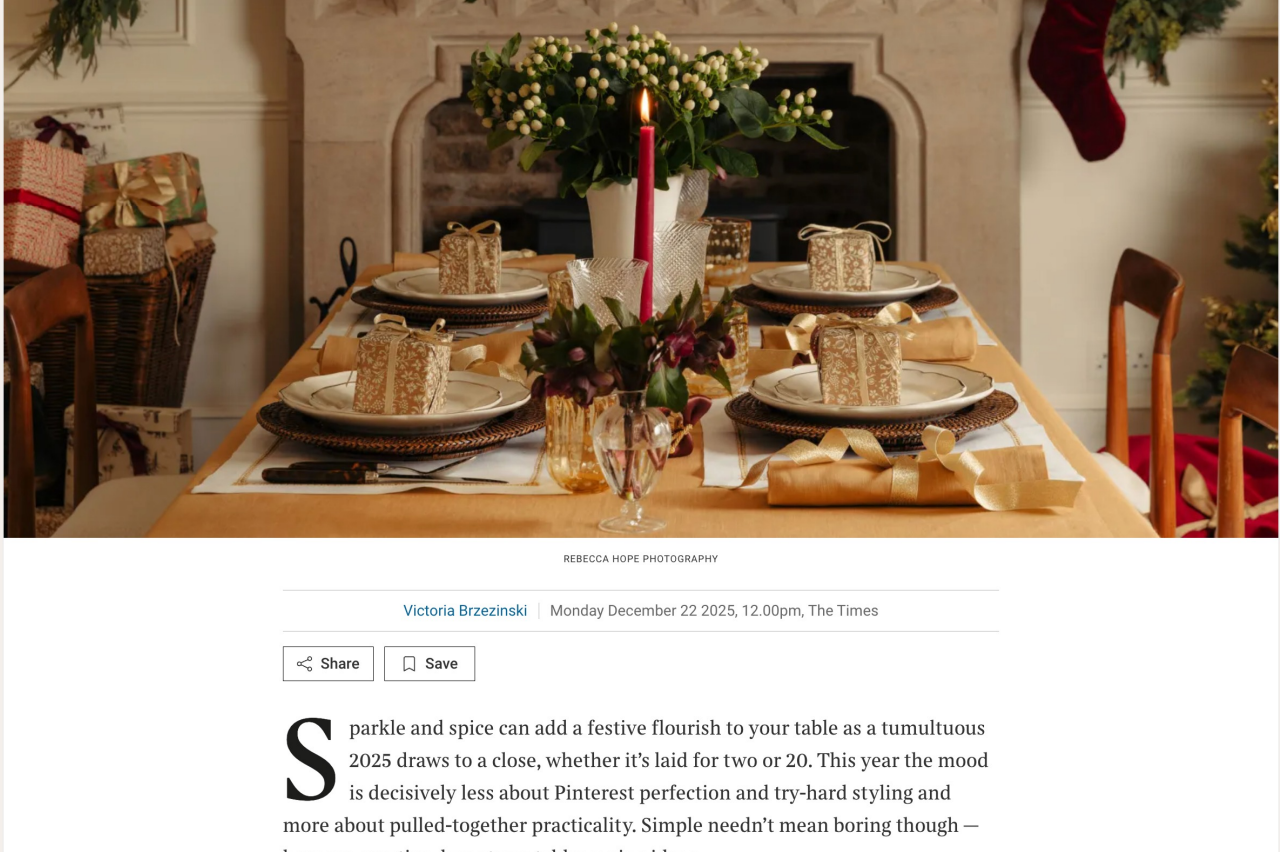




Four stylish looks for your Christmas table

NEW

Simple, low-stress ways to elevate your dining space this festive season – chosen by interior designers



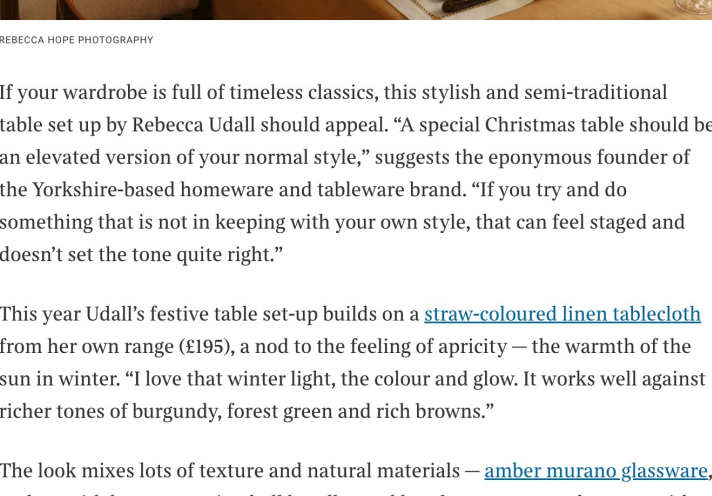
REBECCA HOPE PHOTOGRAPHY

Victoria Brzezinski | Monday December 22 2025, 12.00pm, The Times

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Sparkle and spice can add a festive flourish to your table as a tumultuous 2025 draws to a close, whether it's laid for two or 20. This year the mood is decisively less about Pinterest perfection and try-hard styling and more about pulled-together practicality. Simple needn't mean boring though – here are creative, low-stress tablescaping ideas.

