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The holidays are my favorite time of year. When else are we obligated to indulge in delicious food and drink, decorate our houses and celebrate with loved ones? This time of year is meant to be enjoyed, and this December I've got the perfect plan for sharing the joy of the season!

GREEN, WHITE, GOLD

Why not skip the predictable holiday décor and create unusual elegance this year? I love the stunning wintry palette...and the options are endless. Choose three chic, wintry colors. My favorite combination is apple green, white and gold. It's the perfect mix of crispness and warmth, much like winter itself (at least when indoors). Use this color scheme throughout your holiday details...from décor to cocktails and menus. These colors work beautifully on tabletops and outdoors, too.

The ultimate Christmas tree is dressed with a collection of fresh flowers, like orchids, chrysanthemums and carnations. Florals can be cut and water-tubed at the base of each stem for a long-lasting effect (available at your local florist or crafts store).

To make your table or mantle a festive focal point throughout the holiday season, fill your favorite urns, vases and antique containers with abundant white carnation blooms. This affordable flower creates a stunning winter wonderland. Simply trim your stems so the base of the blooms are flush with your containers. As always, mismatched containers with different shapes and heights add visual interest. Or, create gorgeous accents with easy, spray-painted white and au naturale pine cones. Try tying them with luscious silk ribbons for indoor décor. Scatter on a tabletop or in baskets outside.

SWEET TIDINGS

Host a decadent dessert party for the easiest holiday party theme. Inviting guests from 8 to 10 pm keeps the prep to a minimum and the party short and sweet! Greet guests with your specialty holiday cocktail. A *White-Winter-tini* is creamy and delicious: Mix equal parts of Godiva White Chocolate Liqueur and Effen Black Cherry vodka. Float white rose petals on top as a garnish. Stunning and delicious! Champagne makes another elegant, festive cocktail. Serve three vintages and let guests choose from three styles of stemware. For a new twist on sipping bubbly: Stemless Reidel glasses, traditional flutes and slim bud-vase flutes.



Next, offer the ultimate, decadent dessert and candy bar. Create a stunning spread with all-white candies in various-sized glass jars: Gumdrops, M&Ms, white chocolate malted milk balls, yogurt-covered almonds, white candy canes and white chocolate pretzels. Continue the sweetness with mini-cakes, cupcakes and pudding shots, served in small glasses. Decadent truffles and chocolate bark are festive when rolled with peppermint or nuts. For another lovely and easy dessert, fill a trifle bowl with layers of cake, brownies and pudding. Serve your delicious desserts on three-tiered stands and finish the table with white votive candles and fresh cedar sprigs.

Happy Holidays! **scene**

Debi Lilly is president of A Perfect Event, a Chicago-based national event-planning firm. Debi serves as an industry expert for InStyle Magazine, Martha Stewart Weddings, InStyle Weddings, Chicago Social and Chicago Magazine, among others. She has a faithful and well-known following, including Oprah Winfrey, among many other high-profile clientele. For more information, visit Aperfectevent.com.