



A PLACE AT THE TABLE: DINING AT SUNNYLANDS

Anne Rowe
Zulma Brennan

Essays by

India Hicks
Mary Velez

Special photography by

David Loftus

Frontispiece

Tablescap detail—linens:
Léron; china: Flora Danica by
Royal Copenhagen; stemware:
Baccarat; flatware: Cactus
pattern by Georg Jensen.

Title page

Tablescap detail—linens:
Léron; china: Derby Panel
Green by Royal Crown Derby;
stemware: Baccarat;
flatware: Acorn pattern by
Georg Jensen.

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Vintage and contemporary photographs from the Sunnylands Collection appear on pages 11, 13, 17, 18-19, 38, 85, and 90.

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This page

Detail—Renaissance flatware by Tiffany & Co., monogrammed “A” for Annenberg. Embroidered and damask linens: Léron.

Opposite

A set of twelve mother-of-pearl and silver corn on the cob holders made in Sheffield, England, in original box.

Contents

Foreword by David J. Lane	page 6
The Fine Art of Dining: Setting the Table at Sunnylands	pages 8 – 17
An Allergy to Average by India Hicks	pages 18 – 35
A Design for Dining	pages 36 – 81
A Witness to History by Mary Velez	pages 82 – 97
Setting the Table for Diplomacy	pages 98 – 101
Endnotes	page 103
Acknowledgments	page 104



Foreword

Each year at the Center & Gardens, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands features a new exhibition that has a connection with the Annenbergs. Sometimes, the exhibition highlights specific works in the Sunnylands Collection (Chinese cloisonné, English silver-gilt, or Steuben crystal) and sometimes, we have expanded the understanding of objects that the Annenbergs collected by focusing on a specific artist (Yaacov Agam, José and Tomás Chávez Morado, and Kwakiutl master carver Henry Hunt). One year, we featured the birds of Sunnylands in photographs by *National Geographic* photographer Tim Laman. Our other strategy has been to tell stories about the Annenbergs through objects they received as gifts or through events that were particularly important in the history of Sunnylands.

This year's exhibition celebrates Walter and Leonore Annenberg's remarkable history of gatherings through an exploration of the variety of dining experiences they provided their guests. Their passion for assembling others around their dining tables fueled their private, political, and philanthropic lives. As we emerged from a historic pandemic, we were reminded of the joy that gathering with others brings, and so it is particularly timely that we celebrate the legacy of dining at Sunnylands.

The material evidence of the Annenbergs' passion for entertaining and connecting with others is abundant in the photographic archives at Sunnylands and in the extensive tableware collections assembled here. These resources form the basis of this year's exhibition titled *A Place at the Table: Dining at Sunnylands*.

But it is the impact of these gatherings that shapes the story of diplomacy at Sunnylands. During their lifetimes, the Annenbergs brought together American presidents, international leaders, British royalty, Hollywood celebrities, and cultural icons at their winter home in the desert. The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands builds on the history of diplomacy to fulfill its mission of fostering international agreement. We believe that Sunnylands with its unique approach to gatherings is the perfect location for successful soft diplomacy in today's political climate.

Following the Annenbergs' wishes, the Trust continues to convene world leaders at the Sunnylands dining tables and ensures that the legacy of superb hospitality is carried forward to improve the state of our world today.

Ambassador David J. Lane (retired)

President, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands

*"Thank you for the extraordinary hospitality—
both for the U.S.-China summit, and for the extra day.*

It could not have been better!"

President Barack Obama



President Barack Obama (left) welcomes President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China (right) with their delegations to Sunnylands for the "shirtsleeves summit" held in June 2013.

Official White House Photo.

*"To be invited to Sunnylands was the
greatest invitation one could ever have."
Philanthropist, Brooke Astor*

THE FINE ART OF DINING

Tablescape—linens: Léron;
plates: Cheviot Green by Minton;
silver-gilt flatware: Renaissance
by Tiffany & Co.; silver-gilt
salt cellar and pepper shaker;
maker's mark H&J, Sheffield,
England; custom inlaid table
designed by William Haines.

The Fine Art of Dining: Setting the Table at Sunnylands

Power Couple

Walter and Leonore Annenberg are remembered for many reasons, including their extraordinary philanthropy. Among their various significant gifts to society is Sunnylands, their iconic desert estate that was transferred to The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands in 2009 for use in the service of diplomatic outreach. From 1966 to 2009, a steady stream of important figures arrived at Sunnylands' *porte cochère* and broke bread at its dining tables. The house and its list of notable events and guests made history. Bearing witness to the power of place mixed with outstanding hospitality, the Annenbergs consciously harnessed the glories of Sunnylands to forge relationships for diplomatic purposes.

Walter and Leonore shared the distinction, as a couple, of each serving the United States with the rank of ambassador. Walter served under President Nixon as the Ambassador to the Court of St. James's (1969–1974), and Leonore served under President Reagan as the Chief of Protocol (1981–1982). Hosting heads of state was a logical utilization of their natural gift for diplomacy. Prior to their ambassadorial appointments, they counted industry leaders across sectors as friends. Their social reach expanded with the inclusion of international leaders, dignitaries, and royalty. They were influential, deeply admired, and impeccable hosts, sustaining their dominant American social position throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

*"I enjoy entertaining.
I look forward to meeting the foreign diplomats."*
Leonore Annenberg

