

## INTERIOR MOTIVES

# Table-toppers are important part of decor



NAOMI STONE  
LEVY

Your dining area will be incomplete if you don't think of what is to top your table as a part of the entire decor.

This will include linens, glassware, china, flatware, flower holders, candlesticks, salt and pepper containers, trivets, jam and jelly holders, relish dishes, cake plates and bread baskets.

First consideration? Very informal living vs. more casual decor vs. more formal environs vs. extreme elegance. This involves your backgrounds. Is your space an extension of the kitchen? Is this a separate and more formal room? Where do we begin? I am ready — are you?

When the home or apartment is small, and the dining area has a Formica finish on a counter or island, your accoutrements will be altogether different from that topping a highly polished traditional mahogany dining table.

For this I would suggest placemats and napkins of an informal nature. They are available in charming cotton

prints, oftentimes quilted. This doesn't infer they need be inexpensive and without taste. The china can be pottery, the flatware black-handled, the glassware of heavier construction, perhaps in ruby red color, and a small, low bowl, always in evidence, and filled with real geraniums. This sets the less formal mood.

### Stepping up

One step up the informal ladder would be a dining table of butcher block oak mounted on a pedestal. The mere fact that there are no legs interfering with seating allows the tabletop to be a mite larger.

Once again a lovely bowl filled with live greens should be permanently in use. Because the butcher block of white oak has its own charisma, linens aren't required. But I envision a colorful napkin folded in a fanlike manner.

The cutlery conceivably could be stainless steel in an informal finish. The dinnerware again can be pottery, in an appealing pattern. Include several sets of minute stainless steel colonial-styled salts and pepper mills. Include a set of four pewter candlesticks. Voila, you have the essence of "bon gout"

(good taste).

Maple, pine or oak rank as formidable woods for still another informal look. Please don't buy a suite. If you are desirous of any individuality don't match the chairs to the table. Paint or lacquer will enhance this scene. For added comfort use tie-on cushions in a durable, charming and synchronized fabric.

Dictated by the shape and size of your dining area is the shape and size of the table. Without exception I prefer a round table wherever it is feasible, because the conversation group is more pleasurable.

I sound like a needle stuck in a record track, but I never give up on an arrangement of fresh flowers. Once you have become accustomed to this look, you too will never give it up.

The bowl is critical to the final effect. Crystal, porcelain, brass, copper, pewter, silver, black glass, whatever. Just keep it low. The more distinctive the bowl the less important its contents. A few blossoms tucked in among pine needles is all that is necessary. The foregoing pertains to modern or traditional. The tabletop can range from glass through all manner of woods.

### Contemporary

And so we venture into a contemporary dining room. This isn't necessarily all steel and glass. It is a combination of simple forms.

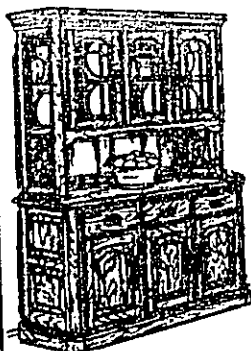
Top your table with a large grouping of candlesticks. All white bone china without any pattern would be a singular approach. Uncut crystal must follow classic forms. Flatware patterns range from the ultra simple English "Pistol" design to the more complex and remarkable Danish, whether stainless steel, silver plated, gold plated or sterling silver.

Linens cloths have become less necessary to the finished table. But our choices of napkins are awesome: real linen, extra wide hem-stitched edges, sheer, drawn threads, lace bordered, white or ecru, all elegant. I dislike the feeling of poly threads, merely because they are stiff and not very absorbent. Cotton is preferable by far. At this juncture it behooves me to list some of the trappings pertinent to all table topping.

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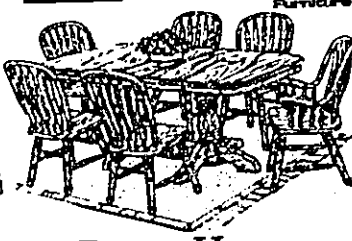
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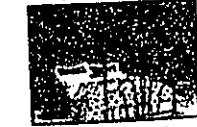
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