1. Classic with a twist



REBECCA HOPE PHOTOGRAPHY

If your wardrobe is full of timeless classics, this stylish and semi-traditional table set up by Rebecca Udall should appeal. “A special Christmas table should be an elevated version of your normal style,” suggests the eponymous founder of the Yorkshire-based homeware and tableware brand. “If you try and do something that is not in keeping with your own style, that can feel staged and doesn't set the tone quite right.”

This year Udall's festive table set-up builds on a [straw-coloured linen tablecloth](#) from her own range (£195), a nod to the feeling of apricity – the warmth of the sun in winter. “I love that winter light, the colour and glow. It works well against richer tones of burgundy, forest green and rich browns.”

The look mixes lots of texture and natural materials – [amber murano glassware](#), cutlery with brown tortoiseshell handles and handwoven rattan chargers, with gold ribbons tied around a rolled linen napkin.

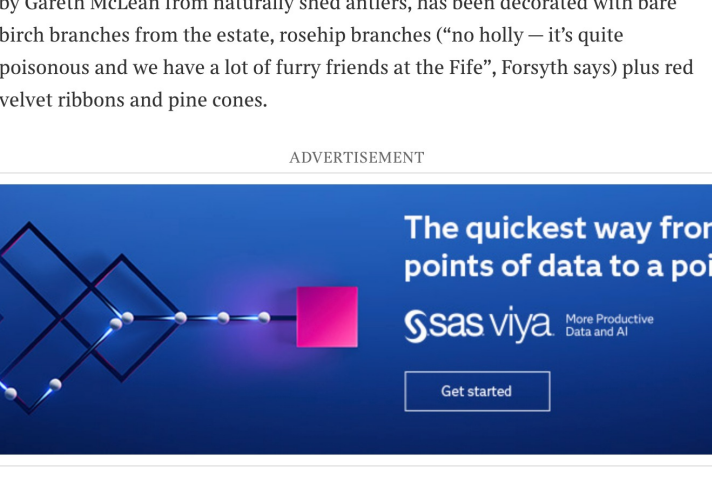
Nothing is too matchy-matchy. Apart from the seasonal greenery (winter-flowering ruby-coloured hellebores and white-berried hypericum) and the red baubles strewn across the table to bring a festive touch, the rest of the tableware can be used year-round.

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“Flowers of the same type in one vase are always really effective – a failsafe if you're not too confident with floristry,” Udall says. “Anything personal on a day like Christmas is so nice. If people have children, they could decorate gingerbread men to represent each person's place setting. Here, we've got little wrapped presents for each guest. Or you could have crackers. Have fun with it – don't take a table too seriously. It wants to feel natural to you so ultimately everybody can sit around and feel relaxed.”

2. Alpine chic



ALEXANDER BAXTER

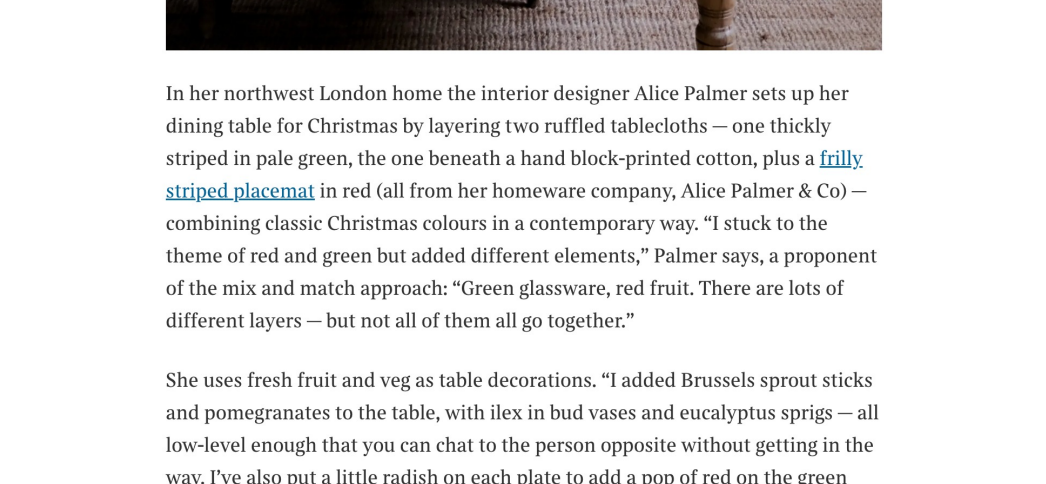
Until March 8 the Fog House at the Fife Arms – a five-star Highland getaway in the Cairngorms owned by the Artfarm founders Iwan and Manuela Wirth – is reimagined as a Swiss alpine fondue hut. Think flickering candlelight, cosy sheepskins slung over the backs of chairs, the smells of firewood and melted cheese.