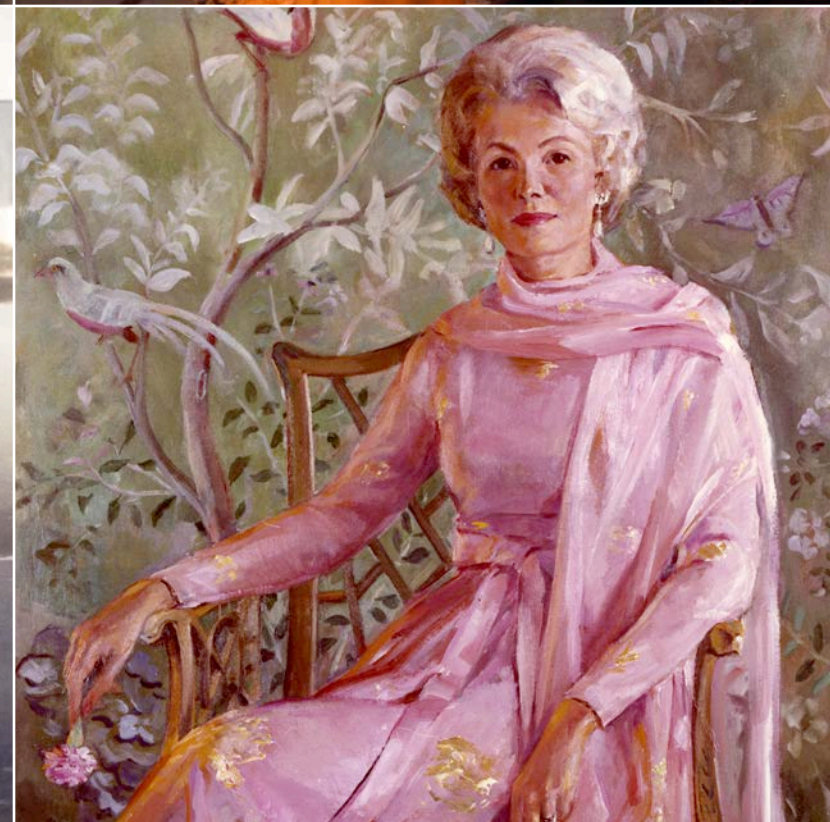
Clockwise from top left

Portrait of the Honorable Walter H. Annenberg, 1972, painted by William Franklin Draper while Walter served as the Ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

Leonore adjusts Walter's tie at Winfield House in London, c. 1973.

Portrait of Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg, 1972, painted by William Franklin Draper as a companion to Walter's portrait.

Walter and Leonore Annenberg travelled throughout the United Kingdom during his time as ambassador, between 1969 and 1974.



During Their Residency: 1966–2009

At their desert home, the Annenbergs entertained seven United States presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. Other political and royal guests at their table included Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II; His Royal Highness Prince Philip; HRH Charles, Prince of Wales; British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher; Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu; Iranian Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi; Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; Secretary of State, General Colin Powell; and then-future Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to name just a few.

Cultural figures also had a seat at the table, including Hollywood royalty like Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Kirk Douglas, and Gregory Peck. Designers, reporters, and philanthropists like Oscar de la Renta, Mike Nichols, Diane Sawyer, and Bill Gates were special guests.

Those who received a phone call or handwritten invitation from Leonore (“Lee” to her closest friends) to attend a soirée at Sunnylands were a who’s who of international icons. The list of recognizable names found in the diligently maintained guest books is staggering.

The Annenbergs and their staff worked tirelessly to curate new experiences for returning visitors. This included rotating room assignments, as well as providing recreational and leisure activities, such as screening newly released theatrical movies delivered to Sunnylands from Hollywood. They selected weekend guests and established seating charts to ensure that each guest made new connections. They were also careful to reference past menus to provide a new dining experience to returning guests.

The Los Angeles Times recognized Leonore’s prowess for hospitality in 1969 as she prepared to represent the United States in London during Walter’s years as Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s: “A hostess of note, usually parties of 30 or so, mixed from the business, political, social, and artistic world...”¹

Prince Charles wrote glowingly of the Annenberg hospitality after his first of two visits in 1974:

...You both have a brilliant knack of being a marvelous host and hostess and plying your guests with unbelievable hospitality—none of which is ever forgettable. After hearing so much about Sunnylands from yourselves and from Alexandra, I was so pleased to be able to see it for myself and it surpassed all my expectations in comfort, taste and design...My deepest thanks again for last weekend.

*Yours sincerely and affectionately,
Charles.²*

Clockwise from top left

Leonore Annenberg welcomes First Lady Hillary Clinton to Sunnylands, January 26, 1995.

Official White House Photo.

Walter and Leonore Annenberg escort HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, to a press conference on the lawn at Sunnylands, February 26, 1986.

Walter Annenberg and General Colin Powell in the atrium at Sunnylands, December 31, 1987.

Anne and Kirk Douglas (center) attend the 1992 New Year’s Eve party hosted by Walter and Leonore Annenberg at Sunnylands, December 31, 1992.



Post Residency, Retreats: 2009–Current

The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands continues to invite leaders to the Annenberg estate to achieve its mission of fostering international agreement. Guests over the last decade include President Obama (the eighth United States president to visit), President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China, King Abdullah II of Jordan, ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders, as well as Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and John Kerry. Many other distinguished retreat attendees have convened to address pressing world issues within the privacy of the estate. The Sunnylands retreat ethos holds that creating a private space for truly candid conversations heightens the potential for impact and lasting outcomes. This mirrors the privacy the Annenbergs provided, allowing good works to emerge through discrete, small, topic-specific gatherings. Today’s staff continues to uphold the Annenbergs’ approach to gatherings, attending to every detail through the site’s specific historic lens.

“Sunnylands is a special diplomatic tool for a special moment.”

Chief of Protocol Capricia Marshall

Cultural Exchange Through Dining

Dining with others is the beating heart of every culture. The primal power of sharing culture through food (what Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the oldest diplomatic tool) can accelerate meaningful connections. The Annenbergs recognized this, and the tradition of cultural exchange through food continues at our retreats today. For instance, in 2013 when President Obama hosted President Xi Jinping of China in the Sunnylands dining room, the menu was region-specific. Dinner began with a Southwest reference, a Mexican tamale; followed by American beef; and for dessert, a California cherry pie. Chief of Protocol Capricia Marshall oversaw this menu selection: “I’d learned from years of traveling around the world with First Lady Clinton that breaking or making bread with others is one of the most effective ways to bridge cultures. Sharing culinary traditions taps into the emotions, piercing the veil of the culture in a way that policy conversations can’t.”³

“The Annenbergs, these wonderful two ambassadors, were devoted to the idea that through decent, honorable, civic discourse, we can make progress together.”

Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy

Clockwise from top left
 Agricultural scientist and policy maker, Agnes Kalibata, with David J. Lane, president of The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, at a February 2020 retreat at Sunnylands.
Photo by Lani Garfield.
 Bill Gates (right) attends a Sunnylands retreat in April 2012.
Photo by Mark Davidson.
 Condoleezza Rice, former U.S. secretary of state, and Taranjit Singh Sandhu, Indian ambassador to the United States, speak at a retreat at Sunnylands in December 2021.
Photo by Lani Garfield.
 HSH Albert II, Prince of Monaco, (right) and Anote Tong, president of Kiribati, attend a retreat on rising sea levels and ocean acidification in October 2014 at Sunnylands.
Photo by Mark Davidson.



