



*Text by* LAUREN FERGUSON    *Photography by* MAJOR ADAM COLBERT

# Take the Party Outside

Doug Davis, interior designer at Tracery Interiors, may live in a 530-square foot cottage, but with a side yard readymade for entertaining, his little abode on Montevallo Road lives large.



*“We love to go back and help with parties at houses we have designed. It’s fun to use the space and see other people enjoy it.”*

—Doug Davis



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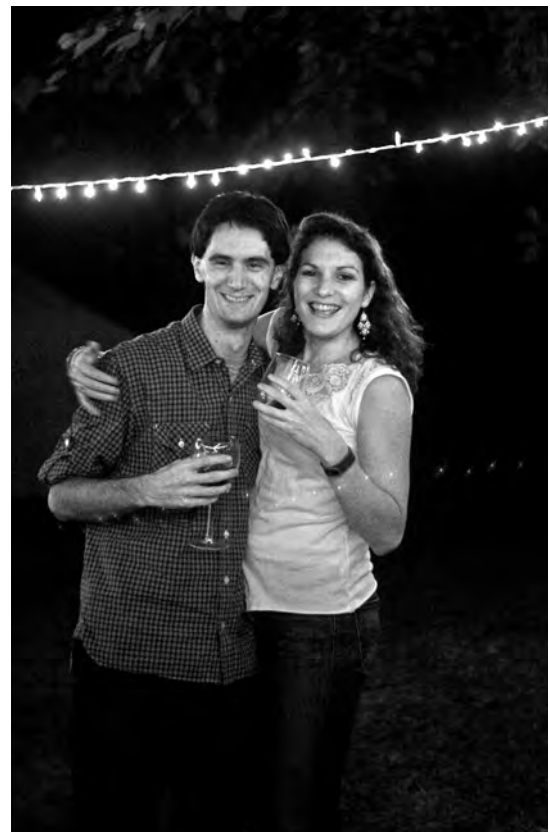
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## Great Ideas for Outdoor Entertaining

Whether you are entertaining on a large scale or hosting a summer gathering, Doug Davis offers great advice for a casual and fun atmosphere.

- Go natural with décor by using flowers and potted plants. Choose arrangements you would use in your home. This helps connect the indoors to the outside and maintains a consistent feel.
- Set up specific stations for serving food and beverages. This allows guests to mingle back and forth between stations while keeping everything accessible
- Take advantage of shade. We are in Alabama after all. (And don't forget to have bug spray handy!)
- Provide comfortable seating areas. Doug assembled a variety of inexpensive garden furniture and some vintage antiques. Using white paint, he unified the tables and chairs for a clean, crisp look.
- Light up the evening with candles, hanging lanterns, and strings of white lights for evening ambiance.
- Leave your doors open to encourage indoor / outdoor flow and keep the party circulating.



### WHEN IT'S TIME FOR A PARTY, DOUG DAVIS'S KITCHEN BECOMES PREP CENTRAL, AND THE GARDEN BECOMES PARTY CENTRAL.

Doug's cottage fits his busy lifestyle as a single guy and frequently traveling designer, plus it is convenient to his office—less than one block away. The recently renovated bungalow was built in 1942, and is one of the original buildings in Mountain Brook Village. The interior features three rooms and a bathroom. The “L” shaped layout allows the cottage to appear larger than it seems at first glance.

“Instead of seeing the house all at once when you enter, it rambles around the corner, making it feel bigger,” says Doug, “and the side garden helps.”

Framed by hedges, the garden is a natural space for summer evening parties.

“I really enjoy gardening and being outside in this outdoor room I've created. It's a shade garden that's cool, quiet, and tucked back away from the busy street. It's a nice, private little space and doubles the size of my house,” Doug says.

Doug keeps a consistent white color scheme throughout his cottage interiors and

exteriors, establishing an easy starting point for party decorating.

“When we style events, we like to use natural flowers, cut from the yard, and really make everything relate to the surroundings,” Doug says.

Doug focuses on functionally upfront and uses durable materials such as indoor-outdoor fabrics and allows ample room for preparation, serving, and a bar.

“We design a place for everything and customize for our clients and our own parties,” says Doug.

For this event, Doug continued his white color scheme by using white serving pieces and a mismatch of painted white metal and wood outdoor furniture. He draped elegant white tablecloths over tables filled with trays of easy to prepare, pick-up appetizers.

His sleek and compact kitchen still offers plenty of room for prep, even at only 80 square feet. Paige Schnell, principal of Tracery Interiors, prepared the food for Doug’s evening event. Menu items included cheeses, berries, and prociutto-wrapped asparagus. Separate tables were used to serve wine, and beer and water were served in a galvanized tin tub. “I don’t cook very much, but Paige Schnell, she is a great chef,” Doug says.

Doug hung lanterns on surrounding hedges and sprinkled them throughout the landscape to add sparkle and make the space come to life. As it grew dark, strings of white lights and lanterns lit up the grounds adding drama to the outdoor party.

Guests included interior designers, store owners, bloggers, and friends of Doug such as Paige Albright, Paula Coldiron, Marianne Strong, Rachel and Frank Craige, Ryan Davis, Paul Romjue, Megan Brasher, and his friends at *Birmingham Home & Garden*. Thanks Doug!

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1. Co-host Paige Schnell, principal of Tracery Interiors, whipped up an easy menu for outdoor entertaining—pick up foods that didn't require running back and forth to the kitchen. 2. Lantern light illuminates the atmosphere. Plus, they protect the delicate flames from blowing out at the slightest breeze. 3. Strings of white lights span from the roof of Doug's cottage to the tree line at the edge of the property. 4. Guests arrived in casual summer attire. 5. Rachel Craig enjoys a glass of wine in the dusky evening. 6. An overall view of Doug's cottage shows just how small the house is, but how much larger it seems with the side garden.



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Doug Davis and guests share a laugh

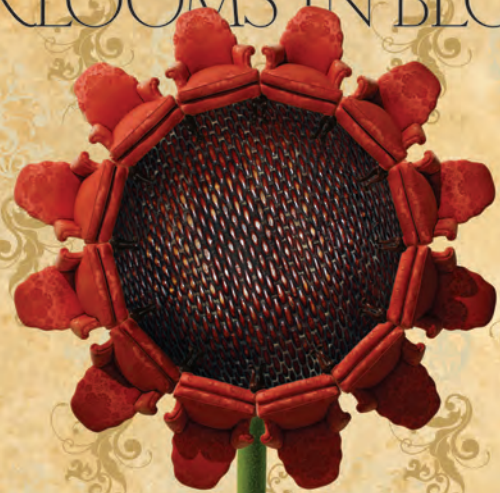


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