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The mom-to-be's chair is swaddled in pink and lavishly adorned with ribbons and flowers.

It's a Girl

By Elizabeth Rose

Using pastel hues, playful decorations and a little imagination, a traditional baby shower is transformed into an afternoon of fun.

Eagerly awaiting the arrival of her third baby, Risa Provencio and her friends Amanda Heer and Jean McGrury wasted no time whipping together a baby shower that celebrated all things feminine. After giving birth to two sons, Risa and her husband, Rob, were thrilled to learn that a little girl was going to be introduced into their family.

Risa, Amanda and Jean are in the event planning business, and they decided to design the baby shower as a team. "It's kind of embarrassing to admit, because you aren't supposed to plan your own shower. But I'm an event planner—I can't just sit back and not want to create something like this," Risa says.

To represent the baby shower's



Party game scorecards rest under the forks at each setting while folded fans hold place cards. Risa's eclectic china collection adds elegance to the outdoor setting and allows her to choose unique combinations to reflect each guest's personality. (Inset) Tables laden with ribboned baby bottles, printed cards naming each table—this one reminds guests "what little girls are made of"—and pink sherbet glasses topped with green carnation "sundaes" continue the tea's theme and colors.

The objective was to decorate in a manner that would encourage guests to feel frivolous and playful.

(Right) Baby shower guests sign a "Frivolity Oath"—a vow to forget grown-up cares so they can enjoy the afternoon.

(Below) Sparkling pink lemonade served in champagne glasses makes a festive and decorative refreshment presentation.



central theme, Risa created a special logo: an infant girl sitting on the edge of a teacup. She calls this the "golden thread," a concept central to her style of event planning that ties all the elements of an event together. The invitations featured this logo embellished with a bit of pink gingham ribbon.

After deciding on a tea party theme, Risa, a tea enthusiast, considered increasing the guest list because she had collected enough china over the years to provide cups for twice the number of people invited. "I love the romance and the congeniality of tea parties. When my friends found out I was pregnant with a girl, they said 'Oh, you'll finally have someone to have tea with you!'"

On arrival, guests walked through an entrance draped with ribbon and framed by a matching pair of may-



(Above) An attractive and practical way to serve water, "Prettea in Pink" water bottles are tucked snugly in a gingham-lined basket.



(Above left) This lush floral arrangement adds a crowning touch to a buffet table laden with sweet delights, including a cupcake tower. (Above right) A pink sleeper sports the party's logo and celebrates the coming of a new baby girl.

poles wrapped in pink, green and white ribbon—the event's signature colors. The objective was to decorate in a lighthearted, whimsical manner that would encourage guests to feel carefree and playful. They even

signed a page from the baby's scrapbook that included a "Frivolity Oath," promising not to be serious for the next two hours so they could revel in the idea that pink is not just a color—it's an attitude.

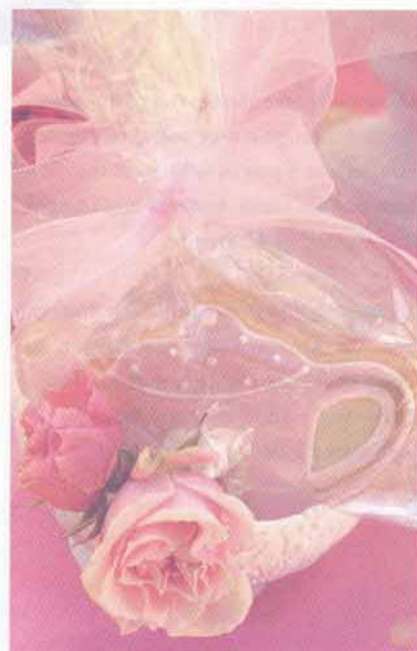
Adding to the fanciful atmosphere, the site was lavished with creative floral arrangements and guests were given ribbon-bedecked purses that contained glitter, perfume and miniature lipstick samples—all things feminine. Stacked in tiers, pink and white cupcakes replaced a formal cake, while delightful delectables like tiny

tea sandwiches were served with sparkling pink lemonade. The "sweet-ea" table featured candies, cookies and other treats in the featured colors, including tiny "pacifiers" made from lifesavers and jellybeans.