Setting the Stage

Creating a meaningful meal with others is part planning and part magic. To enhance the potential for success, Leonore had a strategy. “The key ingredients are first of all to have interesting people. Then you try to put together an ambience of good food and attractive table settings. But all of that would be unimportant if you didn’t have interesting people.”⁴

In Leonore’s extensive library, she had rows of dog-eared and annotated cookbooks, as well as books on entertaining and related activities such as proper table service, napkin folding, and flower arranging. Leonore meticulously curated every detail of the meals and tableware when entertaining at Sunnylands.

She embraced a “high-low” style, combining the world’s rarest objects with pretty and charming accoutrements that were readily available, such as simple glass votive candleholders. The effect was symphonic, as every object provided a contributing element to the delightful scene. It is said that one’s décor is autobiographical. Sunnylands’ tableware reflects the Annenbergs’ love of flowers, birds, a gentle elegance, adherence to excellence, innocent charm, an allergy to average, and a hint of fun.

“The success of their dinner parties was very much because of Leonore’s detailed attention to the seating plan.”

Estate Manager Linda Brooks

Flower arrangements were rarely elaborate and distracting. Usually, they were comprised of tightly packed monochromatic roses or carnations, necessarily low profile, allowing clear views across the table.

For decades, guests to Sunnylands marveled at the elegance of the Annenbergs’ gatherings. Birthdays, holidays, formal dinners, an official White House dinner, and casual weekend visits were elaborate, beautiful, and entertaining. While Walter and Leonore’s legendary hospitality brought people together, their gatherings also relied on the hard work, dedication, and collaboration of the back-of-house staff, with whom the Annenbergs worked closely to create the Sunnylands magic that continues to charm guests today.

“Whether guests were there for the first time or had been there many times, they felt at home.”

Friend, Carol Price

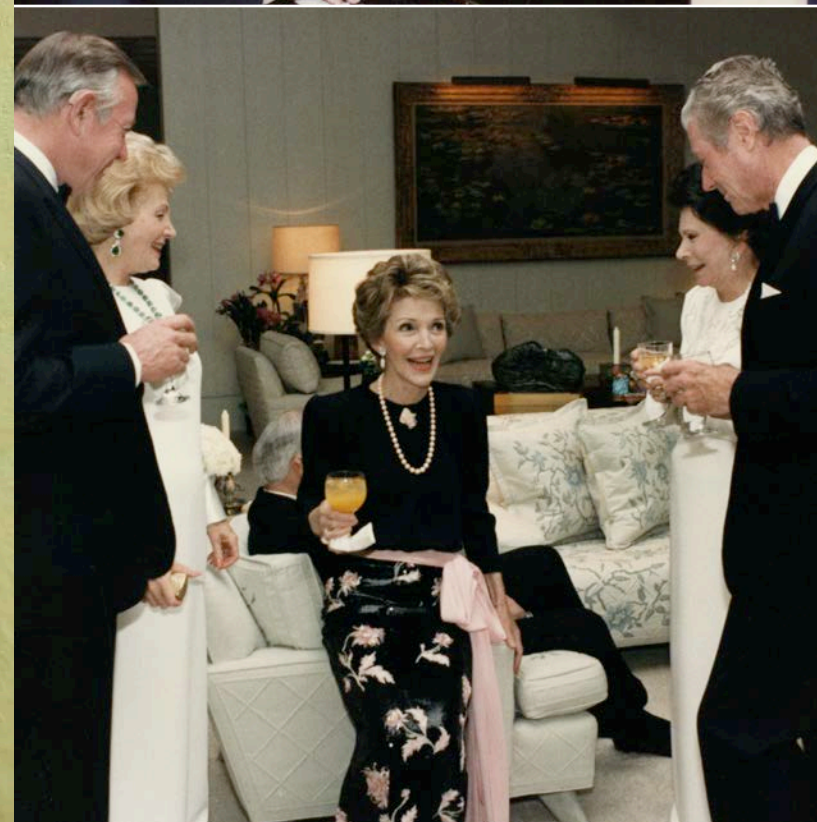
Clockwise from top left
Guido Goldman, fashion designer Oscar de la Renta and his wife Annette, socialite Betsy Bloomingdale, and others join the Annenbergs for a lively night accompanied by a pianist, April 1995.

President Ronald Reagan joins other Sunnylands guests for a New Year’s Day luncheon on January 1, 1983.

Official White House Photo.

Friends and family gather in the atrium to celebrate Walter Annenberg’s 75th birthday, March 12, 1983.

Charles Price II, Leonore Annenberg, First Lady Nancy Reagan, and Betty and William Wilson converse before the start of the 1985 New Year’s Eve party.





AN ALLERGY TO AVERAGE

*“Lee, I have something to say to you,
I’ve just appointed your husband
Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s.”*

President Richard Nixon

Walter and Leonore Annenberg
disembark from their private jet
followed by their friend Lord James
Edward Hanson, date unknown.

An Allergy to Average by India Hicks

India Hicks is a designer, entrepreneur, podcaster, best-selling author, and mother of five. She was born in London, England, and currently resides in Harbour Island, Bahamas, and Oxfordshire, England. Hicks comes from both British and design royalty. Her father was famed interior decorator David Hicks, and her mother is Lady Pamela Hicks, whose father was the last Viceroy of India.

As my husband, David Flint Wood, and I have learned in our years living on Harbour Island, in the Bahamas, when you set up shop somewhere sunny, you'd better like guests and entertaining. Fortunately for us, we do.

That's the first thing we have in common with Ambassadors Walter and Leonore Annenberg, who for 40 years welcomed political, business, educational, and entertainment leaders to Sunnylands, their 200-acre winter home in Rancho Mirage, California.

The other is never to fall into a rut. Whether it's the guests around the table or the tablescape that greets them, I do think the Annenbergs and I share a philosophy that creating a dining experience for friends old and new is one of the great joys of life. Of course, having a collection of Baccarat glassware to choose from sounds fun, although the jam jars I arrange flowers in do have their own charm.

I wonder if the Annenbergs found, as David and I have, that making a life together in a rather exotic location creates bonds unlike others? I'm not sure, for instance, that David would consider the chainsaw I once gave him to be as brilliant a gift if we hadn't been facing down yet another hurricane season. We settled in the West Indies seeking a gentler way of life. David after a career in advertising, and I after crisscrossing the world as a model.

