

MAKE YOUR DREAM HOME A REALITY

REALHOMES.COM

# REAL HOMES

# 50 under £50

GIFT IDEAS FOR THE  
WHOLE FAMILY

## MAKE IT SPARKLE

SPECIAL TOUCHES  
FOR FESTIVE  
ENTERTAINING

## OPEN- PLAN LIVING

Get it right with  
our expert tips

### BEST BUYS

WOOD  
FLOORING

FRIDGE  
FREEZERS

KITCHEN AND  
BATHROOM  
UPDATES

## The magic of Christmas

STYLISH DECORATIONS TO  
FILL YOUR HOME WITH JOY

# CELEBRATE AT HOME

BEAUTIFUL SPACES PACKED WITH ENCHANTING IDEAS

FUTURE

12 >

ISSUE 260

PRINTED IN THE UK £6.49

9 1771464 406998



If you want to try and keep guests in the living room, swap your regular coffee table for an outsized piece that can be loaded up buffet-style. Go for a naturally distressed surface that can handle wear and tear and won't leave friends and family nervously reaching for the coasters. A tray-style top will help contain any major drink spillages. If you have an outdoor rug, consider bringing it inside to help protect carpets, since they can usually be hosed clean.



Cushions and throws in various 100 per cent acrylic outdoor fabrics from Sunbrella's Bengali, Chartres, Lopi and Heritage collections; prices from £58 per metre



Don't let the knee-knocking cold stop you from entertaining outside. As long as guests are pre-warned to double up on socks, hats and scarves, it can turn out to be an incredibly festive experience. Pile up seating with woolly blankets and throws, and get a crackling bonfire going on – load your summer firepit with logs or use an incinerator bin to protect your lawn/decking. String outdoor fairy lights from the trees and serve cockle-warming food like stew or chilli in earthenware mugs. Don't forget the mulled wine and marshmallows for toasting, then get everyone dancing.



Open-plan layouts come into their own when entertaining. The most obvious bonus is that hosts and guests can chat while prepping, cooking and keeping the buffet stocked up. If you have an island, use it to serve food – position dishes at the front of the island to deter guests from wandering into the 'hot zone' of the main kitchen behind. Noise and echo can be an issue in bigger rooms but textiles help absorb sound so don't skimp on the tablecloths, runners, rugs and cushions. Decorating an open-plan room benefits from restraint; a little goes a long way when it can be seen from every angle.



Langton kitchen in Mink and Putty, from £18,000, Burbidge



Gingko Halo One Bluetooth speaker in walnut, £139, Amara

*Don't forget*  
TO CRANK UP THE TUNES



INTERIOR STYLIST

LEOMA HARPER

'We usually host a Christmas party in early December and both families on Christmas Day, so it's a busy house this time of year. I have quite a relaxed attitude to hosting and love the house to be festive and inviting. Last year I created a grazing table on the kitchen island, which worked a treat for the party and are so easy to do. There's a vast amount of ceiling space above the dining table and it felt a bit empty, so I decided to fill it with a decorated branch a few years ago. It was only supposed to be up for the Christmas period, but four years on it's still here and ready for its next makeover! I love to go big and sparkly, hanging baubles and décor at different lengths to give a cascading feel. When dressing a festive dining table, start with the centre and work your way out. I love a good centrepiece, with lots of candles and sparkle. I usually create this with a foliage base and then accessorise with candles, tea lights and baubles.'  
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