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A place setting at the table

By **Holley Simmons and Jennifer Barger** November 15, 2013

Aunt Mary can't sit next to Aunt Laura, and Grandpa needs to be kept away from the bourbon. Familial drama aside, prepping the table for a holiday meal can be an enjoyable act. We tapped three local tastemakers to create festive set-ups using easy-to-find materials. Some may even be in your china cabinet, meaning it'll be simple to re-create these looks at home. As for conflict-resolution strategies? We can't help you there.

Styled by **Sidra Forman, florist/chef**

Forman (sidraforman.com) dresses up local parties using a keep-it-natural aesthetic. "Start with nice things, then get out of the way," she says. For this rustic-yet-romantic setup (all goods, Darryl Carter, 1320 Ninth St. NW; 202-234-5626), Forman made place cards from monogrammed locket (\$18 each) hung on prickly branches found in a pal's yard. She grouped branches from her own magnolia and persimmon trees in a Watts pot (\$615) and bunched ranunculus, sage, oregano and lamb's ear in vintage urns (\$450 each). White plates (\$45-\$56) and antler-handled silverware (\$178 a place setting) offset canvas napkins that Forman cut from a painter's drop cloth.

Styled by Sarah von Pollaro, Urban Petals

Floral designer von Pollaro (urbanpetals.com) creates posy-powered decor for the Kennedy Center, embassies and such restaurants as Kapnos. For this eco-friendly look, she filled tin cans (with the labels scrubbed off) with grocery-store mums and both curly and flat parsley. "You can cook with it later," she says. A mix of family silver, lively accent plates and Moroccan tea glasses (plates, \$68 for four; glasses, \$8 each, Salt & Sundry, Union Market, 1309 Fifth St. NE; 202-556-1866) add to the eclectic vibe. "If you mix in family heirlooms, it makes the table like a potluck, with

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Shop

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a little bit of everything,” she says.

**Styled by Amy Rutherford, Red Barn
Mercantile**

In her Old Town decor shop (1117 King St., Alexandria; 703-838-0355), Rutherford mixes rugged fabrics, simple shapes and a smattering of vintage. She goes for a similar feel with this tablescape, lining up antique wooden candlesticks on a runner cut from burlap (sold at fabric stores). Her own white plates get dressed up with printed napkins (\$15 each, Red Barn Mercantile), wooden letters (\$9 each, Red Barn Mercantile) and pheasant feathers (\$6 for a dozen, A.C. Moore stores). “I like to keep my table simple at Thanksgiving, since there’s so much food on it,” Rutherford says. “And having place cards lets you mix up the seating plan.”

Photos: Jason Hornick (for Express)