Our home, Hibiscus Hill, was purchased after I peered in the windows and David wandered the gardens. The real estate lady was suspicious and wouldn't let us in to see the rooms. Over the years we've made it our own. I understand the Annenbergs commissioned Sunnylands, so they certainly had an exquisite vision from the very beginning. It's been quite something to see the boulevard of palm trees grow higher each year at my home. I imagine Leonore felt the same as her grounds became ever more beautiful each season.

Their passion for assembling others around their dining tables was an absolutely essential part of their private, political, and philanthropic lives. I believe that magic happens around the table. Walter and Leonore believed in that magic, but they called it diplomacy. Thank goodness for the hosts among us who find common ground around sharing food and conversation.



Clockwise from top left

"All five of my boys, the fifth being Stretch, our puppy!"

Photo by David Loftus.

"Arranging a hanging garden of wildflowers locally sourced from Oxfordshire, including some nicked from my mother's garden for a dinner the night before my wedding."

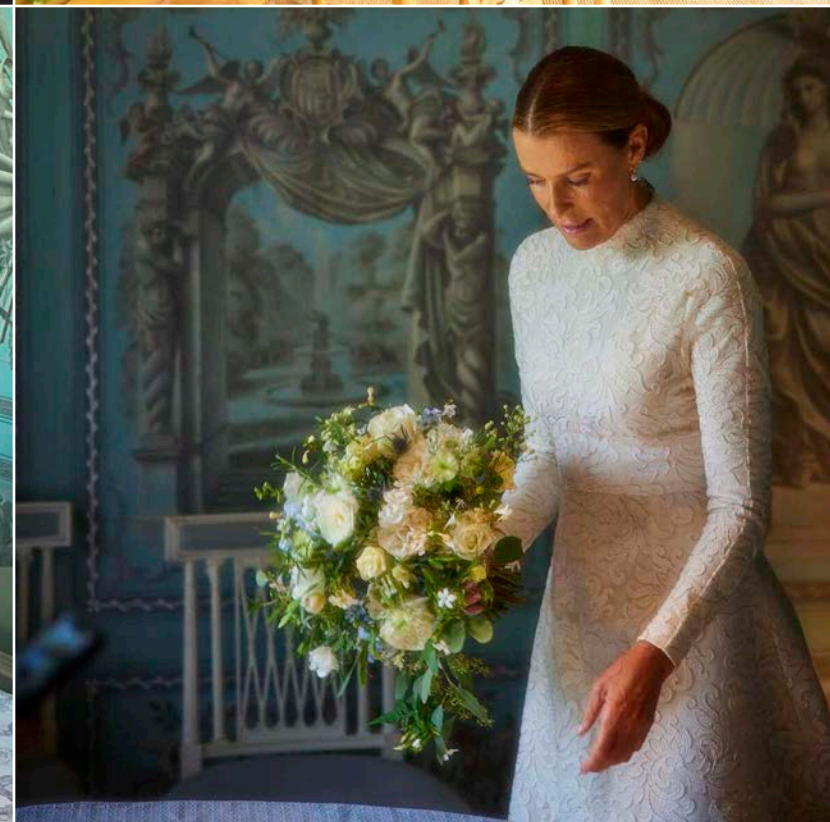
Photo by Robert Fairer.

"On the day of my wedding, five children later. We could never be accused of rushing into this!"

Photo by David Loftus.

"With my beloved mother, chatting about Royal bridesmaids' dresses."

Photo by Jo Adams.





When you are hosting sovereigns, presidents, and Hollywood types, nothing can be left to chance. After all, as Leonore said, “Try to put together an ambiance of good food and attractive table settings. But all of that would be unimportant if you don’t have interesting people.”⁵

How she must have loved working out the placement for her lunches and dinners. I sigh in relief when I spy my name on a place card (pronounced the French way, with a slow, exaggerated emphasis on each syllable: plaaaacement, even in Southern California) or am directed by a helpful hostess to the chair she has designated for me. It really is the best way to avoid any guests feeling lost, alone, or like the last to be chosen for the team.

On the rare occasion when I break this rule, I sometimes have regrets. For instance, once we had musician Lenny Kravitz over for supper. We ate in the kitchen, not at all formal and no place cards or seating plan. Afterward, my mother asked, “Who was that nice man? Was I right in hearing his name was Zinny Crayfish?” I realized at that moment that it would have

helped her to have eyes on a place card with his name on it. Things grew even weirder when Lenny wandered into the TV room to find my boys playing the video game Guitar Hero, which was the hot new commodity at the time. “Can I have a go?” asked Lenny, picking up a plastic guitar and starting to strum. Felix, then aged around ten, pointed out to Lenny that he was actually one of the computerized “heroes” on the screen. Lenny was playing Lenny.

I’m not sure how Leonore would have felt about this impromptu digital jam session as she was known to plan every one of her guests’ itineraries from morning until night if they were houseguests, and for the entire evening for dinner.

I do know I would have enjoyed the See’s chocolates and perfectly stacked potato crisps the staff stocked into the Game Room. These were probably most appreciated by people like me who are known to eat chocolate for breakfast. I lay the blame completely at my mother’s feet. Growing up on holiday in Ireland, we made giant pots of fudge. I was neither tall enough to peer into the vat nor old enough to stay up for dinner when the delicious fudge was served. My mother would leave two squares by my bedside so I wouldn’t miss out completely. Little did she know that I ate them as soon as I opened my eyes, setting the stage for a lifetime of chocolate breakfasts.

Left

“My mother’s eighteenth-century Meissen, which she was surprised to find me using as a pudding plate and not carefully displayed for viewing only.”

Photo by India Hicks.

Opposite

This Yellow Room motif features the glazed striated yellow painted surface of the coffee table and the attention to detail represented by the color-coded jelly beans that Leonore introduced to guests’ rooms.





Having things all scheduled out likely helped the Annenbergs avoid scheduling mishaps such as the time we were expecting a visiting king of Spain and were only off by a week. My mother is vaguely related to the Spanish royal family, and the Greek, and at one time the Romanovs, and definitely the Swedes. Who can keep track, really? Anyway, when a wandering king of Spain sails through the islands, we'll offer him a hot meal. We set a date and a time, and starched and re-starched the white tablecloths. I brought out all the blue-and-white china and it felt vaguely regal, despite having been discovered in a secondhand shop in Wallingford, England. We shooed a snoozing cat from the large blue-and-white bowls, filled them with water, floated tea lights and frangipani flowers, and lit candlesticks that David had bought me for Christmas one year, and waited for the royal arrival. And waited. And waited.

