

# Southern Living®

## Secrets to Southern Charm

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Recipes & ideas for spring brunches, showers, and parties

**BEFORE & AFTER!**

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# SPRING PARTY

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Bring brilliant color to your table with hand-tied bouquets of peonies. Turn the page for more ideas from this simple yet stunning garden party.

*It's the season*  
of bridal showers and garden parties, and you're on the VIP list! Come behind the scenes with three of the South's most renowned hostesses as they share their best tips and tricks for throwing an unforgettable spring soiree.

BY JENNIFER KOPF MARKET WORK BY LINDSEY ELLIS BEATTY  
PHOTOS BY MONICA BUCK, PETER FRANK EDWARDS, JOHN KERNICK



Add a single fresh bloom to enliven your serving trays.



Let the warm glow of candlelight set the mood as the sun sets.

### An Elegant Garden Party

**THE HOSTESS:**  
Kristin Newman,  
owner Kristin Newman Designs

**THE LOCATION:**  
A private garden in  
Charleston, South Carolina



Event designer Kristin Newman

“With the peonies in full bloom, spring in Charleston is glorious. What better way to celebrate the season than with a dinner on the lawn that allows friends to enjoy a gorgeous garden setting?” says Kristin. “To keep it elegant, go simple and sophisticated all the way.”

**SET THE SCENE** For a really dramatic outdoor setting, use a series of 8-foot-long folding tables to create one long dining table. “It’s important to make sure all the tables are perfectly straight and level, which is easy to achieve with plastic or wood shims,” says Kristin. “I like to use simple linens, white china, and clear glass to create a neutral backdrop that allows the vibrant colors of the flowers to burst from the table.”

**GOOD ADVICE** Keep a relaxed schedule. Allow for plenty of mingling with cocktails before the dinner begins, and seat guests just as the sun sets and the table starts to warm with the glow

of candlelight. “Timing is everything, even when it’s slow and Southern,” Kristin says.

**WHERE TO SPLURGE** Wonderful Champagnes and wines are treats for guests to enjoy and turn cocktail hour into a real event. “Rather than mixing up specialty cocktails, take a purist approach to choosing spirits,” says Kristin. “Serve a rosé Champagne to add to the gorgeous pink palette, and use fresh lavender, berries, and peony blooms to adorn the trays of drinks. The fragrance of the herbs and blossoms will enhance the entire experience!”

THE IMAGE COMPOSITE: JANEY PETERSON/EDWARDS IS; PHOTO: JESSIE COOPER/PHOTO PRODUCT; SAUL LOEB/ANDRESON

**WHERE TO SAVE** The location—nature does it best! “Take advantage of the season,” Kristin says. “Lush flowers, the scent of tea olive, and a perfect spring night are the best reasons to turn your lawn into a dining room.”

**EVERY PARTY SHOULD HAVE...** Candlelight. “To use taper candles outdoors, we created our own clean, simple hurricanes,” she explains. “Place a taper candle in a small candleholder; then slip a long, slender glass cylinder over the candle and holder.”

**TAKE THE TIME TO...** Iron. “Ask anyone—an iron is my most important tool!” Kristin says. “A perfectly pressed tablecloth allows simple settings to look beautiful. I use 100% linen cut generously to give the table a soft, billowing look. Also fold each napkin identically. Paying attention to details like this shows how much you care about each guest.”

**ALWAYS ON THE MENU** Kristin loves to include seasonal vegetables and seafood made by her friend Callie White. “She’s an incredible cook and always keeps it Mediterranean in feel by choosing food that can be served at room temperature—that’s key to maintaining consistency when serving a large group,” Kristin says.



Rent classic Chiavari chairs for an elegant look that doesn't overwhelm the setting.

### GET YOUR PARTY STARTED

Stick with a simple black-and-white palette to keep the focus on the flowers.



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