

HOUSE & GARDEN

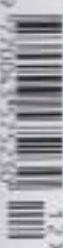
December
2016
£4.30

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**GARDENERS
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FOODIES**

**PLUS THE
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ALL SET FOR CHRISTMAS

DESIGNERS DECORATE THEIR TABLES
RITA KONIG'S DOS AND DON'TS
SKYE GYNGELL'S CELEBRATORY MENU



BESPOKE *Christmas* UNWRAPPED

DECK THE HALLS

Wise men and women share their tips for dressing the home for Christmas and preparing for the festive season



Willow Crossley, author and floral stylist

'My style is very natural and relaxed. For Christmas wreaths, I always choose blue or green dried hydrangeas for the base with dried red berries or rose hips and lots of vintage, feathered birds. I like them peeping out from the bottom. For garlands, eucalyptus is my top choice for foliage. It is the most aromatic plant and can transform your home into a scented winter wonderland.' Willow's new book, *'Flourish'* (Kyle Books, £19.99) is out now. willowcrossley.com



Sue Jones, co-founder of Oka

'Creating homemade things for the Christmas table makes the whole occasion more special. One of my signature tricks is my gold leaf vodka bottle cooler. Fill a waterproof pot with water and place the vodka bottle inside. Add gold leaf (this is not expensive and can be bought from Amazon) and place in the freezer standing up. Stir it every half an hour before it freezes. When it is fully frozen, run the outer container under the tap and you will be left with an iced, gold-leaf vodka bottle.' oka.com



Raymond Blanc, chef

'For me, Christmas is about being with my family and friends. Of course I cook, we all get involved, but I try to be as organised as I can so we have more time to celebrate together. There are several things you can do to spend less time in the kitchen on the big day: weigh out your ingredients the day before or if they are non-perishables, get them weighed out a few days before. If you have space in the freezer, spread the load. For example, make your pastry for your mince pies in advance and freeze it until needed.' belmond.com/feranoh/



Rachel Bates, founder of Rachel Bates Interiors

'I favour an elegantly curated Christmas scheme. My favourite part about Christmas is setting up vibrant drinks tables in the various entertaining rooms in the house. I use my 'Antoinette Champagne Cooler' and fill my 'Peacock & Blossom Magnum Cooler' with bottles of Laurent-Perrier rosé, which I then serve in lace cap hydrangea crystal coupes and my 'Peacock & Blossom Crystal Flutes'. rachelbatesinteriors.com

