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These 5 Summer Hosting Trends Will Encourage You to Entertain All Season Long

Designer Sheila Bridges puts it best when she says to “embrace the spontaneity of the season.”

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Adam Kuehl

Memorial Day weekend has come and gone, marking the unofficial start of summer. Many of us are taking inventory of our glassware and **linen collections**, opening the windows of second homes that have remained quiet through the chillier months, and stocking up on **our favorite bottles of bubbly** all in the name of warm-weather hosting—both planned and impromptu. But even veteran hosts need a dose of fresh inspiration for the season ahead.

We've asked five hosting experts—from designers to tastemakers—to share the **entertaining trends** they're loving right now that will help us become better, more seasoned hosts and remind us of the “why” behind every gathering we have this season. Whether you're planning events from a city apartment or a coastal estate, these trends will empower you to invest in your parties wisely, leaving your guests and yourself more fulfilled.

Emphasizing Presence Over Production



Courtesy of Isla Capricho

Vanessa Douer, co-founder of **Isla Capricho**, says the biggest trend she's seeing this summer is a shift away from hosts focused too much on crafting the perfect event. She says that the idea that one has to feel like one's event is "Instagram-ready" is fading, as people want to be at the table with their guests rather than managing in the background.

“The best summer tables I’ve sat at were never perfect,” says Douer. “The napkins didn’t always match, there was probably a wine stain somewhere, and kids were running around. But the food was good, the conversation was better, and no one wanted to leave. That’s the feeling we’re trying to bring into people’s homes: tableware that invites the long lunch, not the staged dinner party.”

Designer **Sheila Bridges**, who **just launched an outdoor tableware collection** featuring a new Philadelphia Toile pattern for Walmart, echoes the sentiment and says she’s happy to see a greater emphasis on in-person connection and community for the first time in years, no matter the occasion, especially with all that’s going on in the world today.

“Whether it’s a small dinner party, a birthday celebration, or a summer brunch, I think hosting should feel spontaneous yet special,” says Bridges. “Many of my friends have been hosting potluck dinners again. I love these gatherings because it takes a lot of pressure off of the host and allows people to bring their favorite dish.”

Designating Florals as an Embellishment, Rather Than the Star of Your Table



Neil Watson

Lady Bamford, founder of U.K.-based **Daylesford**, says although the inspiration for her summer tablescapes often begins with florals or interesting stems found in her garden, she doesn't want them dominating the scene (or heavily scenting it, for that matter).

"I try to let [florals] be an embellishment rather than a distraction, so I will keep vases small and low in order for nothing to be tall enough to block anybody's sight," says Bamford.

Lady Bamford loves the brand's **Miro vases** for setting a summer table, though she also says Daylesford's **Stubby Bud Vases** are also great options for a versatile setting. She says bud vases pair excellently with hurricane lamps and candles along the table for a soft, atmospheric glow that encourages the conversation and cocktails to keep flowing long after the sun has set.



Thinking of Your Summer Table Beyond a Specific Party



Amy Burstyn Fritz, co-founder of **Misette**, says the hosts she admires most are those who set tables that are asking you to leave your mark instead of to be photographed. She says the best way to avoid getting caught in the trap of being photo-ready but not truly present this summer is to stop thinking about a summer table as a single event.

“The hosts whose tables feel most considered are running a season,” says Fritz. “They build a small library of pieces and reset them all summer in different combinations. The same linens and ceramics can transport you somewhere completely new depending on what you put with them—that gives you range without constantly having to buy more.”

Misette’s latest launch, the **Salon Collection**, was inspired by Fritz’s travels through Monaco, where she fell in love with the tradition of gathering for hours to play cards, backgammon, and chess. She says her pieces were crafted to nod to those old-school games on purpose, with decoration that asks people to play, not just admire the pretty scene.

Bringing Color and Pattern Back to the Summer Table



Houses & Parties

Out of all the seasons, summer tablescapes often get neglected in terms of color, with many hosts opting for all-white or beige scenes. Douer says that deep blues, terracotta, citrus yellow, and coral are the season’s biggest colors for the table and can still be paired with crisp whites and natural textures for well-edited elegance. Several of our experts noted that they are more interested in collected tables that bring a mix of high and low to create a special scene that can only be found at your gathering.

“The summer tables that feel exciting right now are colorful and collected: a coral jug from one trip, embroidered linens from another, hand-painted plates you’ve had for years,” says Douer. Plus, what better way to transport guests (and yourself!) to a favorite locale than with pieces and flavors you’ve collected from there?



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Embracing Nature’s Elements (and Taking Them in Stride)



Adam Kuehl

“Summer is all about hosting guests of guests and parties that go outside the dining room,” says **Houses & Parties**’ Rebecca Gardner, who’s also the writer behind VERANDA’s column **The After Party**.

Several of the hosts we tapped advised leaning into the seasonal beauty around you, whether your event is at a lake house, beach condo, or even an apartment rooftop. Bridges says she often entertains in more than one location during summertime to keep things interesting. Her parties often start poolside or on the patio with a signature cocktail and progress into her screened-in porch come dinnertime to keep bugs and intense sun at bay.

While summer can bring all sorts of unpredictable weather, India Hicks, author of the upcoming ***Entertaining with a Side of Chaos*** (out in September), encourages hosts to just take the summer in stride and forget chasing perfection, especially during a time of year that invites everyone to unwind. “Entertaining in the Bahamas teaches you that wind will rearrange flowers, napkins, hair, and occasionally entire table settings, so resistance is futile,” she says. “The trick to being a memorable host is to seem delighted when things go slightly wrong.”

Moving your party outdoors often requires rentals, and leave it to Gardner to ensure your card tables and folding chairs will still look chic this summer. She says that Houses & Parties’ table linens are made to fall to the floor of 8-foot-by-36-inch folding tables, “hiding their unsightly legs.” The brand also offers ***ruffled chair slipcovers*** to dress the “inevitable Chiavari chairs that are dusted off for these occasions.”

Some other favorite party tricks of Gardner’s for hosting en plein air this season? ***French table parasols*** for shading food at poolside buffets (chic and genius). And if you’re really looking to go all-out, Gardner style, her newest ***Lobsters & Lizards collection*** (inspired by a Tony Duquette sketch of a lobster and lizard stole, no less) brings a coastal New England flair to one’s table in a way that only she could dream up.



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