Other friends had arrived, and we all decided to enjoy a drink whilst waiting. Our beloved chef and majordomo for the past eighteen years, Claire Baldwin (whom I affectionately refer to as our "Top Banana"), was growing anxious in the kitchen; her

fish did not wait for anyone. We decided to have another drink. I dispatched a few of my boys to the harbor to see if they could hunt down the missing king. Whilst pouring another glass of wine, I emailed and texted, trying to reach him. That's when David had the wonderfully brilliant and admittedly old-fashioned idea to pick up the phone and call him. "Ah, India, my dear," said the voice on the other end, "We are so looking forward to your dinner next week." I hung up the phone, poured myself a bit more wine, and Claire served the fish, which was cooked to perfection.

That's one occasion on which we did choose a starched tablecloth, but I'm just as likely to use a duvet cover, stitch together a few towels leftover from a collaboration, or even turn Brooke Shields' scarves into tablecloths. Fortunately, I do design a few of my own.

Left

"I discovered these plates in a dusty antiques shop in England. There were only a few in each pattern, and I was hopelessly unable to make a complete set. I love them all the more for that. The bamboo candlesticks were a 'non-anniversary' present from David, because up until last year, we didn't have an anniversary to celebrate."

Photo by India Hicks.

Opposite

When eating in one of five color-coded historic suites at Sunnylands, guests received their meals on matching breakfast trays. Frequent guests often expressed their preference for one of the suites (pink, yellow, peach, green, and blue).





During the Annenbergs' residence at Sunnylands, I love the fact that the sales staff of Léron linens flew from New York to California once a year to have tea with Leonore and discuss what tablecloths, napkins, and placemats she would need over the coming months. How dreamy to have collected over 50 sets of delicate, hand-embroidered motifs that were custom made to complement the décor and color schemes of Sunnylands. I imagine Leonore had such fun choosing each one.

With over 30 different patterns of dishes in the pantries, the Annenbergs could easily make sure they didn't repeat a tablescape for a returning guest. They were lifelong collectors of dishes, as am I. Some are hand-me-downs, like my mother's wedding china and the palm tree and lattice print dishes that were left in the cabinets when we bought our Harbour Island home. While I never would have chosen them for myself, they've become a part of our daily lives with endless pieces of toast spread with marmite eaten off them over the years.

There's also a set I've been collecting since the Christmas when I was eight, which was probably the first time I remember receiving the thick cardboard box wrapped in brown paper, with an imposing purple ER (Elizabeth Regina) stamp on it. Inside was lots of scratchy straw and inside that, when you dug deep, was a gravy dish, or a saucer, or a demitasse. Each with a kind note from my godfather Charles, Prince of Wales, who was, coincidentally, twice a guest of the Annenbergs at Sunnylands. For years and years, every birthday and every Christmas, these cardboard boxes arrived. I have now moved from one home to another in England and the mountain of Thomas Goode boxes have finally been brought up from the cellar, unwrapped, dusted off and put to use—a complete set of impressive fine English china.

Left

"Now having finally a house of my own in England, I was able to unpack, appreciate, and above all use this set of china which had been stored in the depths of my mother's basement since it was given to me piece by piece by a clever much-loved godfather during my childhood. I was never going to risk shipping it to the Bahamas."

Photo by India Hicks.

Opposite

A selection of place cards saved from historic dinners hints at the significance of the individuals who participated in conversations around the tables hosted by the Annenbergs in the United States and Great Britain.





No doubt the Annenbergs would have appreciated that Thomas Goode china. Their time at the embassy in London, he as the Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, from 1969 to 1974, was an era of fabulous style, much of it set by my father, David Hicks, who very much defined the look of that time. He even designed the bowling alley in the White House for President and Mrs. Nixon. It's always a good thing to pick up an enthusiasm for all things English, and I do hope the Annenbergs enjoyed Battenberg cake, originally created for my great-grandfather, at every opportunity during their years in England.

This exhibition highlights five patterns that were the most frequently used at Sunnylands: Danish Flora Danica by Royal Copenhagen; Cheviot Green by the English company, Minton; Derby Panel Green by the English company, Royal Crown Derby; and two patterns by the Hungarian luxury brand, Herend: Queen Victoria and Rothschild Birds. Each extraordinary in their own way, and with Leonore's knack for mixing up the table with high-style Georg Jensen sterling serving pieces set amongst low votive candles.

I can certainly relate to this high-low style. We do not have Leonore's favorite stores on Harbour Island or in the English countryside, but I am known to wander about picking up or cutting down any fabulous palm fronds, flame tree branches, or hibiscus blossoms to use on the table. Lucky nuts, picked up on the beach, are another favorite.

Each holiday I change up our table a little—dried fruit and palm fronds one year, bowls filled with oranges the next. Or branches of fir and pinecones with blue-and-white ceramics and tartan napkins. Once I did resort to a plastic garland down the center of the table, but with all the candles, bowls, and other goodies laid out, it actually worked out nicely.

It's fresh and fun to not always set the same table in the same spot. The Annenbergs usually hosted their dinner parties using two round William Haines-designed inlaid tables for their formal dining room, rather than one large rectangle, to avoid a "head of table" seating on each end. Their feeling was that a round table encouraged conviviality and eliminated hierarchy.

Left

"An intimate birthday supper for my sensational friend Brooke Shields. She was slightly surprised to find that I had repurposed several of her animal print sarongs to make into a tablecloth and napkin rings."

Photo by India Hicks.

Opposite

A variety of midcentury picnicware from the Sunnylands pantries strikes a whimsical, festive tone for lunch at the Chinese Pavilion on the Sunnylands grounds.



The Annenbergs' dislike of hierarchy was shared by Indira Gandhi, according to a story my mother, Lady Pamela Hicks, tells. In India, during the time when my grandparents, Louis and Edwina Mountbatten, were there as viceroy and vicereine, the seating was

done by hierarchy of the province or state you were from. If you were the governor of Bombay, a vast province, at a governor's conference, you would be the chief guest and placed in a primo spot. If you were governor of a smaller province, your spot would be much more modest. The problem with this in a country like India is that you might be seated next to someone who did not speak the same dialect as you and lunch would be had in unbearable silence.

When Indira Gandhi came into power as prime minister of India, my mother remembers her saying how ridiculous this was, grading everyone by status and not being able to converse. She would be doing things differently, she said, making a seating plan designed so guests could

actually talk to one another. A few weeks later, my mother asked her how it had worked. "Disastrously," she said. "The French ambassador stormed out, saying he had never been so insulted when seeing his seat all the way down the table."

