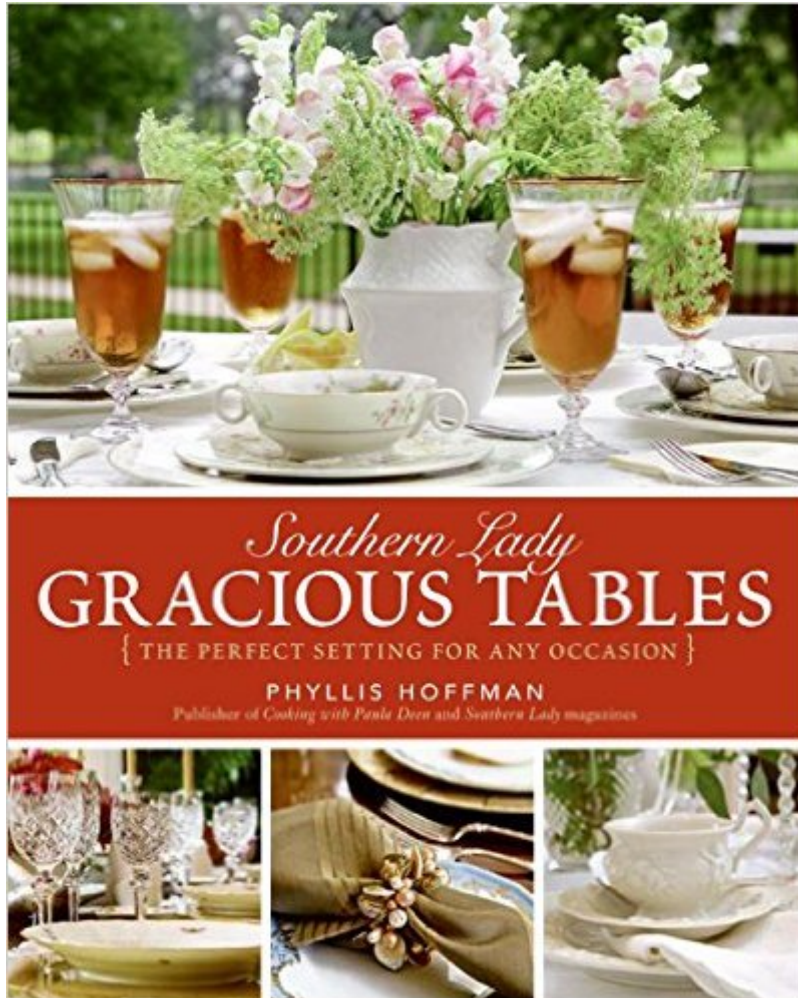


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# Southern Lady: Gracious Tables: The Perfect Setting For Any Occasion



## Synopsis

Entertaining doyenne Phyllis Hoffman shows how to prepare a stunning table for any occasion. So many of the events of our lives, from the formal to the informal, are celebrated by gathering around a table. Whatever the occasion—whether it's a holiday dinner, Sunday brunch, or a casual lunch with friends—the table is the place where we relax and enjoy each other's company while savoring a great meal. No one knows how to dress a table with elegance and flair better than Phyllis Hoffman, publisher of *Southern Lady* magazine, the quintessential resource for entertaining the gracious Southern way. Now, Hoffman draws upon her years of expertise to create *Southern Lady Gracious Tables*, the definitive guide to creating gorgeous "tablescapes" for every occasion. Starting with the basics, Hoffman presents a series of breathtaking spreads for a whole range of occasions, from formal settings to casual get-togethers, and describes how to achieve each look, right down to the recipes—55 in total—for her mouthwatering specialties. Enjoy a lovely outdoor lunch of tasty Fried Green Tomatoes with Crab and Green Chile Cream Sauce, or finish off a dinner party with delectable Praline Bread Pudding with Bourbon Sauce. Hoffman then builds a "wardrobe for the table," navigating through the complex world of dinnerware, fine linens, and serving pieces. Each and every element of the table—from fruit saucer to lemon fork to water goblet—is covered in a friendly, helpful way. Finally, there's advice on adding that all-important personal touch, with instructions on how to craft flowers, family heirlooms, collectibles, and other unexpected treasures into the perfect centerpiece, place marker, or accent. All along, her advice includes refreshingly simple techniques for presentation and encourages the reader's own creativity in playing with colors, patterns, and styles. Complemented by lush photography and told in Hoffman's accessible, encouraging, and deliciously Southern voice, *Southern Lady Gracious Tables* is a must-have for every aspiring hostess, south or north of the Mason Dixon. The perfect gift for any woman who loves to entertain, it has all the tools, tips, and inspiration you need to elevate the ordinary to the unforgettable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I purchased this book after reading reviews of it on .com and I ABSOLUTELY LOVE THIS BOOK. It is everything previously said and more. First, her dinnerware is beautiful - from the simple to the extravagant. All of her table arrangements are fresh and new ideas - not the same old stuff seen in other tabletop books I own. And, even though she may use expensive things (not all are), her ideas and design can easily be duplicated with what you may own. I am a dish fanatic not a cook. But, I was even interested in checking out the recipes and the beautifully displayed food. Then, near the end of the book, she has added beautiful and quaint drawings of the different types of dinnerware, explaining what each piece/shape is used for, e.g. cream soup cup and saucer...bouillon cup and saucer...luncheon plate...fruit saucer, etc. The next bonus is a section on artful flowers - again, designs that can easily be imitated/duplicated. Everything in the book has that "welcoming" feeling - even the formal table settings. If you are a dinnerware aficionado, you must have this book. I love it and know I will reference it frequently.

