

Ice Storm Author Rick Moody

Darien vs. I-95

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# NEW CANAAN DARIEN & ROWAYTON

October 2006 \$4.95

## Entertain with Style

5 Hostesses  
Share Their Secrets



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0744-7096

## Casual Elegance



KAREN ZUCKART with floral designer LORETTA STAGEN

The centerpiece is a combination of flowers, fruits and vegetables in autumnal colors by Loretta Stagen. Terra-cotta-colored orchids, roses and hypericum berries; green hydrangeas and trachallium; and burnt-orange oriental lilies mix with purple artichokes, eggplants and green pears.

Limoges wedding china elegantly complements Baccarat wine goblets and etched parfait-style water glasses, family heirlooms that once belonged to Andrew's great-grandmother.

The napkins and tablecloth are of rust handwoven chenille linen embossed with a flower pattern.



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A winged creature — a rooster, hen, swan, duckling, pheasant, pair of geese or a long-necked goose with a golden egg — guards each place setting at New Canaan artist Karen Zuckart's dinner table. "They're Herend porcelains," she says. "I love them."

A mother of three and graduate of the Chicago Institute of Art, Karen and her mom run Gingerbitz Gingerbread Designs. As a baker and enthusiastic chef, Karen has also been inspired by her mother-in-law's definition of hands-on gracious living and is unabashedly sentimental about entertaining.

One ace up her sleeve? Her husband, Andrew, who not only

cooks and makes a mean pitcher of spicy Bloody Marys but also cleans up. The secret to their wonderfully casual dinner parties is meticulous organization, which includes a written timeline for the week before. "When people arrive, I like to be relaxed," explains Karen. "I'll invite them to put on an apron and help."

The Zuckart children (Max, Sally Rose and Abigail) decide who sits where, and they make the place cards. Dinner might be roast goose accompanied by Karen's Aunt Carol's famous chestnut dressing. As for dessert, the selection of homemade fruit pies and cakes will usually include a mincemeat pie made by her father. "He makes it with lots of rum," Karen says.