

# Home for the Holidays

AN AMERICAN LINEN COMPANY INSPIRES HOLIDAY AND DINING TRADITIONS WITH STRIKING DESIGNS

words by **Karina Antenucci**

Hen House Linens' mission is not just to sell table linens; it's to bring people back to the dining table. "We believe people need to be getting back together and connecting with those they live with, whether that's family, a partner or roommates," says Katherine Poole, the firm's creative director.

Poole, who lives in Raleigh, N.C., and Hen House founder Jenny Davids, who is based in Severna Park, Md., were college friends at the University of North Carolina. Both women were raised in the South, "where family is first, hospitality is second and food comes third at home," Poole says.

Casting disposable paper products aside, the design duo set out to create authentic and enduring traditions with their own families, like dining together around a table with cloth napkins.

Davids noticed a lack of quality cloth products that were easy to use for everyday meals and entertaining, and, in 2009, Hen House Linens came home to roost.

The company has typically shied away from doing a traditional holiday collection. "We really believe if you have easy-care linens in a great red and green, you can use them all year long," Poole says.

This year the creative team decided to branch out for the holidays and added Christmas-oriented items, such as a simple stocking, tree skirt and a few fun pieces.

Coasters, guest towels, kitchen towels and throw pillows feature holiday words like "Bright," "Peace on Earth" and "Have Yourself a Merry." And in keeping with the company's "use them everyday" mantra, all of the items wash beautifully.

"When you actually take time to sit down around the table, it's a completely different experience than a buffet where you stand around with a plate," says Poole. "It's much more comfortable and intimate, and you'll have conversations you wouldn't normally have."

Poole insists holiday table decorating should be



fun. "Pull out all of that crazy-good family china and incorporate some of the ornaments that didn't make it onto the tree," she says. "It's a fun time to play with the Christmas china or silver that you inherited and never use otherwise."

She also advises keeping the dining room table set. "When you have the table set – and it doesn't have to be a formal setting, just tablecloth and napkins – it reminds everyone that, at the end of the day, you are going to be together," she adds.

"In my family, whoever is the last one at the breakfast table clears the dishes and throws down a cloth and napkins to have it ready for the rest of the day." **O/H**

**Home to roost**  
Hen House Linens is a labor of love for founder Jenny Davids (left) and creative director Katherine Poole.

**THE DETAILS**  
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