

platform for a winning party



Here are some practical suggestions for making you "the hostess with the mostes'."

by **Rollie Hochstein**

YESTERDAY'S MAIL brought two party invitations for the same evening.

One was homemade and a little on the silly side. The other was elegantly formal. I didn't have to think twice about which to accept, but to make sure I checked with my husband.

"Let's go to the Vincents," he said immediately—the Vincents of the homemade invitations and the parties that are fun.

Some couples consistently throw "fun" parties. Others never quite make it, no matter how correct their approach or sincere their efforts.

What's the secret of successful entertaining? It's no magic formula, but there are a few simple knacks that practically guarantee a party's going over big.

Gala parties begin in the mind of the host- or hostess-to-be. Lucille Rowe, a popular party-giver in our neighborhood, says she starts off with visions of guest lists and recipes and decorations dancing through her head. At first her husband Joel says they can't afford another blow-out, but soon Lu's enthusiasm takes hold of him, too. Then the two of them conspire

to get such a kick out of their party that guests can't help having a good time.

Directly opposed to the *let's-have-a-party!* approach is the *oh-dear-we-owe-so-many-invitations-we'll-just-have-to*. A party that starts out as a duty has two-and-a-half strikes against it. If a party doesn't feel like fun, you're better off sending gifts to your guest list. Or moving out of the neighborhood!

But once you've decided to entertain, it's wise to remember that a good party is no stroke of luck. Rather, it's a tested and planned product that anybody can turn out by following some favorite formulas.

Laura and Dick Vincent obey the principle of plenty: plenty of people, plenty of food, plenty of music. For a real party (as opposed to a quiet evening's get-together), they always invite as many people as their big living room can comfortably hold. They make it a point to have fewer chairs than guests.

"That's to keep everybody moving around!" Laura once told me. "If they all have seats they're apt to stay in 'em all night. We like our guests to mix around, to talk about lots of different things, to meet new people."



Plan your parties carefully (and get hubby to pitch in), and your guests will have a fine time—so will you too.