

IN THE DETAILS

Designer Philip Mitchell shares his best advice for throwing a perfect holiday party — in just 900 sq.ft.

Text by STACY LEE KONG | Photography by ALEX LUKEY



Sofa, Philip Mitchell Design Furniture; **large artwork** by Troy Henriksen, Galerie W; **antique coffee table**, Patina Antiques; **Lucite lamp**, RH Restoration Hardware; **chair**, Andrew Martin.

WHEN DESIGNERS SAY they find inspiration all over the place, they're not kidding. Case in point? This holiday soirée, hosted by designer Philip Mitchell and his partner, advertising executive Mark Narsansky, which owes its very existence to some pretty fabric. "We were at the Brunschwig & Fils showroom one day, looking at these beautiful patterns. They weren't necessarily holiday fabrics, but they had these rich reds that we were inspired by," Philip explains. "We weren't looking to redo our apartment or anything like that, but we started brainstorming what we could do with them. We thought, 'Why don't we have a party and incorporate them somehow?'" One high-design theme, 60 guests and several bright ideas later, we've got the scoop on how the stylish couple pulled off this fab holiday party in their 900-square-foot Toronto condo.



ABOVE: Designer Philip Mitchell (right), his partner, Mark Narsansky, and their Ganaraskans, Wylo and Jacob, in the condo's foyer.



BRIGHT IDEA

Send out invites that reflect your theme. Use a site like Paperless Post or make a DIY version with cardstock and pretty pens.

▲ START OFF WITH A BANG

"I'm all about splurging on old-school invitations," says Philip. "People love getting something like that in the mail. It adds to the special feeling." Mark designed these ones based on the three Brunschwig & Fils fabrics that initially inspired the couple.

> **MAXIMIZE SPACE WITH A LARGE COFFEE TABLE** Instead of placing smaller side tables throughout the living room, Philip and Mark stuck with one large, central coffee table. A monochromatic floral tablescape made a festive focal point, while the table's edges were kept clear for cocktails and small plates. They also went with flameless candles — a safer option for a bustling gathering.



H&H editor-in-chief Suzanne Dimma was one of the guests at Philip and Mark's holiday party.



BRIGHT IDEA

Wrap a square piece of fabric around a round ornament, then tie the top with ribbon for an easy DIY decoration.



< **MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR THEME**

Philip and Mark's fabric-inspired theme also shows up on their large Christmas tree, which they placed tight in the corner to suit their smaller space (it blocks the hearth, but with a room full of people, there's no need for a roaring fire). The pair went all-out, decking its branches with ornaments covered in their trio of Brunschwig & Fils patterns and baubles in complementary hues. They also included vignettes throughout the condo in similar shades of red and turquoise. **Fabrics**, Lee Jofa; **rug**, Elte; **picture light**, Royal Lighting; **abstract artwork**, Stephen David Chizick.



▲ HAVE FUN WITH YOUR FOOD

Festive sugar cookies are a playful nod to the season; displaying them on a luxe footed silver tray elevates the sweet treats.

Cookies,
Petite Sweet.

▼ CONSIDER SPLURGING ON HIRED HELP

If the party's big enough, bringing in waitstaff makes sense: "I think it's way more enjoyable for the hosts to be able to visit with their guests — and not worry about mixing them drinks," Philip says. Bartenders and waitstaff usually charge by the hour, so for a two- or three-hour cocktail party, it's surprisingly affordable.



BRIGHT IDEA

Stock a bar cart or small bi-level table with clean glasses.

▲ SET UP DIFFERENT ZONES

Philip pushed the table to one side of the dining room to create an ample bar for the bartender to stand behind. "The caterer was in the kitchen, so we wanted to make the most of this area," he says. It also offered a transitional space between the busy living room and the den, which was quieter and more intimate. **Murano glass light fixture,** Amarynth; **artwork** by Andrew Plum (left), D&E Lake.

◀ SERVE A SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

A special tippie is a fun addition to any party. Here, it was white cosmopolitans, made with spill-friendly white cranberry juice instead of red.



"WE DIDN'T WANT TO GO OVER THE TOP, SO WE BUILT A CHRISTMAS SCHEME THAT COMPLEMENTS THE ARCHITECTURE AND COLOURS WITHIN OUR SPACE"



▲ GIVE OUT GROWN-UP LOOT BAGS

Sending guests home with a small token is the perfect way to wrap up a party, and these are especially festive. Every bag contains a pretty ornament and a donation on behalf of each guest to the Children's Wish Foundation. "I think it helps people get in the spirit of giving for the holidays," Philip says. *Antique console, Patina Antiques; photograph by Richard Barnes, Bau-Xi Gallery.*

BRIGHT IDEA

Set gift bags on or below a foyer table so departing guests can easily grab and go.



Megan Howlett, Mark (centre) and Jeffrey Leibel.



Servers circulated with a selection of tasty small bites.



Philip and Teri Kramer Goldberg (right).