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Interior designer Janice Kumar-Ward shows you how to gather, borrow and make items to create festive flair with a modern mood

WORDS AND STYLING JANICE KUMAR-WARD
PHOTOGRAPHY DUNCAN INNES



As a working mum with two young children and a husband who adores Christmas, in the lead up to the festive season, I'm always in a rush! We love gift giving in our family and cooking a special meal on the day and I'm always surprised (and relieved) to find that you can grab just about everything you need for the dishes themselves as well as the table dressing from the supermarket. It's the perfect place to pick up those last-minute things that have ended up being the making of Christmas around my place.

For this table setting, I wanted to prove that you could create a look that was simple but classic in a way that was inexpensive and fun to do. I chose a theme that revolved around glass and tin, trash and treasure (so many items could easily be sourced from New World). In this inner-city Auckland apartment, we worked in a compact environment to achieve a high-impact result while keeping your wallet intact. >



Real tip: To remove tin labels, peel labels off by hand then run tins through the dishwasher.

HOW TO ACHIEVE THE LOOK

The overhanging Christmas branch adds another dimension to this setting. The branch itself comes from an oak-tree pruning and is hung with assorted decorations from Citta Design. We used some clear nylon and a couple of cup hooks in the ceiling to hang ours and create a backdrop. This may work for your setting too.

The centrepiece is simplicity itself and a good way to recycle water bottles. In this case, it's composed of a line-up of Waiwera water bottles (to enhance the Kiwi theme) and National candles, both bought from New World supermarkets.

To make simple guest place-names which double as take-away gifts, I used Dole pineapple tins with the labels removed – pineapple Pavlova for dessert anyone? – and filled them with Living Herbs, in this case mint, and wrapped a pretty ribbon around them. The tins, herbs and ribbon are also from New World.

It's fashionable to mix-and-match vintage China with modern pieces so have a fossick around op shops for these if you don't have any in the cupboard. Our plates and antique filigree pieces are from

Murdoch McLennan Antiques while the black-and-white striped plates are from Citta Design.

I teamed the standard with the stand out when it came to setting the table further. The cutlery is an old set from Citta Design, that is always in use in my household as are the wine glasses. The glass tumblers are from The Warehouse. I bought 10 packs of 10 about five years ago and they are fantastic value at 99 cents per pack!

As a final touch, I added some classic no-iron napkins (again from Citta Design) but still keeping with the colour scheme and made my own Christmas crackers. Take a look at the Step-by-Step box for how to make these fun additions to the festivities.

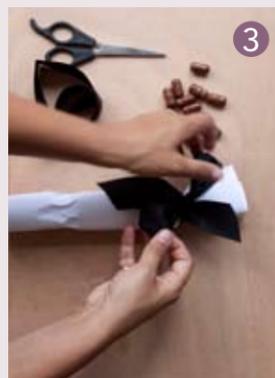


Step-by-step crackers

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Toilet roll inner
- Cracker popper, optional (ours is from Spotlight)
- Double-sided tape
- A4 paper for small cracker or A3 paper for added drama
- Ribbon
- Surprise, joke and hat, optional (I filled the crackers with chocolate-covered liquorice bullets)

1. Stick a length of double-sided tape on the roll and on the centre of the paper's longest edge.
2. Unpeel and adhere paper to roll to create a cracker barrel.
3. Pinch one end together; tie with a bow.
4. Fill with goodies.
5. Add the last ribbon – done!



Stockists
 New World supermarkets: www.newworld.co.nz
 Citta Design: www.cittadesign.com
 Murdoch McLennan Antiques: (09) 309 4757
 The Warehouse: www.thewarehouse.co.nz