

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

## 6 Tips for Hosting a Flawless Fall Party

Author and entertaining expert Annie Falk offers pointers for throwing a fall dinner party that everyone will be talking about

Posted October 19, 2015



A collection of pumpkins in the Hamptons, where Annie Falk enjoys entertaining during the fall.



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Author, cook, and philanthropist Annie Falk splits her time between Southampton, New York, and Palm Beach, Florida, where she is known for her exceptional entertaining style, hosting gorgeous gatherings—dinner parties, cocktail fêtes, seasonal celebrations—with every detail looked after. Her parties are legendary, thanks to her appreciation of food (she studied cooking with Roger Vergé at Moulin de Mougins in the South of France) and love of friendship and hospitality.

Falk has channeled her passion for hosting into writing books that benefit charities close to her heart. “My passions, in terms of giving back, are about the children and the environment,” she says. Her first book, *Palm Beach Entertaining* (Rizzoli, \$45), benefited the Children’s Home Society of Florida, which serves families in need, and proceeds from her second, *Hamptons Entertaining* (Abrams, \$45), published this past summer, go to the Peconic Baykeeper, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the aquatic ecosystems of the South Shore of Long Island.



“Entertaining is about sharing generously and creating an atmosphere where friends feel welcome,” Falk recently told *AD* in an interview. “Allowing food and drink to become the catalyst for sparkling conversation, the exchange of ideas, and memories in the making.”



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### **Invite the right mix of guests.**

“My rule is that everyone who is coming should know at least one other person,” says entertaining expert Annie Falk (pictured). “It’s interesting to see people connect with new friends. There is no greater compliment that when a friend leaves and says, ‘I loved meeting this person.’”



## **Welcome each guest with a drink.**

“A signature cocktail sets the tone for the evening. For fall, serve a hot spiced apple cider with shots of rum on the side. A benefit to this mix —if someone isn’t indulging in alcohol, they can have what looks like the same drink as everyone else.”





## **Develop a seasonal menu.**

“One of my favorite seasonal menus is the autumn feast I pulled together at Joan and George Hornig’s barnyard home in the Hamptons. We started with hot spiced cider, snacked on truffle popcorn, and then for dinner I served parsnip-apple soup, potato-crusted halibut with squash and arugula pesto, and an apple-raspberry granita for dessert.”



## **Follow three simple rules for seating.**

“One, the host and hostess should sit in the center of the table rather than at the ends. That way they can converse with more people. Then, seat people next to each other who you think will have something interesting to talk about together. Two, use narrow tables to keep conversation easier. Three, seat boy-girl. It’s a bit old-fashioned, but when women are seated together they can talk together and talk all night and never turn to talk to anyone else.”





## **Try edible centerpieces.**

“I always love beautiful flowers, but for fall, you can skip the flowers and use bowls of really fragrant apples and pears, Brussels sprouts on the stalks, and gourds of every shape, size, and color. (Just be aware of the height of your centerpieces. Keep them low so people can see and talk easily over them.) Add votives. And when the dinner is over, you don’t have to throw anything out; you can cook with your centerpieces.”



### **Get creative with place cards.**

“Place cards can double as a takeaway gift. It can be a baby pumpkin with a name card ribbon-tied to it, or a fragrant sachet of cinnamon sticks, or the mulling spices that were in the apple cider.”