snow print featuring Christmas trees and woodland animals. Pair Sophie Allport's tablecloths and napkins with crisp white china and a centrepiece made from woodland treasures. Take the children out to collect pine cones, holly and fir tree clippings and arrange around a large white pillar candle. This is a simple but timeless tablescape you will want to recreate year after year.

NATURAL BEAUTY: Winter Wonderland range by Sophie Allport. Napkins, £13 for four, mugs £10



A TWIST ON THE CLASSIC

This look takes a festive tradition and gives it a fresh new vibe. The pictured set-up by high street retailer H&M (products available online) is my inspiration for this tablescape. It combines all the usual Christmas motifs but gives them a modern, slightly rough-and-ready twist. Think oversize star print tablecloths and sheepskin chair cushions combined with a mix of plants and metallic decorations as centrepieces. I love the setting too; a Scandi-meets-industrial space with a subtle grey colour scheme. This theme can be as minimalist or maximalist as you desire; simply layer on the details until you are happy with the finished look. I prefer a more minimalist take – not just for aesthetic reasons but practical reasons too; it is much easier to set up and tidy away just a few items.

NORDIC WINTER

A white Christmas may be unlikely in many parts of the UK but we can still channel the soft ambience and romantic beauty of fresh snow with our decorations. This scheme takes inspiration from some of the most festive places on earth; Norway, Sweden and Denmark. But this is a modern, design-led alternative to more traditionalist table settings with geometric details and a colour palette of off-white and pale grey.

Keep it simple and uncluttered with exquisite table linens in soft hues, crisp white tableware, and white dinner candles in rustic metallic holders. A touch of greenery scattered over the table elevates the whole look and gives it that much-needed festive touch.

If you love to use Christmas as an excuse to go all out, this theme can be made all the more impressive with the addition of a hanging 'centrepiece'. Geometric shaped ornaments hanging from a branch over the table will really wow your guests.

For more Scandinavian style visit Shannon in Walcot Street, or online. The snowflake decorations, right, are £10.50 from idyllhome.co.uk

Clair Strong Interior Design is a small, friendly, creative business based in Bath and London, providing services for residential and commercial clients. Visit: clairstrong.co.uk or contact: clair@clairstrong.co.uk.

