

HOSTING A beautiful, bountiful BABY SHOWER

shade, the hostess decided to incorporate an egg and bird theme, as well. After all, the egg suggests birth and new life. It was perfect.

THE INVITATIONS

Blue and brown invitations from Inviting Company were perfect for this event. A simple design, the invitations could have been used for any number of occasions, since there was nothing on them to lock the hostess into a baby theme.

Inviting Company has lots of designs to choose from, both themed and non-themed. In this case, the hostess knew her friend wouldn't want anything overly "baby" for her invitations. She found a bird and nest icon on the Internet and centered it at the top and printed the invitations in chocolate brown ink.

THE TABLE

The hostess found a chocolate brown under-cloth and a burlap topper for her tables from Southern Events Party Rentals. Layering is the key to give a table depth, so she added twig place mats that really popped on the light brown burlap cloth. Robin's egg blue china was topped with pewter dessert plates. Pewter flatware rounded out the look.

By keeping the look neutral with mostly browns, the blue didn't seem overwhelming. When choosing a color scheme, I always advise using punches of color carefully. Unless you are going for a "Palm Beachy" table with lots of sorbet colors, it's usually best to carefully incorporate color.

paper, ribbons and balloons. Someone grabbed some fill-in invitations, and the event was off and running. These days, however, it's a whole different story. Baby showers are quite posh and can have many variations.

One recent Franklin shower was a case in point. The expectant mom was a wardrobe stylist, so the traditional blue and white simply wouldn't do for the hostess. She knew her designer friend would have high expectations for this event, so she kicked her creative juices into high gear.

Her first step was choosing the colors. Because the mom-to-be was expecting a boy, the designer decided to go with robin's egg blue and chocolate brown. She knew the color scheme would be more appealing than traditional blue and white. Inspired by the robin's egg



THE JOY OF A PENDING BIRTH is enough to make most self-respecting women go crazy. A girlfriend announces the good news, and a gaggle of girlfriends jump into action planning a shower for her.

In the old days, a baby shower usually revolved around pink and blue crepe



Rental outlets like Southern Events have tons to choose from and also have a staff eager to offer advice. They can make suggestions once you let them know your vision.

As a final flourish, the hostess hired calligrapher Angela Riemann of Unique Ink to create place cards for each guest. It was a small touch that many people would have overlooked, but it added a lot of panache to the tables and caused the guests to sit up and take notice!

THE FLOWERS

The bird and egg theme and twiggy mats conjured up a polished yet woody tableau. The florist, Elaine McCord of Elaine McCord Floral Designs, picked up on the theme and decided that the blue hydrangea was the perfect bloom to use for this look. The hydrangea was the base of an arrangement that was topped off with a massive branch that held a bird's nest and faux eggs.

Pros like McCord can usually flesh out your ideas if you give them the direction you are heading in. They might even make suggestions you had never thought of.

THE MENU

A baby shower brunch menu can't be too varied, by nature, so the hostess chose the traditional with a twist. Instead of hash browns, she served sweet potato hash browns.

She again took a cue from the color scheme when selecting the menu. All pregnant women crave chocolate, don't they? Everyone loves chocolate! This hostess picked up an assortment of hand-made chocolates from Schokolad in Cool Springs. Each one was decadent and beautiful, so instead of serving them on a flat tray, she put them on a tower of cake plates to make them a focal point of the brunch – just like a floral centerpiece! Placed on an empty birdbath, the whole effect was dramatic. Fresh strawberries kept the look from being too dark and provided a nice contrast.

Alcohol-free chocolate cocktails were also served. Iced coffee was purchased in advance and martini glasses were rimmed with chocolate syrup. The effect was very dramatic and so yummy.

THE GIFTS

For the sophisticated mother-to-be, the Plaid Rabbit in Cool Springs is the only place to shop. Complete with a registry for baby gifts, Plaid Rabbit has it all. Bugaboo Frog strollers, gorgeous Moses baskets, day gowns – the list goes on and on. And now that you can buy her items online (plaidrabbitbaby.com), there's no reason why the expectant mother isn't well-armed for baby's arrival!

Angie Patterson, the owner of the Plaid Rabbit, says that she loves her work. She enjoys the expectant joy of the mothers, grandmothers, aunts and friends who come into her shop looking items for a new little one. And while styles change, she says that there are some classics to rely on when registering or buying a gift for a baby.

"Day gowns are always a classic," Patterson says. "Beautiful booties, blankets, burp cloths and bibs are also staples that any mother-to-be will love. For something a little different, a stylish diaper bag or a picture frame are perfect."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER...

As I always say, inspiration can be found anywhere, so keep your eyes open. In this case, it was found in the robin's egg blue and chocolate brown color scheme that led our hostess to use a bird and nest theme and serve chocolate. You might be surprised where your creativity will take you.

Every woman wants to have a beautiful baby shower. Pregnancy is such a wonderful time. Our hostess knew right away what look her friend would love and went with it. To be a successful hostess, you must remember that. It might not be a look you would choose yourself, but that doesn't matter. It's like buying a gift for someone. You don't select something you would like ... you choose something the recipient would like.

Our hostess went the extra mile in planning this event. She trimmed costs by preparing the food herself. However, she chose to spend a little more on the rentals and flowers, since they made such a statement. In the end, the day was a huge success. Everyone raved and the mother-to-be cried.

Doesn't that make it all worthwhile? ☺

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