



Narragansett Bay wedding flowers by Tom Mathieu & Co.



The 2007 Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach Annual Dinner Dance featured a blue-and-white Chinoiserie decor.

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Towering arrangements of flowering branches artfully created by Andrew Pascoe are always sensational. The tablecloths are Scalamandré's iconic "Resist Print".



TABLECLOTH TALK

I am truly amazed at the recent explosion of the specialty tablecloth business. Wasn't it just a few years ago that catering facilities offered only white or ivory? Maybe more if they were the over-the-top Grand Prospect Hall in Brooklyn or perhaps Leonard's of Great Neck.

But sometime at the beginning of the Martha Stewart era, party tablecloths began to take on a life of their own. First colors, then sheer overlays; now it's all about pattern and texture and embellishment. I have seen tablecloths that rival couture evening gowns, what with their lace, sequins and beading. Or high-tech fashion-forward expressions involving laser cutting, LEDs, even faux fur!

There are now sophisticated linen rental companies that offer an ever-changing array of options, along with large cutting and sewing companies that do nothing but make party tablecloths and napkins. Who'd a thunk?

I tend to be a purist at home, however, and as with my bedding and underwear (I know, too much information), prefer plain white. It never competes with the food or my amateurish flowers. And while I am probably the least domestic person on this planet, I take great pains in pressing napkins before every single dinner party. There is something about the smell of the spray starch, the hiss of the steam iron and the deliberate repetition required to do a good job that soothes me and puts me in the mood to welcome guests with open arms.

Ca me crazy.



Caviar Pie My Way

SERVES 4 AS A FIRST COURSE
OR 8 FOR COCKTAILS

6 hard-boiled eggs
2 tablespoons onions, chopped
¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted
Salt and pepper
1 cup sour cream
4 ounces black caviar (American Paddlefish works well)
4 ounces salmon caviar
Toast points, for serving

- 1 Grease a 6-inch springform pan with cooking spray.
- 2 Place eggs, onions, and slightly cooled butter in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Pulse until well combined. Season the mixture with salt and pepper to taste, depending on saltiness of the caviar. Lightly pack into the pan. Spread sour cream evenly on top of egg mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for 1 hour.
- 3 Apply caviars to the top of the pie, beginning with a wide ring of black and finishing with a center circle of red.
- 4 Cover with plastic wrap and chill thoroughly. When ready to serve, release sides from pan and place on a small glass cake stand.

Pass toast points separately.

BLUE HYDRANGEAS AND EXPORT PORCELAIN

As classic as it gets, but forever pretty and, in many areas of the country, plentiful, blue hydrangeas will always say "summer." When arranged in blue-and-white porcelain containers, the end result is the perfect juxtaposition of bombastic nature and restrained formality.



**It's always crisp, always correct
and simply elegant.**

