



## **SURPRISE YOUR GUEST** *with a napkin nosegay*

A pretty little plate topper speaks volumes about how much you care, even before you have a chance to say it. Plus, top floral and event designer Karen Bussen says, “These simple details make your table really shine.” To do: Fold a napkin into a square. Position a snippet of lilac diagonally across the square, then fold the corners over the stem. Cinch with a length of ¼"-wide satin ribbon layered atop 1½"-wide organza ribbon.

## **CULTIVATE CONVIVIALITY** *with a sweet setting*

You don't have to wait for a seat at a crowded bistro the next time you want to catch up with a pal—instead, go to your garden. Even the humblest outdoor table becomes a chic spot for a chat when filled with lilacs. “Their fragrance and lush petals are spring personified,” says Bussen. “And their pliant branches make them so easy to arrange.” Case in point: this gorgeous centerpiece, made by letting a bunch of branches rest on the rim of a pitcher. The hourglass shape of the vessel keeps stems crisscrossed, locking in the symmetry of the arrangement.

# Best-friends



## **FOR MORE INSPIRATION**

Entertaining expert Karen Bussen has designed events for VIPs like Martha Stewart, Robert Downey Jr., Marc Jacobs...and now you! Whether your gathering is for 2 or 20, you can tap Bussen's creative genius any-time through the seven best-selling books in her *Simple Stunning* series (Stewart, Tabori & Chang).

# brunch

Make good on that "Let's catch up soon!" promise with a lovely gathering for you and your best gal pal



## DELIGHT HER SENSES

*with a blooming "brooch"*

This charming accent makes twice the impact, combining the heavenly scent of lilacs with elegant tapered candles. Simply place an 8" taper in a candleholder, then tie a lilac sprig to it with ¼"-wide ribbon. (Hint: To ensure freshness, precondition the lilacs by smashing their stems with a mallet, then letting them soak in water for 30 minutes.)



## BOOST YOUR BOND

*with a happy heart*

A fanciful heart can add flair to many places, like the top of your table, the back of a chair or a garden gate. To make: Cut snippets from a couple lilac branches to 2 inches. Then attach the floral sprigs to a heart-shaped wreath base by wrapping them with wire, overlapping the stems as you go.

**Secret source:** 8 Inch Heart Wreath Form, \$3, from [MaineWreathCo.com](http://MaineWreathCo.com) or call 877-846-3797.