



ENTERTAINING

# House Party

*Tips from the pros on planning your next get-together in style, without all the stress.*

**E**VERYONE HAS A FRIEND or family member whose home is a magnet for attracting guests. It doesn't matter if it is a special holiday gathering, an intimate dinner party or an impromptu get-together, people just want to pull up a chair and join the festivities. So, what is it exactly that has guests congregating in the kitchens and backyards of these homes? Read on for trade-secrets on the anatomy of the perfect at-home gathering.

BY RACHEL ARROYO



A large island sits center stage in this expansive kitchen created by Roomscapes Luxury Design Center.



For those who entertain often, a butler's pantry provides extra storage space and an added place for catering staff to set up.



This deluxe home theater offers the ultimate entertaining at home experience.

### Create the right setup

The trend of entertaining at home has been going strong for the past 10 years, according to Mercedes B. Aza, the vice president and chief marketing and finance officer for Roomscapes Luxury Design Center, an award-winning design-build firm in Rockland, MA. "Right after 9/11 we started hearing words like 'cocooning' and 'nesting' to indicate that people were staying and entertaining more at home," she says. "Ten years later the trend continues and the truth is that entertaining at home is an incredibly comfortable, cost-effective way to spend time with friends and family."

The homes that are well designed for entertaining, explains Aza, have open floor plans, multiple seating areas, large kitchens with one or more islands and sometimes a separate bar area or butler's pantry. But there are other, smaller additional features that can also make a home more party friendly, such as incorporating a warming or refrigerator drawer; installing a second dishwasher, or putting in a second oven somewhere, even if it isn't in your kitchen. To spice up the soiree, she says consider installing a small wine refrigerator somewhere outside the main kitchen area, or converting a central space into a bar or entertainment theatre.



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