I'm certain no such storming out ever took place at Sunnylands, where the Annenbergs, as the ultimate diplomats, seated each table with the perfect mix of interesting people. Larger parties took place in the atrium, as did the Ambassador's birthday parties. Sometimes one really does need more room to spread out for a New Year's Eve celebration.

For our New Year's Eve celebrations, the last night of 2019 was especially memorable. It was a natural disaster and a national crisis. Hurricane Dorian had brought utter ruin to the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco. It was not just the power of the winds but the surge of water that followed. A tsunami wave had raced toward those islands and angrily swept away hundreds of people who will never be accounted for. Thousands of others were left completely homeless. We live on an island only 70 miles away. It could have been us. So, on New Year's Eve, with help from generous friends in our small community, we hosted a party for a few hundred people to raise desperately needed funds for the Global Empowerment Mission, a responsible, smart, hands-on foundation that is helping to rebuild lives.



Left

"Standing amongst the unfathomable destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian with Michael Capponi, founder of Global Empowerment Mission, a disaster relief agency on whose executive board I now sit."

Photo by Linda Griffin, distributed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Opposite

Placed at the edge of a plate, atop a brass eagle-shaped seating card holder, is the place card that was executed in calligraphy for President Barack Obama in 2013. Place card holder: Milwee Antiques, Georgetown; plate: Derby Panel Green by Royal Crown Derby.



Claire went into Top Banana mode. She borrowed industrial-sized saucepans in which she cooked soups, was lent fridge space around the island to store salmon, ordered in exotic vegetables, sourced out crusty breads, and peeled seemingly endless bags



of potatoes as delicious sweet hams bubbled in Coca-Cola on stove tops for hours on end, always her *pièce de résistance*. Crates of chilled champagne and cases of wine began to arrive. Wheels of cheese and baskets of fruit were delivered. A crew from the Other Side, a family-run hotel, rescued us with tents, tables, goodwill, and manpower. But there was plenty of womanpower, too, hanging chandeliers, hoisting lighting, and stringing up branches from tropical trees. Napkins came from Pomegranate and linens from Penny Morrison; piles of mint, roses, and eucalyptus were given by the Prince of Dunmore. I should note that this is a local title only, given with love to a young man who spins up incredible flower

Left

“Giggling here with a certain godfather who had just played an energetic charity game of polo.”

Photo by Alpha Press.

Opposite

Leaving nothing to chance, Leonore Annenberg created this seating chart for the luncheon held in honor of HRH Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, at Sunnylands on February 27, 1983.

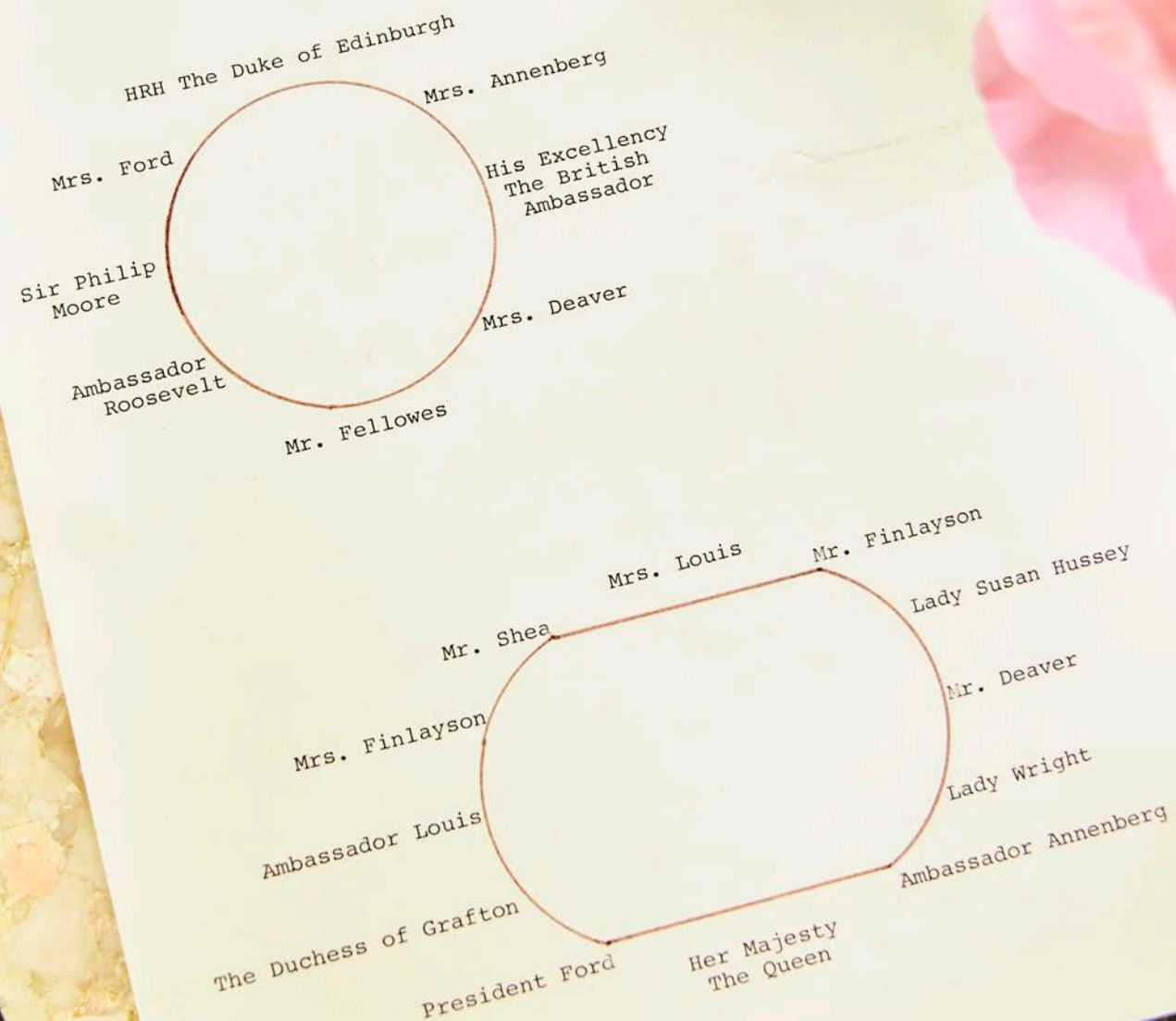
arrangements, consults on matters of style, and even helps out at my shop, The Sugar Mill. Bars were set up, countless candles were lit, and the band rehearsed whilst I tore out my hair over the seating plan.