The original brief for this space was humble and rustic, with the focus firmly on the food, explains the creative project producer Emily Kingzett. “The room is based on a Scottish fog house, the rustic shelters found on many estates. The Fife as a whole is quite maximalist Victoriana, whereas the Fog House is one of the areas which is more pared back.”

To bring some of this simple Scottish-alpine energy to your Christmas table this year, lay a red and white checkerboard tablecloth (similar 178cm x 178cm tablecloth, £25.20, [lovetablecloths.co.uk](#)), a “very Swiss” grouping of three bright red pillar candles (£4.50, [flyingtiger.com](#)) and plain white fabric napkins atop the plates, tied with a bit of red and white butcher's twine (£1.66, [etsy.com](#)).

The dramatic Christmas foliage by Nastashia Forsyth takes its cues from the “feeling of a forest”. The existing installation suspended from the ceiling, made by Gareth McLean from naturally shed antlers, has been decorated with bare birch branches from the estate, rosehip branches (“no holly – it's quite poisonous and we have a lot of furry friends at the Fife”, Forsyth says) plus red velvet ribbons and pine cones.

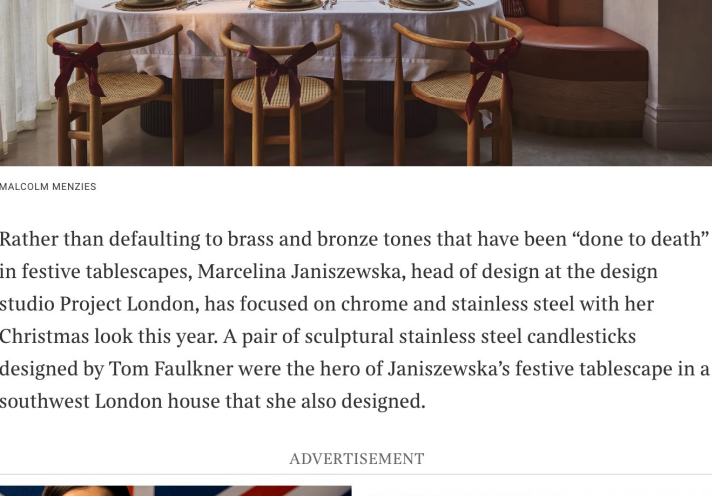
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“There's nothing that's not doable at home,” Forsyth says. You could tie ribbons and hang pine cones from a ceiling light for a similar effect. “Or if you could suspend a branch or wire above your dining table, you could add pine cones and ribbons to that.”

• [Sarah Moore's Christmas hosting tips: from cocktails to canapes](#)

3. Cosy pattern clash



In her northwest London home the interior designer Alice Palmer sets up her dining table for Christmas by layering two ruffled tablecloths – one thickly striped in pale green, the one beneath a hand block-printed cotton, plus a [frilly striped placemat](#) in red (all from her homeware company, Alice Palmer & Co) – combining classic Christmas colours in a contemporary way. “I stuck to the theme of red and green but added different elements,” Palmer says, a proponent of the mix and match approach: “Green glassware, red fruit. There are lots of different layers – but not all of them all go together.”

