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The flowers

TRALEE PEARCE
FROM SATURDAY'S GLOBE AND MAIL

Karina Lemke, owner of Posies Flowers in Toronto, says the ultimate luxury when hiring a florist should be having your guests think that maybe, just maybe, you did the flowers yourself. And the closer the relationship you have with your florist, the more likely you are to create such an illusion.

Having worked with Judith Tatar for years, Lemke knows her preferences, and will drop off a sampler a few days before a party for approval. She knows Tatar's decor is crisp and minimal, the perfect tableau for the softening influence of flowers.

For the dining table, Tatar told Lemke that she was starting with mini-bottles of Veuve Clicquot. That inspired a collection of 13 mini-vases filled with matching blooms and greenery running the length of the table.

"Normally we wouldn't do colour," Lemke says. "But the orange and apple green really had a freshness about them."



Judith Tatar chose fresh flowers in autumnal hues to dress her table (*Kevin Van Paassen/The Globe and Mail*)

The clusters of vases also allowed Tatar to move them around if she liked, and they mellowed out all the wood, glass and metal of the setting. But the trick to picking a colour theme is to not go matchy-matchy. Elsewhere in the home, the arrangements stood on their own, much like the art of the lady of the house.

The large white and green Ornithogalum in the front hall "looked harvesty to Judith. It was architecturally and seasonally appropriate." It's also long-lasting, a point to consider if you have a busy house.

More holiday trend suggestions: **Black** To match the clothes and the nails you'll be sporting to holiday parties, expect to see a lot of black — both in vases and flowers. Lemke finds top-to-toe black a little too goth for the home, so she advises using the colour as an occasional sculptural note as she did for Tatar, with 'Black Velvet' Kangaroo Paw in the corner of the living room and single Dutch Schwarzwald calla lilies in the single bud vases in the bathrooms and bedroom.

Vases The monster centrepiece is out. "Clients just end up moving them off the table to eat," Lemke says. Instead, dig out all those square glass vases you've received with flowers and start planning odd-numbered groupings.

Neo-trad For a more classic palette, pick red or white for arrangements, not both. Lemke loves to group three vases: white hydrangea in between two vases of cedar.

Bulbs Tulips, hyacinth and amaryllis are classics that need little tinkering. Find a silver, gold or Byzantine red pot, add sheet moss and cedar clippings and you're done. 416-588-9061, posiesflowers.com.

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