Being very familiar with Southern Lady magazine, which Phyllis Hoffman publishes, I expected this book to be gorgeous & I wasn't disappointed. It is full of beautiful photos of all different kinds of table settings along with Ms. Hoffman's very tasteful commentary. If you love 'pretty things' & you appreciate gracious living, you'll love this book. There are a number of recipes also, and having used so many recipes from 'Southern Lady', I trust these are as delicious. If you're a lover of fine dinnerware, silver & glassware, you'll wish you had all the lovely patterns; I know I do! I've already enjoyed this book so very much, and with the timeless elegance & good taste of Ms. Hoffman's ideas, I know I'll continue to do so.

The photos are gorgeous in this book and the ideas you can get from looking at them are abundant. I love beautiful china and have quite a bit. The missing stars in my rating are because, as I read this book, I found that because Phyllis Hoffman and her husband were born to privilege and have

continued to live with it she hasn't a clue otherwise. She talks about, and shows pictures of, the very expensive china and silver passed down to her from her family members. She remembers "sitting down with Grandmother Hoffman . . . and sorting through her heirloom silverware collection." She suggests purchasing a special set of "youthful and fun" china reserved only for the breakfast counter - not table - counter. Her accompanying photo is of very expensive designer MacKenzie-Childs dishes. I know, in the resources it's listed as Victoria and Richard Emprise but, that's wrong. Emprise is the new designer line of Victoria & Richard MacKenzie-Childs. The most ridiculous comment in the whole book was this: "Of course you'll want to offer your new neighbors a housewarming gift. A potted plant, a sterling silver picture frame, or a crystal bud vase are always lovely options. A casserole dish from the china pattern in which your entree is served [from when you have them over to dinner - which is a good idea that I agree with] is even more special . . ."

Really? Sterling silver, crystal, a casserole from your own china pattern? For complete strangers that just happened to move onto your block? Yes, I was disappointed at how many recipes there were but there is nothing to compare to the disconnect with reality in the text. My suggestion is to purchase this book if you love pictures of beautiful dishes and ideas for tablescapes - just don't read it. Use your own dishes, from wherever you purchase them and don't feel bad if your family members fail to have "heirloom silver to sort through" - this woman lives in a different world than most people.

Although not a Southerner by birth, Phyllis Hoffman's magnificent book makes me long for relocation! I make up reasons to entertain because I love it so much and want for guests to feel pampered, special, and "wowed." Hoffman's book is the ultimate guide to doing just that. The photographs are incredibly stunning and there are so many recipes...good ol' Southern fare presented in 5-star style! (I like to spend more time on the table setting than in the kitchen, so prepared foods from Costco are often mixed in with homemade!) I agree that not everyone who reads this book will necessarily have the cache of heirloom china, flatware and stemware at their disposal. Neither did I; however, I am becoming a collector of various patterns purchased from many different places, some expensive and some not (Mikasa outlet store, Macy's, TJ Maxx, Tuesday Morning, Pier One, Target). I have a healthy mix of china, stoneware, and melamine dishes that can be beautifully mixed and matched. I scour clearance sales in search of interesting stemware to complement the dishes in my stash. Estate sales, garage sales and flea markets are absolute treasure troves! (Where to put all this stuff? It's tucked in every nook and cranny I can find...even in rollout drawers under beds!!!) Hoffman has me hooked, and I am going to order

"Gracious Spaces" and subscribe to Southern Lady magazine this afternoon!!!

This was a beautiful book, my only negative was I thought it would have even more photographs. I am not a "cook", so while the recipes were wonderful (or looked to be) to me this is not why I bought the book. It was a beautiful book though and for anyone who entertains regularly is a must.

Pretty book. Title suggested table decoration and various how to's, but it's more of a cook book...not nearly enough table scapes.

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