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# FOOD & WINE

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ENTERTAINING

# Nathan Turner

**2** Nathan Turner, owner of Nathan Turner Interiors & Antiques in Los Angeles, has found an extraordinary place to give dinner parties: his own shop. As he travels the world buying for his store, he also finds wonderful entertaining ideas. Here he gives his secret sources for everything from the perfect roses direct from a flower farm to the best dulce de leche cookies.

INTERVIEW BY ANN PEPI



**3** **How did you get interested in throwing parties?**

My parents entertained a lot when I was young. My favorite thing to do was to help my mom set the table. And I was obsessed with **place cards**. I loved figuring out where people would sit and writing down the names.

**How do you set your table?**

I have one 50-person setting of **hotel silver (1)** that I use 80 percent of the time. It's really plain and really battered, and I love it. I found most of my hotel silver platters and place settings at Paris's **Marché Aux Puces**, in the 18th arrondissement, and at Manhattan's **26th Street flea**

**market**, around Sixth Avenue. I've been obsessed with hotels since I was a kid. Hotels and room service. My mom would freak when she'd see the room service bill when we checked out. I'd have done a taste test of the entire menu.

**What's your favorite wine?**

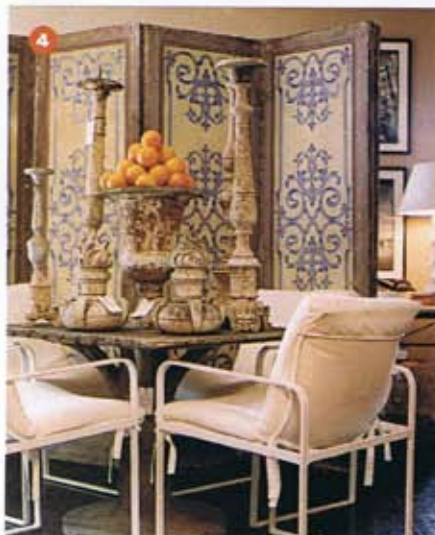
**Laurent-Perrier rosé Champagne (2)** (\$60). It's also my favorite thing to take to a dinner party, because not everybody knows about it. Once I invited someone over whom I'd just met and she brought me a bottle of Laurent-Perrier. I was like, "We are totally going to be friends."

**What's the best party you've ever thrown?**

At one of the first dinners I had at my store, I decorated with **buckets and buckets of roses (3)** from Rose Story Farm (\$75 for two dozen; 805-566-4885 or [rosetoryfarm.com](http://rosetoryfarm.com)). Instead of fields of corn, they grow fields of garden roses—almost every variety, every color. The smells are radical. After dinner, we ended up sitting outside until midnight, eating **Gorgonzola drizzled with honey** and drinking wine.

**Do you often entertain at your store?**

I probably do **dinner parties at the store (4)** most of the time



PHOTOGRAPHS: JESSICA BOONE (TURNER); MICHAEL WESCHLER (FORKS, STORE); YUNHEE KIM (BOTTLE)

**Any party fiascos?** “Once I baked a chicken in a bag and the bag caught on fire. But you just order Chinese and put it in your hotel silver bowls—you go with it.” —Nathan Turner

(636 N. Almont Dr.; 310-275-1209). I have more space there than at home, so my **KitchenAid mixer** ended up there and so did my **Cuisinart food processor**. It's a pain to carry it back and forth, so I just make everything at the store. You wouldn't believe that I could cook for 45 all by myself out of the little closet of a kitchen at my shop.

**What food do you serve at parties?**

I like simple desserts like **fruit crumbles**. My mom has an orchard with apple, peach, pear and apricot trees on her ranch in northern Nevada, near Lake Tahoe. I usually go visit every September, and we can fruit for something like four days. I have a gazillion jars of canned apples, canned pears, canned this, canned that, so you can just dump a jar in a pan, sprinkle on the crumble and put it in the oven.

**Where are your favorite places to scout for items for your store?**

I buy a lot of items for the store in France, Italy and Belgium. Belgium is insane, they have such great design skills there. When I go to Antwerp, I stay at the boutique hotel **De Witte Lelie** (Keizerstraat 16-18; 011-32-3-226-19-66). One of my favorite things to do in Europe is walk around at night when everything is closed and look at all the stores' window displays when they're all lit up.

**What are some of your favorite hotels and restaurants?**

I really like the **Hotel Torre di Belosguardo (5)** in Florence (2 Via Roti Michelozzi; 011-39-055-229-8145). As for restaurants in Mexico City, I go to **Fonda el Refugio**, which has amazing food and design (Liverpool 166; 011-52-55-5525-8128).

**Where have you traveled recently?**

I love going to new places. I just went to **Gran Roque**, an island off the coast of Venezuela. The plane lands and you get that buzz, the feeling that you've never seen this place before. There are only a few places to stay there. I loved eating at **Posada Acuarela**, an 11-room inn run by an Italian couple. They serve a mix of Italian dishes—antipasti, pastas—and Venezuelan-inspired ones like seviche (011-58-237-221-12-28 or posadaacuarela.com).

**What's your favorite style of furniture?**

I like really simple lines. After Louis the XVI, when designs were crazy and over the top, came the **Directoire period**, which was the opposite because people wanted to rebel. Directoire lasted only five years—1795 to 1799—but it's my favorite style of **French furniture (6)**.

**Do you ever give theme parties?**

All the time. I've even done a whole party around a drink, a **Pimm's cup party**. I made huge pitchers of the cocktail, with lime, orange, lemon and mint. I took those citrus colors and incorporated them into the decor. Another time I threw an Argentinean **asado** (barbecue) party for **Soledad and Alessandro Twombly**. I grilled the meat in the back of the store

and served **alfajores (7)** for dessert. They're like South American Oreos—dulce de leche gets sandwiched between two cookies, and the whole thing is dipped in chocolate (\$30 from Amigofoods; 800-627-2544 or amigofoods.com).

**What's next for your store?**

I'm working on a line of textiles for **Claremont Fabrics**—upholstery, drapery, tablecloths—inspired by the antiques around me. ●

