

# All Through Your House: 'Be Our Guest'

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Every holiday is a reason to celebrate. Thanksgiving — all of autumn, even — is no exception. Combining Mother Nature's bounty, ingenuity and a bit of whimsy is lifestyle guru Chris Olsen's forte.

So we asked Olsen to create a fall-inspired tablescape. He designed a "living arrangement that can be used for Halloween and through Thanksgiving" with a simple change to the floral arrangements. He started with birch stumps, added 4-inch houseplants — which will last for months — and covered the table with moss. Olsen created pedestals using slices of trunks. For Thanksgiving, remove the pumpkin/owl and add a turkey statue.

## TIPS:

**It's all about the details.** You can purchase these placemats or create them yourself with burlap, cut tree branches and a hot glue gun. Stick with an organic feel that can be used with both contemporary and traditional décor.

**Add a bit more color.** Olsen said, "Use dried, dyed oak leaves, which can be purchased at a craft store or florist. I prefer real leaves versus silk so the entire arrangement is 'living.'"

**Minimize.** At each place setting, add a napkin. "I prefer not to use napkin rings, as they can clutter the table. Placing the napkin under the plate or draping it on the arms of the chairs keeps it accessible without crowding the table," Olsen said.

**Let your imagination go.** Think about your glassware and plates. Olsen used olive green wine glasses that can be used for autumn or Christmas. The tumblers were purchased at a flea market. He suggested adding red apples to the water for fall, and for Christmas use cranberries or sliced kumquats.

**Delegate.** If you cannot enjoy the party, why throw it? Hire a caterer. An ideal caterer has a chef, who can come out and plate the food for you. Consider hiring a bartender as well. "By the time you purchase the food and factor in your time, you'll probably save money or at least break even. Most caterers clean up after themselves, which is a plus," Olsen said. "Also, think about renting plates, glasses and napkins. You simply pack them, and the rental company does the clean up."



Chris Olsen