

# Room for Design

by  
Gloria Cohen



Not so many years ago, the dining room was the ultimate in pomp and circumstance.

Today, thank goodness, we are more concerned with the personal touch in entertaining. Dinner parties have shrunk in size, blossomed with variety in food and decoration and spread out to every room in the house.

For big parties, we have accepted that wonderful invention, the buffet at which people get up from their chairs and move around and conversation goes on all over the room. And more and more, the big table that is giving way to more versatile round ones.

To be really pleasant for dining, a room must be relatively quiet—I mean the visual quiet of drawn curtains and soft light as well as the absence of clutter. An over-lit room is a horror.

The temperature of a dining room is also important. A too-hot room can take away your appetite. Before every dinner party, no matter how cold the day, the room should be aired.

When you decorate the tables, beware of centerpieces with too many flowers in too-big bouquets. Much more charming is a simple flowering plant in its own clay pot or a little wicker basket. And please don't have strongly scented flowers. The only aroma should be that of the food. Above all, a dining room should be comfortable, one in which you wish the dinner would go on forever.

The best new dining rooms are more versatile, more inventive, less constricting than ever before. They reflect our modern, relaxed approach to live.

Dining can be formal or unorthodox. It may take place in a foyer, an outdoor terrace, in a family room, or a formal dining room. All share a common trait—something special happens when you walk in and sit down in these congenial settings because certain requirements have been met.

The walls are covered with wallpaper, art, fabric, mirrors or books so that diners needn't gaze at an empty space beyond the table. Rugs or curtains or table skirts deaden clinking sounds of fork against plate.

There are flowers, plants or both inside the room or just beyond it. The table setting is planned to make food and drink look as good as they taste.

Dining, as opposed to eating, is a lovely little ceremony in our lives. It is

an occasion to anticipate, a time to talk unhurriedly, a place to linger. The highest compliment you can give another is to serve a delicious meal in a setting that pleases.

As mentioned, dining can take place in any room of the house as long as you set the scene and provide the background for dining.

For example, dining in a library. Books make such a glowing setting that some designers order them by the yard. A dining room-library is a popular partnership. Bookcases take no floor space, and dining takes no wall space and neither room needs fulltime rights. Lights on dimmers can be bright for reading and soft for table talk.

If you have to dine in an area of the living room, try to use a corner because two walls are cozier than one. You can even create a corner with a divider of some sort. Some corners have a nice window area with a view—all the better.

Big dining rooms and big art works go together beautifully. Art needs blank walls and uncluttered space and the stark tables and chairs need visual assistance. A ceramic tile floor, a modern art collection and dinner go well together.

Although it may be your last resort, dining in a hallway can be an agreeable solution, especially in an older, remodeled apartment where a wide hall or foyer can substitute for a dining room. With plants and floral prints on walls, it is a foyer disguised as a charming dining area.

A formal dining room offers the luxury of a place set aside for meals only, where the ambience should be as satisfying as the cuisine and conversation. There should be interesting things to look at, plenty of fabric or rug to muffle noise, controlled lighting and a little wine if you choose.

If you can't dine outdoors, you can cultivate a garden in your dining room with hanging plants, potted flowers and exciting, wild and country atmosphere. A country atmosphere will bring gentle fragrances to a room designed for pleasures. Mirrors will double the cluttered jungle.

Dining in the city can be innovating and exciting, with a country atmosphere is often a friendly get-together with simple charm and home cooking.

Dining room floors must be practical and have visual effects. Spills occur and the surface that bears the brunt has to be ready for it.

In a room with relatively few design elements each one matters and so windows deserve thoughtful planning. You deal with a view beyond and the control of sunlight. I prefer fabric on dining room windows.

A dining room must be ready to grow with the number of guests so it should be flexible. Extensions and leaves that pull out or add on are a bonus.

Does this column make you feel like entertaining soon? If I've whet your appetite, set the table, dim the lights and surprise your guests with dinner in a different room of the house.

## Phyllaine Lahiff re-elected by ADA

Phyllaine Lahiff of Farmington has been re-elected as secretary of the board of directors of the American Diabetes Association-Michigan Affiliate. The election took place in Detroit during the association's 30th annual meeting this month.

# 'Book Trek' signs up its space kiddettes

This year's summer reading program at Farmington Hills and Farmington Community Libraries takes elementary school-aged children into the world of science fiction with "Book Trek."

Each member receives a membership card for the space kiddettes, an explorer's log, which is their reading record, and a science fiction bookmark. Registration is still in progress at both libraries.

The space kiddettes may choose to read science fiction, or other books of their choice; then report orally to a children's librarian. For every two books read, the children select a science fiction game or puzzle, and have their name posted on the Space Bulletin Board which shows their progress along the treks.

"But that's not all," said Denise Albrecht, children's librarian. "Three super special programs are scheduled for reading club members, only."

A SPACE mural will be designed, painted and displayed in both libraries by first to third graders on July 11 and for fourth to sixth graders on July 13. All participants will go home with a free paperback book.

During the second Book Trek, members will create their own robots on July 25 and 27.

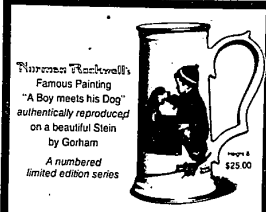
The third trek is called "Make-up Monsters."

"The necessary ingredients plus some good imagination is all they'll need for this one," Mrs. Albrecht said. Dates are Aug. 9 and Aug. 10. Specific times will be posted at both libraries. The club winds up with a party Aug. 11 for all members who have completed reading six books, or more, through the summer.

Party plans now call for a guessing contest of "moon rocks," a free paperback book giveaway, contest prizes, a movie and some space refreshments.



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