(Left) A framed print featuring the party's logo—a baby girl in a teacup—welcomes guests to the tea party. Creating a clever logo like this one brings continuity to the decorations and signs.

(Right) Clear cellophane wraps a teapot-shaped cookie, frosted in delicate pink with white polka dots, making a sweet take-home gift.





(Above) Upon entering the party, guests walked through a pink and green ribbon curtain and a pair of whimsical maypoles topped with roses, feathers and ribbons that danced in the breeze.

(Right) "Sitting Pretty—Please find your seat" announces a sign nestled on a doll's chair. Each table is named—like "Whimsy" and "Sugar and Spice"—to evoke frivolity.



tabletops

To represent the baby shower's central theme, Risa created a special logo: an infant girl sitting on the edge of a teacup.

Clever decorations added to the joy of the festivities. A clothesline displaying tiny pink baby apparel, including sleepers stenciled with the party's logo and the words "baby girl," marked out the party area, along with a large green and pink quilt Risa made herself. Fans with decorated name cards placed in the folds served as placecard holders, while a doll-sized high chair held framed graphics that identified each table. In the buffet area, a wrought-iron chandelier was draped with feathers and ribbon, and a charming floral arrangement in pink and green looked almost as delicious as the food.



Thanks to creative styling, fun activities and good friends, Risa's shower was a lighthearted celebration. As Risa says, "The whole point of it was to celebrate being a girl and how much fun that is. I think the older I'm getting, the more free-spirited I find myself wanting to be. Welcoming a baby is a special, magical time, and I wanted all of my friends to be a part of that."

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Photography by Derek Photography
See Shopping Guide, page 90.*

10 Tips for Party Success

- 1 Find your "golden thread" concept—something that ties the event together and represents the person the event is celebrating.
- 2 If you're stumped for ideas, the following can be sources of inspiration: Design as well as general interest women's publications, showrooms and craft stores. Elegant and creative doesn't have to mean "expensive."
- 3 Know your resources. Local craft stores, Internet sites or even a stroll through the phone book can spark creative ideas. Risa used inexpensive fans threaded with matching tassels to create personalized place settings that doubled as party favors.
- 4 Create a sense of anticipation that something wonderful is about to happen. Personalizing your invitations with a creative touch like ribbon, flowers or confetti is a good beginning. At Risa's event, the ribbon entrance set apart the space as special. An inexpensive curtain rod and crepe paper or acetate ribbon also creates that effect.
- 5 Spring for real linen. Rentals are surprisingly affordable and eliminate the hassle of cleanup. It's a touch of elegance that sets the tones for the whole party, making guests feel special.
- 6 Anticipate your guests' needs and take steps to keep them comfortable. Temperature, restrooms and food allergies are critical issues for most events.
- 7 Create activities and areas that give your guests the opportunity to get to know each other.
- 8 Ask for help. Friends and family can be a great source of ideas—and a big help on the day of the event.
- 9 Look around at what you can use or recycle creatively. It's amazing what can be found around the home. Garden hooks were used to suspend teacup flower arrangements and Risa used plaster garden urns to hold ice and beverages. As she notes, "My motto is: If I can spray-paint it white, anything can be totally renovated."

10 Start planning early. Allot plenty of time to let your mind wander and engage in "out-of-the-box" thinking. This way, planning your event will be a pleasure instead of a source of stress.

(Top) Delicate roses, hydrangeas and mums highlight the party's pink and green colors. Use museum wax to secure the cup to the saucer and place the cut flowers in a well-soaked square of florist's foam or Oasis to keep fresh.

(Left) Favorite teacups hung from garden hooks are filled with charming floral arrangements to decorate the outdoor space.

