

VOGUE

JUNE

ON HOLIDAY
WITH
**Salma
Hayek**

WHEN
TO
LET GO

One Family's
Decision About
Life Support

SWEET
SOMETHINGS
SUMMER'S
PRETTIEST
ROMANTIC
DRESSES

YOGA
FOR YOUR
SOLE

A 10-Minute
Workout
for Your Feet

GLORIOUS
GETAWAYS

150+ INSIDER TIPS FOR
WARM-WEATHER STYLE

What to Wear, How to Pack, Where to Shop

FALL
COLLECTIONS
2005
A Sneak Peek



U.S.A. \$10.99
CANADA \$4.99
FOREIGN \$4.99

Evelyn Lauder, the consummate Palm Beach hostess, infuses her gatherings with glamour.

an
eye
for

Elegance

BY DAPHNE NIKOLOPOULOS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PRICE

It is Saturday night, and the home of Leonard and Evelyn Lauder is buzzing with activity. An army of chefs is marching about the kitchen in a carefully choreographed exercise of sautéing, baking and plating. Wine stewards are decanting bottles of 1989 La Mission Haut-Brion. Servers are adjusting their bow ties. The house staff is lighting candles and seeing to last-minute details in the dining room. In a few moments, 72 guests will arrive for dinner, and everything has to be perfect.

Even for the most practiced hostess, a dinner party of that magnitude would be cause to breathe into a brown paper bag. But Evelyn Lauder looks so serene you'd think she just walked out of a meditation class. Elegant in a long, flowing skirt and silk chiffon blouse, she floats into the room and gives a last-minute inspection. Place cards properly positioned? Check. Celadon and white roses perfectly arranged? Check. Tablecloths draped just so? Check.

If this party — a post-wedding-rehearsal dinner in honor of Elisabeth Polsterer and Wilhelm Anger — is any indication, Lauder has an eye for detail. She has created an atmosphere that is mindful of the honorees, with memorable little touches they are certain to appreciate, yet exudes all the glamour one would associate with the name Lauder.

In entertaining, as in all things, Lauder has the Midas touch: Everything she touches turns to the proverbial gold. As senior corporate vice president of The Estée Lauder Companies, the cosmetics giant launched by her mother-in-law, she helps develop new fragrances, from petal to public. As a photographer, she has captured the essence of nature and human interaction in a book called *An Eye for Beauty*. As a philanthropist, she has raised millions of dollars for breast cancer research, and has founded the largest



national organization devoted solely to funding research on the killer disease.

She brings that instinct for success to everything, including party-planning.

"A successful party starts with a theme," says Lauder. "It creates mem-

ories, and people love it."

For this dinner party, Lauder has chosen an Austrian theme. Polsterer, the bride-to-be, is from Vienna, as is Lauder. The two women were introduced by Estée Lauder years ago and

have since become very friendly, due largely to their shared background.

"Since we're both Viennese, we have an all-Viennese menu," says Lauder. "We have things like Smoked Danube Trout, Strudel a la Johann



Lauder is a collector of vintage porcelain head vases. This one is decorated with roses and a veil in honor of the bride, Elisabeth Polsterer.

Perfection with Loise

Evelyn Lauder offers the following strategies and tips for hosting intimate or larger gatherings:

- **GET CREATIVE.** You can take leaves from the garden and use a Sharpie to make your place cards. Be sure to write the names on both sides of the cards if not all the guests know each other.
- **PLACE LOW CANDLES** on the table, to light the face from below. Place votives around the table to create a warm glow.
- **LOWER CHANDELIER LIGHTING** to candle power. If there is no dimmer, turn ceiling lights off.
- **USE AMBIENT LIGHTING.** I have trees in my dining room, so I sometimes hang lanterns in them to add an *al fresco* feeling to the atmosphere.
- **NEVER PLACE FLOWERS** in the line of sight.
- **ALWAYS SET THE TABLE** the morning of the party, to avoid last-minute stress.
- **IF YOU'RE COOKING YOURSELF** and don't have help, prepare something that doesn't need attention at the last minute — something you can roast in the oven, and doesn't require carving. The best kind of entertaining is when the cook is not in the kitchen.

—D.N.



Guests at the Lauder affair enjoyed delicious opening treats, including Smoked Danube Trout with horseradish cream, Smoked Alpine Salmon and caviar in a cup.

Strauss, and Viennese Emperor-Style Schnitzel. We have made fun names for everything."

Aside from creating catchy names, Lauder also has kept a close eye on the kitchen, not hesitating to give her input to the chefs along the way. "I'm a cook," she says, "and this is my kind of food. I like to get involved."

Lauder has had a hand in every aspect of the planning, down to ordering the dessert: authentic Sacher tortes, which have been flown in from

Vienna. The Sacher torte, a decadent chocolate-and-raspberry cake that originated in Vienna's Sacher Hotel but has become popular worldwide, was a must, says Lauder. And to think — they almost didn't arrive due to a courier error.

"They got lost en route and we didn't realize it until the last minute," says Lauder. "We had our caretaker, who was in Aspen at the time, track the shipment down via e-mail. They finally arrived the evening before the party."

Did Lauder panic? Not a chance. "Always keep your cool" is her manifesto. She says: "There is always a solution."

Lauder's calm demeanor is evident in the mood she creates. For this party, she has decorated the dining room and adjacent sunroom around her collection of head vases. They're porcelain head figures — American treasures from the 1930s, '40s and early '50s —

continued on page 152



an eye for *Elegance*

continued from page 117

that depict fashionable women like Lucille Ball and Betty Grable. Lauder has been collecting them for years.

"They were a big fad in the day," she says. "What attracted me was their makeup, which is all early-'40s. The lipstick is very red, the rouge is round in the middle of the face, and the eyebrows are plucked very thin. This had an appeal for me, considering the business I'm in."

The figurines are a perfect fit for the Lauders' Palm Beach home. "My theory about having a home in Florida is to have it feel tropical and to be a beach house — not formal Park Avenue," says Lauder. "These add to the atmosphere of a beach house."

They certainly add to the atmosphere of a party. The head vases have been decorated with miniature celadon and white roses, and embellished with tiny bridal veils, in honor of the happy couple.

To temper the fun accents, Lauder has used elegant mother-of-pearl place mats on the main dining table, and silk tablecloths in hues of the ocean and the grass on the supplementary round tables. She has dispatched her collection of '30s-era

The Lauders' kitchen is a hub of activity, as the catering staff prepares for show time.

Murano glass vessels, filled with after-dinner chocolates, strategically about the tables. And she has brought out part of her collection of wonderful old linen.

"I love using my mother's napkins with her initials, or my mother-in-law's linen from her collection, as we have the same initials," Lauder says. "I have beautiful old linen from my aunt and grandmother. It's so wonderful to sit with a huge napkin that once belonged to your grandmother on your lap. You feel connected."

That's the art of the party, Lauder says: Sharing the things you are connected to with the people who mean so much to you. This party is the perfect example: Guests raved about the decor and the food. "They said the [Viennese Emperor-Style] veal was better than any Wiener schnitzel they'd had in Vienna," Lauder remarked after the party, adding that they hummed along with the Viennese songs and Hungarian melodies played by a pianist and a strolling violinist.

At the end of the evening, everyone — particularly the honorees — left smiling.

Another successful endeavor for the lady with the golden touch. ❧

Daphne Nikolopoulos, managing editor of Palm Beach Illustrated, can be reached at dnikolopoulos@palmbeachillustrated.com.