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Preston Bailey and Debbie Lustig.



Bailey with his partner, Theo Bleckmann.



Natalia Echavarría

Think Pink

Colorful flowers and drinks to match put a brilliant blush on an after-dark holiday event

By Preston Bailey

Holidays usually involve parties, but this time of year the same Christmas decor is often applied to every soirée. My approach, however, is always nontraditional. Vicente Wolf, a longtime friend, recently designed my New York apartment, so I figured a cocktail party was the perfect opportunity to show off his genius and celebrate the season.

Instead of sticking with the standard Christmas palette, I complemented the apartment's grays, blues, and deep reds with lots of fuchsia. I had a metal tree frame made for displaying greeting cards and whimsied it with ribbon, crystals, and pink feathers, and I cut mini topiaries from foam blocks and inserted tiny ornaments and pink spray roses. Candelabra were placed on the exterior window ledges, upping the moody after-five ambience.

Preston's Pointers:

- Pick a color: Fuchsia was my holiday party's signature shade, from hors d'oeuvres to ornaments.
- Get creative: Instead of a live Christmas tree (too many dropped needles), I put up a large tree-shaped metal stand and used it to display the greeting cards I was receiving.
- Accessorize memorably: For the dinner table, place a decorated topiary or brilliant bouquet of flowers at each place setting.
- Serve something special: Olivier Cheng created the Preston Sparkle cocktail for my party. The rosy concoction is composed of 1 oz. Grey Goose vodka, 1 oz. elderflower pressé, and ½ oz. ginger syrup infused with lemongrass. Place muddled ginger at the bottom of a Champagne flute and add the vodka and other ingredients, plus a couple drops of lemon juice and a splash of grenadine for color. Top it off with Champagne and add a cinnamon-stick garnish.

I live in a loft, so my four-poster bed doubles as a lounging area. After stripping off the linens, I made it cozy by adding a fur throw and large pillows from Vicente's shop, VW Home, and attached garlands of hot-pink orchids to the posts. The food complemented the decor, too. Chef Olivier Cheng's hors d'oeuvres blew me away—cold beetroot soup, watermelon-feta bites, and foie gras nibbles. And we sipped Preston Sparkle cocktails (pink, naturally) created especially for the evening. Style really is in the details.