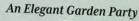
Southern Living Secrets to **BEFORE** Southern **CURB APPEAL** MADE EASY Charm Recipes & ideas for spring brunches, showers, and parties A PERFECT SUNDAY BRUNCH BEST BLOOMS FOR YOUR PORCH OR PATIO PLUS THE SOUTH'S MOST STYLISH CITIES **COOL & CREAMY** ICEBOX PIE









THE HOSTESS:

Kristin Newman, owner Kristin Newman Designs

THE LOCATION:

A private garden in Charleston, South Carolina

"With the peonies in full bloom, spring in Charleston is glorious. What better way to celebrate the season than with a dinner on the lawn that allows friends to enjoy a gorgeous garden setting?" says Kristin. "To keep it elegant, go simple and sophisticated all the way."

SET THE SCENE For a really dramatic outdoor setting, use a series of 8-footlong folding tables to create one long dining table. "It's important to make sure all the tables are perfectly straight and level, which is easy to achieve with plastic or wood shims," says Kristin. "I like to use simple linens, white china, and clear glass to create a neutral backdrop that allows the vibrant colors of the flowers to burst from the table."

GOOD ADVICE Keep a relaxed schedule. Allow for plenty of mingling with cocktails before the dinner begins, and seat guests just as the sun sets and the table starts to warm with the glow

of candlelight. "Timing is everything, even when it's slow and Southern," Kristin says.

Let the warm glow of candleligh set the mood as the sun sets

WHERE TO SPLURGE Wonderful Champagnes and wines are treats for guests to enjoy and turn cocktail hour into a real event. "Rather than mixing up specialty cocktails, take a purist approach to choosing spirits," says Kristin. "Serve a rosé Champagne to add to the gorgeous pink palette, and use fresh lavender, berries, and peony blooms to adom the trays of drinks. The fragrance of the herbs and blossoms will enhance the entire experience!"

WHERE TO SAVE The location—nature does it best! "Take advantage of the season," Kristin says. "Lush flowers, the scent of tea olive, and a perfect spring night are the best reasons to turn your lawn into a dining room."

EVERY PARTY SHOULD HAVE...

Candlelight. "To use taper candles outdoors, we created our own clean, simple hurricanes," she explains. "Place a taper candle in a small candleholder; then slip a long, slender glass cylinder over the candle and holder."

TAKE THE TIME TO... Iron. "Ask anyone—an iron is my most important too!!" Kristin says. "A perfectly pressed tablectoth allows simple settings to look beautiful. I use 100% linen cut generously to give the table a soft, billowing look. Also fold each napkin identically. Paging attention to details like this shows how much you care about each guest."

ALWAYS ON THE MENU Kristin loves to include seasonal vegetables and seafood made by her friend Callie White. "She's an incredible cook and always keeps it Mediterranean in feel by choosing food that can be served at room temperature—that's key to maintaining consistency when serving a large group," Kristin says.







1. Black Bow Cuff, \$20; jeweliq.com ■ 10% off with code SLIOMARCH 2. Striped Paper Straws, \$4/20; shopsweetlulu.com ■ 10% off entire site with code SLMAG2013 3. Flowerbomb perfume by Viktor & Rolf, \$75/10 az; sephora.com 4. Mini Gold Sparklers, \$4.50 each and 5. Striped Goodie Bags, \$5.50/20; shopwaitingonmartha.com 6. Bulk Cylinder Vases 6" x 6", \$59.99/12; candles4less.com 7. Light in the Dark Votive Candles with Holders, \$34.99/25; wayfair.com 8. Cora Dress, \$398; katespade.com

Event designer Kristin Newman