The music started, the ice clinked, and guests swarmed on the terrace and down the drive as children spilled out across the gates. Drinks drifted into dinner, we had an opening prayer reminding us why we had come together. Fireworks were let off into the inky sky. We danced, laughed, and lingered as we welcomed in a new decade together, hopeful for our neighbors’ future thanks to many generous donations made that night. It was an evening Mrs. Annenberg would have loved as it brought together philanthropy and diplomacy around dining.

As we all now know, the new decade has not begun as any of us hoped. I continue to work with the Global Empowerment Mission, now as a board member, in support of people who need help from Abaco to Alabama and beyond.

With the onset of a global pandemic, it took us more than a year and a half to throw our next real party, which happened to be our wedding.

LUNCHEON SEATING PLAN
February 27, 1983



Weddings are wonderful for bringing people together, aren't they? I've learned that the Annenbergs and I were both at the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer. I followed in my mother's footsteps as a bridesmaid. As a 13-year-old tomboy who was



never out of jodhpurs, the idea of wearing a dress brought many reservations, but just the same, I glowed with pride at being asked.

It took Diana—on the shaky arm of her father, with five bridesmaids and two pages in attendance—three and a half minutes to walk up the aisle in front of the biggest gathering of European and foreign royals ever, an invited congregation of 3,500, plus that vast television audience. Can you imagine having more than 3,000 people at your wedding?

The Archbishop of Canterbury led the traditional Church of England service, assisted by clergymen from many

denominations. The bride's nerves showed briefly when she mixed up Charles's names, calling him Philip Charles, rather than Charles Philip. Inside that calm cathedral one could hear a pin drop, but outside on the steps and in the streets the nation roared in jubilation. I only really remember my buttercup-yellow satin shoes pinching, as they were a size too small.

We all enjoyed what is known as the wedding breakfast, although I don't know why as it is a lunch. Brill in lobster sauce and chicken stuffed with lamb mousse was served. I ate the bread rolls. Strawberries and cream followed.

Prince Charles, The Queen and Prince Philip, and Princess Margaret, who I spent the night with before that wedding, have spent happy days and nights at Sunnylands. I am delighted to further this connection with my visit.

There is no better time to celebrate the idea of gatherings and no better place to be inspired than Sunnylands. The Annenbergs wished for this place to continue the legacy of superb hospitality to stimulate conversations toward improving the state of the world today. The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands does just that—as the Annenbergs envisioned.

How wonderful that their wish will bring progress toward a better world and a joy to all who experience this exhibition.

Left

"Worst hair day of my life shared with several billion people. Had lost my mind and chopped off my waist-length hair into this tomboy bob."

Queen Elizabeth II with Diana, Princess of Wales, and her bridesmaids behind the scenes at Buckingham Palace on July 29, 1981. The bridesmaids from left to right are Miss India Hicks, Miss Sarah-Jane Gaselee, and Miss Clementine Hambro.

Photo by Lichfield/Lichfield Archive via Getty Images.

Opposite

A dessert plate by Tiffany & Co. in the Audubon pattern and a demitasse cup and saucer by Minton in the Cheviot Green pattern sit atop an ultra-fine placemat by Léron paired with a simple votive candle holder. This tableau references Leonore Annenberg's "high-low" approach to tablescapes, mixing fine rare items with department store favorites.





A DESIGN FOR DINING

A sunny yellow theme was frequently used inside or outside the Game Room, while more subdued colors were set in the main house. A suite of patio furniture designed by William Haines is set with the striped Carousel pattern by Thomas Goode adding to the chic setting.

The alternating green and gold sections of turf are part of a considered estate-wide water reduction strategy. By reducing overseeding to only 50 acres, water is saved, and the resulting footprint adds a layer of creativity to the landscape.

“Lee is a fantastic hostess. Every detail is perfection.”
Friend, Betsy Bloomingdale

A Design for Dining

The Annenbergs were experts at celebrating a significant aspect of our daily lives—dining. Their large collection of tableware is comprised of place settings used at Sunnylands; Inwood, their home in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania; and Winfield House, the U.S. ambassador's residence in London. Each home had its own set of dishes to match its interior design. The pieces highlighted in this catalog are part of the Sunnylands Collection.

A range of patterns allowed the Annenbergs and their staff to create endlessly varied dining experiences for guests. The patterns differ in quantity, color, and design, and were used for a variety of events and in different settings throughout the estate. The selections from the Sunnylands Collection of tableware and service ware reflect the Annenbergs' personal taste and their creative use of colorful patterns to entertain their guests in custom surroundings. Together with their staff, they crafted tableaus for dining.

"The ladies usually started playing at 10 a.m., played nine holes before coming in, and enjoyed lunch at the pavilion."

House Manager Michael Comerford

Alfresco Lunches

The Annenbergs were avid golfers and used their course daily. Invited guests who played with the Annenbergs on the golf course were treated to lunch in the Game Room or at the Chinese Pavilion. On Tuesdays, Leonore would host her women's golf days, where she invited friends to play, as well as an instructor from one of the nearby country clubs. On these Tuesdays, Leonore hosted a luncheon for the ladies at the Chinese Pavilion, near hole three on the nine-hole golf course.

Luncheons in both locales were curated like dinners in that the menu, guest list, and floral arrangements were predetermined before the event. Tableware used in the Game Room included French Limoges and Kate Spade patterns, Tag porcelain, and sometimes melamine dishes. At the Chinese Pavilion, the style was more casual, matching the location of the event. The vibrant yellow Heller melamine dishes used for meals in the pavilion were paired with florals, seamlessly turning the outdoor luncheons into elegant affairs.



Above

A 1987 Polaroid photograph captures a wonderful morning of golf and lunch at the Chinese Pavilion at Sunnylands. Ladies Day included a morning round of golf followed by lunch on the grounds.

Opposite

Picnicware was commonly used at the Chinese Pavilion for lunches. Salads and toasted pita bread triangles were popular lunch items delivered by butlers on golf carts.



The tea service is by Thomas Goode in the striped Carousel pattern.

Low, tightly packed floral centerpieces were a consistent design on patio tables and contribute to a contemporary arrangement in this outdoor setting.

A silver turtle by the Italian company, Buccellati, is paired with hand-painted, swirl-design plates in the Flamed pattern in yellow by the Austrian company, Gmundner Keramik.