She uses fresh fruit and veg as table decorations. “I added Brussels sprout sticks and pomegranates to the table, with ilex in bud vases and eucalyptus sprigs – all low-level enough that you can chat to the person opposite without getting in the way. I've also put a little radish on each plate to add a pop of red on the green speckled plates.” For a cosy vibe, she keeps lighting low with table lamps – no overhead lighting – plus variety of candles. Palmer combines “stick candles and church candles in a hurricane vase, plus scented candles for atmosphere – [my brand] has a wood fire and pine candle.” (£44, [alicepalmer.co](#))

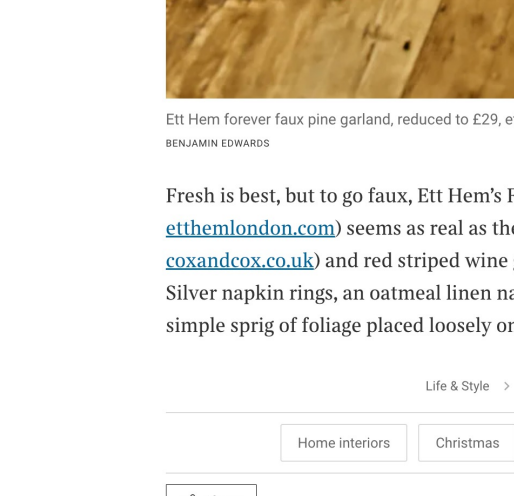
4. Cool-toned mid-century



MACOLLM MENZIES

Rather than defaulting to brass and bronze tones that have been “done to death” in festive tablescapes, Marcelina Janiszewska, head of design at the design studio Project London, has focused on chrome and stainless steel with her Christmas look this year. A pair of sculptural stainless steel candlesticks designed by Tom Faulkner were the hero of Janiszewska's festive tablescapes in a southwest London house that she also designed.

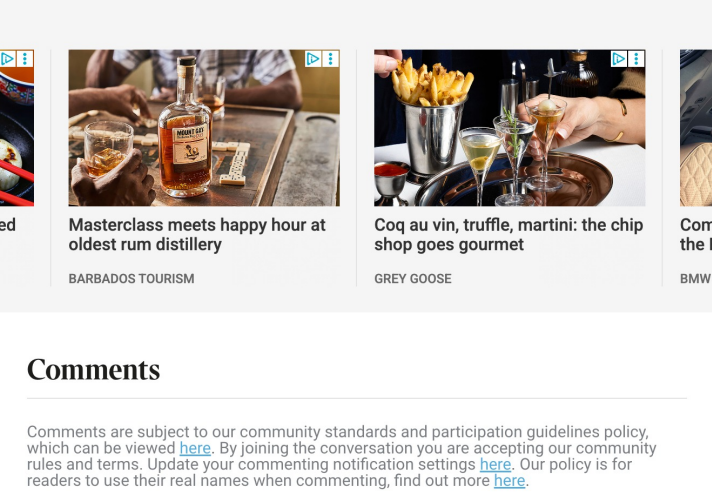
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“For me Christmas should always feel elegant and elevated,” Janiszewska says. She has stuck to three colours: dark green and burgundy with navy tapered candles, softened by neutral linens. A white Rebecca Udall tablecloth, finished with delicate stitching, is layered with a near-tonal runner. Burgundy velvet bows, tied onto chair backs, add charm without tipping into excess. Forget matching china; plates from two different sets add character. “This table doesn't look very OTT from afar but it's only once you sit down and zoom in that you can see all these small details. That's my favourite part.”

Janiszewska made a simple foliage garland to run behind the banquette seating, plus a centrepiece made from leftover greenery. “I always buy fresh flowers instead of getting a ready-made bouquet as I really enjoy making them myself. If you can, it makes it more unique.”



ETT Hem's Forever faux pine garland, reduced to £29, [etthemlondon.com](#)
BENJAMIN EDWARDS

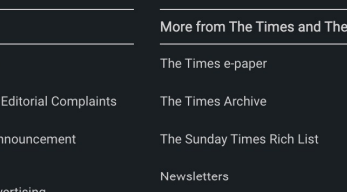
Fresh is best, but to go faux, Ett Hem's Forever pine garland (£29, [etthemlondon.com](#)) seems as real as they come. A cut-glass carafe (£40, [covandcox.co.uk](#)) and red striped wine glasses (£47 for six, [aka.com](#)) add detail. Silver napkin rings, an oatmeal linen napkin with burgundy stitching, and a simple sprig of foliage placed loosely on each setting complete the look.

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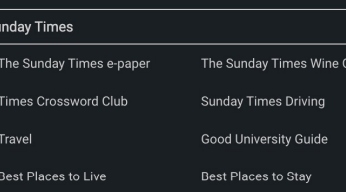
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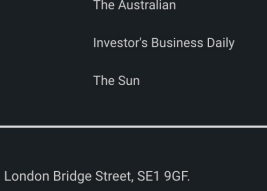
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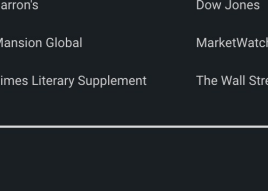
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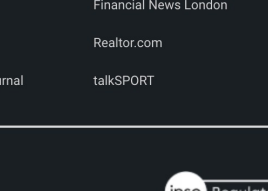
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