

FOOD & HOME

ENTERTAINING

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FLAVOURS

Great potatoes

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puddings

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crumble

Creamy tikka curry



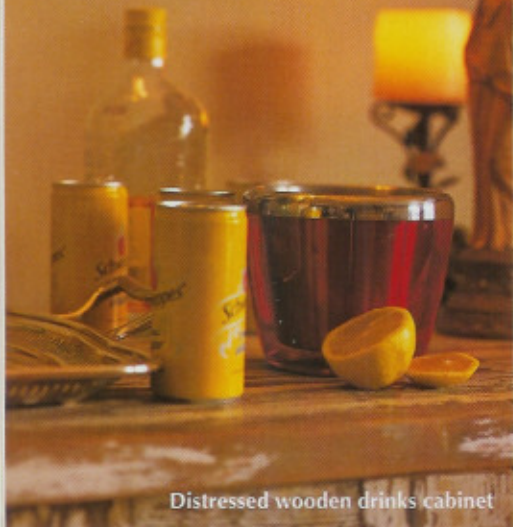
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AT MY TABLE



Distressed wooden drinks cabinet



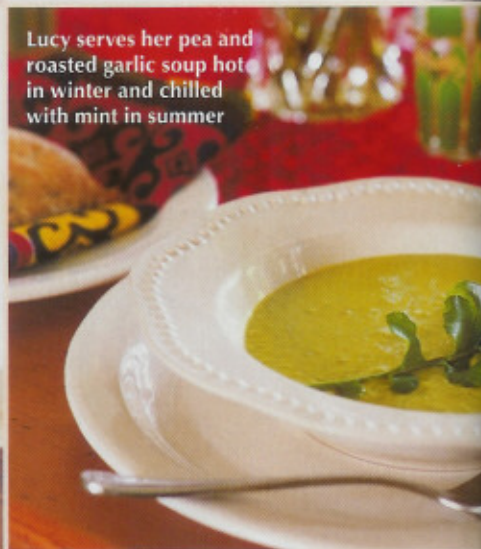
The bright red runner is a product of Gone Rural, a Swaziland-based company specialising in the contemporary working of traditional hand skills



The gorgeous hand-carved, painted clock was bought at a local exhibition. The horns are from Amatuli



Decorator Lucy Corder in the living room of her spacious Illovo apartment

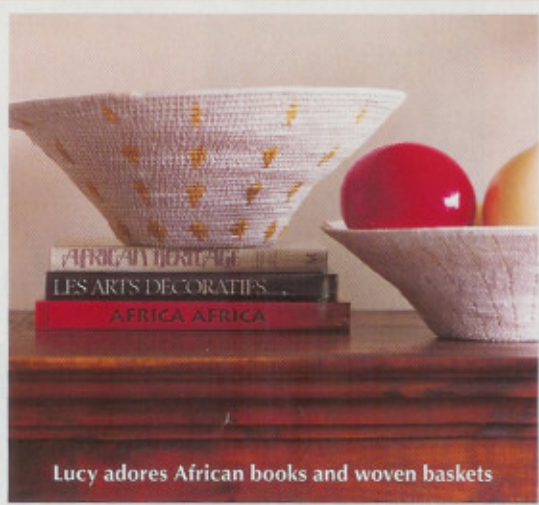


Lucy serves her pea and roasted garlic soup hot in winter and chilled with mint in summer



The kitchen door has been converted into a clever memo using blackboard paint

Natural set



Lucy adores African books and woven baskets

Specialist decorator Lucy Corder is known for her spontaneous, laid-back dinners where fun is the key ingredient

By Tess Paterson Photographs by Renelle Rampersad

Lucy Corder lives in one of those fabulous Illovo apartments with gleaming parquet floors and enviable views that stretch as far as Johannesburg International Airport. The expansive, light-drenched living room has ample space for an eight-seater dining-room table, and it is here, with a group of close friends, that Lucy's legendary suppers play out. "We usually begin with G&Ts on the enclosed verandah," she says. "From here we move swiftly to wine and the atmosphere is always very relaxed." Describing the requisite preparation for dinner parties as "admin", Lucy will only begin cooking when her guests have settled in, and even then it's got to be quick, tasty and hassle-free. "When I ask friends over they always end up around the kitchen counter, and I have to push them out when dinner's ready." Lucy has worked in the interiors industry for seven years, specialising in luxury game lodges such as Buffalo Ridge and Royal Madikwe in South Africa, as well as projects in Tanzania and Mozambique. "I've always worked on commercial projects, and I love being able to offer a full design service, which includes everything from staff uniforms to supplying operating equipment." Lucy's passion for the arts and people of this continent

continues to inspire her, and she describes her style as eclectic and vintage African. "By that I mean that I place a strong emphasis on old worn pieces with character as opposed to contemporary African styles," she explains. Lucy's quirky mix of treasured African objects, like the handmade timber clock above the mantelpiece, fits hand-in-glove with the flat's classical, high-ceilinged shell.

Known affectionately by her friends as "the salad police", Lucy creates menus that revolve around plenty of fresh vegetables, and today she's whipped up a pea and roasted garlic soup. "It's a wonderful dish," she says, "because in winter it's delicious served hot

"When I ask friends over I tell them to come casual," she says. "They always end up around the kitchen counter, and I have to push them out when dinner's ready."

with crusty bread, and in summer it's so refreshing served chilled with extra mint." Lucy simply then adds a crusty olive roll to each side plate before rustling up a salad of rocket, artichokes, spring onion, cashews and Parmesan. Not surprisingly, Lucy is adept at creating stylish and easy-going table settings.

Leaving her gorgeous oak table uncovered, she's added a bright red runner made in Swaziland, napkins made from fabric collected in Zanzibar, and a set of Deon de Lange's elliptical white plates. Two cream leather-clad benches provide lots of comfy seating, with simple slip-covered high-back chairs at each end. As the evening progresses and the wine flows, so the decibels rise. "I'm just too busy to spend hours cooking," says Lucy, "so we either go casual here, or we meet at our local pizzeria, just blocks away. I usually talk my friends into meeting there so that I don't have to drive. So, it's either left to Trabella, or right to Bellini's – depending on what mood we're in." For tonight's dessert, Lucy briefly considered making a pudding, but confesses that she simply didn't get around to it. "We've got Vergelegen Vin de Florence chilling in the fridge," she laughs. "It's all that's needed for a party!"

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