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# Feast and Fashion

*Designer table linens inspire fine dining – any time*

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

The late Cajun chef Paul Prudhomme once assured: “You don’t need a silver fork to eat good food.”

That is true, of course.

But isn’t it nice when you have enchanting accoutrements to complement a carefully crafted meal?

“Too many people wait for something special to celebrate, sometimes only setting a special table for a holiday. But why wait to make a beautiful table? If you take the time to add special details, this becomes a sign that you care for your family and signals a special time spent with loved ones, whether a holiday or a casual lunch,” Santa Fe, N.M.-based textiles designer and retailer Aimee LaCalle told POSH.

Originally from Louisiana, LaCalle in 2016 founded her eponymous studio offering made-to-order textiles that are created via an innovative engineered design and digital printing process. Her line includes table linens as well as bedding, fabric, wallpaper and art.

“At Aimee LaCalle, we think of the table as an extension of food,” she said.

“People work very hard to make a meal for their family or for loved ones, and it’s the same with setting a table: purposefully and intentionally creating a moment of shared memories and demonstrating our care for friends and family.”

For some time now, there has been an epicurean movement sweeping the nation, stirring amateur, at-home cooks to experiment with locally-grown ingredients and globally-inspired recipes to create special meals for their families and friends.

Meals are becoming experiences – which more and more people, especially Millennials, value over material objects.

Table linens and kitchen textiles are increasingly finding their place in formal and informal dining settings, giving luxury designers and suppliers cause to develop new collections that tap into the trend.

“In 2018 we are giving full color to tablecloths’ designs,” said Enrico Cencetti, head of communication and marketing for Florence, Italy-based Tessitura Toscana Telerie (TTT). “The purpose of this is [to keep people] sitting around the table. It is a sign of happiness and enjoying good food.”

TTT this season launches nine new collections. Among them are the 100% linen Kactus tablecloth featuring a colorful cacti garden pattern, and the Coquelicot tablecloth depicting breezy poppy flowers in a gradation of red shades across a linen ground, “giving the sensation that a light wind is blowing on the table, and spring is coming,” Cencetti said.

Kim Seybert is one of the luxury table linens’ category’s pioneers.

Marking her self-named company’s 20th anniversary this year, she told POSH how the milestone snuck up on her.

**Flora:**

This new 100% linen Kactus collection from Florentine luxury textiles house Tessitura Toscana Telerie adds a soft touch to the prickly plant with a bright and fanciful design.



**Fauna:**

Designer Aimee LaCalle’s new South of France-inspired Dordogne textiles collection comes in six styles. Printed on 100% organic, heavyweight cotton, this one is La Forêt, French for the forest.

“It’s a big deal, but I almost didn’t even realize it was here,” she said, laughing. “I got into this business a little bit as a fluke, and I have enjoyed it so much that I’m still surprised so much time has gone by and how inspired I continue to be every season and every year.”

Seybert added: “I started this business as one of the first to offer fashion for the table, and I’m amazed at how much we’ve grown and evolved over the past two decades.”

Personality is at the heart of Seybert’s success, she explained.

“My message has always been to set the table that reflects your personality, and the interesting thing is that the rest of the industry has started to catch up with us to that concept,” she explained. “In the same way they use apparel, people like their tables to reflect their personalities, and that is what we specialize in. They want their table to look special.”

Never has that been truer than today, she noted, citing the role of Instagram and other social media in promoting fashion for the home, personal style and entertaining.

“Life in general is about having wonderful experiences. People today are putting good money toward having more wonderful experiences, and entertaining is one of those experiences people covet,” Seybert said.

Another category innovator, Sandy Chilewich is the founder of New York-based Chilewich – a design house and manufacturer of fashionable, functional table linens and rugs.

For her newly released 2018 collection, she and her team created new yarns from scratch by twisting multiple strands of tonal colors together.

“We developed weaves and tufted textures that deliver complex shades that are dimensional and never one note,” she explains in the catalog. “We digitally printed color gradations on translucent woven textiles producing an otherworldly glow on any surface.”

Four color-themed stories highlight the new offering: Pastel Punch, Sublime Greys, New Neutrals and Blue Denim.

“Our textiles this season were designed to enhance an occasion or mood the way that flowers do,” Chilewich explained to POSH. “Inspired by the infinite color gradations in a garden, the bright oranges to the palest peach, blush pink to wild purples, and the endless array of greens in between, our placemats this spring light up any table surface.”

More than a year old, C&F Enterprises’ upscale carol & frank bedding brand has quickly expanded into a cross-coordinate program that now includes table linens.

The mix spans placemats, napkins and runners in three collections – the newest one being Quinn, a bright painterly floral that is an extension of the bedding collection launched in January. Dec pillows are made to coordinate for a more complete setting.

The brand’s first table linens collection debuted last fall in tandem with the launch of its “carol & frank cares” charitable program to support the no-kill animal shelter Peninsula SPCA in Newport News, Va., near company headquarters.

“We started carol & frank with the intention of developing it into a lifestyle brand, and table linens are a big part of that effort,” Colleen Hall, director of marketing, said. “We want to offer a full room look not just for the bedroom. We’re applying the same approach we use for [parent company] C&F Enterprises, but in a different way because this is for the more luxury tier.” **P**

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**Personality:**

It is at the crux of luxury table linens pioneer Kim Seybert’s long-standing success. Her company this year fetes its 20th anniversary, and counting.



**Fashionable function:**

Chilewich is known for bringing contemporary looks and innovative constructions to the luxury table linens category. The Blue Denim collection “brings the same comfort as a perfect pair of jeans.”