

ARTSTAR

ARTSTAR BLOG

Entertaining In The Winter By Design Aficionado
Michael Bruno



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Michael Bruno, Founder of 1stdibs, is well known amongst the Tuxedo Park area for his entertaining. Creating lively environments for his guests to enjoy, Bruno has impeccable taste when it comes to interiors, ambiance, and visual appeal. Read on to discover Bruno's tips on how to host an ideal party for any season.

You have hosted a fair amount of parties in the summer, and winter. What unique

characteristics does this time of year lend to choosing a festive theme?



At our house, the season dictates the food which establishes the mood. During the winter we do more daytime entertaining. I love to take friends out on a hike or snowshoe. We live in Tuxedo Park which is only one hour from NYC, but it is surrounded by 70,000 acres of parkland so the great outdoors plays a big part in our lives year round.

How do you make the party space feel like a cozy escape from the cold?

I try to keep our winter treks to groups of six so we can eat in the small winter dining room; it's super cozy with plaid wallpaper, black forest carved animal heads, (we don't do taxidermy), and naturally-shed antlers in front of a roaring fire. The room has a large hunt side board that we use as a bar, so you don't have to go far for refills. In the winter, we wrap the room's chandelier in garlands of pine from a 100 year old tree in the front of our house. In that room it doesn't take much to make you feel like you are in an Austrian pub.



What are some tablescaping dos and don'ts?

We collect antique dishes, linens, and glasses and mix them up.

Do- have plenty of water and flowers on the table.

Don't- put serving pieces on the table just for show, just set the table with the pieces you will use. We like to keep it simple. The simpler it is the more you will entertain.



What are the major decorating challenges of hosting a gathering at home?

Having fresh flowers is always key; you should already have everything else you need to set the table. If not go shopping. You only live once! A table without flowers is like a table without friends.

Can you talk a little about the design inspiration and story behind Valley Rock?

Valley Rock Inn and Mountain Club is a project we are developing in the lower Hudson Valley. Our property sits in a valley along the Ramapo River that separates the 70,000 acres of forever-wild parkland of Sterling Forest and Harriman State park. There are trails and lakes in every direction. Our goal was to create a place you can stay and access the great outdoors with guides to take you hiking, biking, and kayaking. At the end of the day you come back to beds with Frette linens in a stylishly designed environment that makes you feel you have gone on a trip much further away than an hour from NYC.



Describe your favorite event that you've hosted and what elements made it so special?

In the winter we do Apres ski-style lunches most Saturdays. Every Saturday is different due to the weather, so it's as much fun for us as it is for our customers. For people that have never been to our property, it's a surprise to show up and eat outdoors in the middle of winter. We

have covered seating areas with heaters, open fire pits and piles of blankets so everybody's warm and cozy. We love the unexpected and the unusual. Our hope is that we are able to keep surprising and delighting our customers.*