Flatware

The pantries hold upwards of eight complete flatware sets and many specific-use (such as fish knives) or partial sets. These include two American services by Tiffany and Co.—a 206-piece service in sterling silver in the “Bamboo” pattern and a 394-piece silver-gilt service in the “Renaissance” pattern. English sets include an antique silver-gilt dessert set for 12 in the “King’s” pattern, engraved with a “K,” and dating from 1827 to 1832. Other delights include several exquisite mother-of-pearl-handled sets for specific use, including a set of 12 German mother-of-pearl-handled, silver-plated, and tortoiseshell caviar spreaders by J. A. Henckels in a fitted case, and two cased sets of 12 silver English corn-on-the-cob holders.

Through archival photographs and firsthand accounts, it is clear that the two flatware patterns consistently enlisted for formal dining were both sterling silver Danish sets by Georg Jensen.

Left to right

Flatware—Renaissance by Tiffany & Co., engraved with “A” for Annenberg; Bamboo by Tiffany & Co.; King’s pattern, English silver-gilt, maker’s mark of Mary Chawner, dated to 1835.

Opposite

A jaunty circular array of the two most frequently used flatware patterns in the Sunnylands dining room by the Danish company, Georg Jensen. The top seven pieces are part of a service for 24 in the Acorn pattern designed in 1915. The bottom seven pieces are from a service for 36 in the Cactus pattern designed in 1930.





Below

Detail—fine English silver and silver-gilt candlesticks used in the dining room include works by famed silversmiths (clockwise from left)—Eliza Godfrey, 1751, one of eight; Simon Pantin, 1727, one of a pair; Paul Storr, 1807/1808, one of eight.

Opposite

Living room tablescape at sunset. Clockwise from top left—rock crystal bird figure by French Luxury company, Boucheron, Paris; the Chinese Pavilion by Steuben Glass; department store votive candle holder in pink; pink scalloped placemat and damask tablecloth by Léron; dessert plate by Tiffany & Co. in the Audubon pattern; gardening book from Leonore Annenberg's collection now in the Sunnylands Collection; teacup and saucer in the Cheviot Green pattern by Minton.



Table Lighting

The Annenbergs collected soaring, heraldic, museum-worthy candleholders but used them sparingly in their desert home. Important eighteenth-century English silver and silver-gilt candlesticks and candelabra by English silversmiths—Augustine Courtauld, Eliza Godfrey, Simon Pantin, Benjamin Smith, and Paul Storr—remained mostly in storage in favor of small, everyday department store glass votive candleholders, which were placed around the tables. Leonore and Walter preferred a low-profile lighting strategy because it was more flattering to guests and avoided obstructing the view across the table. They did, however, light the opulent perimeter candelabra stationed in pairs on three sides of the dining room, including a Georg Jensen (1952) Danish pair. The lighting created a warm indirect glow and glamorous setting.



Glassware

The Annenbergs laid their formal dining table with glassware by the luxury French company, Baccarat. Their collection holds more than 400 individual pieces, including red wine, white wine, water, various cocktail sizes, and champagne glasses. Place settings at dinner included precisely arranged red wine, white wine, champagne, and water glasses. For larger gatherings, such as New Year's Eve parties, they enlisted rental glassware.

Left

Golf ball-themed cocktail glasses were used exclusively in the Game Room and on the pool patio.

Opposite

Luxury crystal glassware by the French company, Baccarat, is used in the main house.



Linens

Custom Lerón of New York linens were the preferred luxury brand when laying tables for formal dining. Placemats with matching napkins were the favored motif for small groups, and tablecloth ensembles were used for larger tables. The lined and labeled pantry and credenza drawers filled with Lerón linens offered a rich array of delightful, hand-embroidered napkins and pierced see-through placemats in many elegant shapes. Linens reflect the estate's color palette of white, celadon green, pink, and yellow.

Sales staff from Lerón flew in once a year to take tea in the living room with Leonore to discuss her linen needs. The stunning collection that Leonore assembled includes over 50 sets of delicate placemats, napkins, cocktail napkins, and tablecloths that were custom made to complement the décor and color scheme of Sunnylands.

David Forster, president of Lerón linens, said in an email to the Trust:

Our sales teams made home appointments with Mrs. Annenberg over the years. In the wonderful light of Rancho Mirage, we created and chose the colors for all the beautiful, custom linens. Sunnylands' placemat and napkin designs, some of which we still produce today, are all examples of wonderful hand-embroidery that was done in France, Italy, and

Portugal ... The lead designer of the linens once said that in designing these table linens he had to think about the china, the flatware, the stemware, the floral centerpiece, not to mention the food! He said in his wonderful Italian accent that when it's done well, it all goes together "like a symphony." ⁶

Opposite

Detail of a delicately hand-embroidered placemat by Léron. Yellow is a principal color in the design palette at Sunnylands.

Below

A bird's-eye view of custom napkin and placemat pairings arranged by color and pattern inside the celadon green credenza designed by William Haines for the dining room.





Dishes

The Annenbergs assembled over 30 different patterns of dishes in their pantries. They collected their china throughout their lifetime, adding to their collection yearly. Some settings were purchased internationally and others purchased at Gearys in Beverly Hills. Each pattern used at Sunnylands was specifically chosen for the occasion. Having a variety of tableware choices allowed for the setting of new tablescapes for recurring guests.

This catalog highlights the five patterns that were the most frequently used at Sunnylands. Rare, handcrafted Danish Flora Danica by Royal Copenhagen; effortlessly elegant Cheviot Green by the English company, Minton; Derby Panel Green by the English company, Royal Crown Derby; and two artistic patterns by the Hungarian luxury brand, Herend: Queen Victoria and Rothschild Birds.

Left

A desert sunset refraction creates a gleaming rainbow to accompany a Tiffany & Co. dessert plate in the Audubon pattern—which features birds, flowers, and a Chinese motif—themes that appear throughout the décor at Sunnylands.

Opposite

A mirrored display niche features thick acrylic shelves that house rare Flora Danica porcelain originating in Denmark. The use of a mirror behind the floral pieces, of which no two are the same, reunites the china with nature as the green trees outside the window become companions in the scene.



Flora Danica

17th century – present
 Royal Copenhagen, Denmark
 Porcelain
 Sunnylands Collection:
 2009.1.10894

During the 1788–89 war between Russia and Sweden, Denmark allied itself with Russia. But when Russia needed Denmark's support, the Danes left Russia to fend for itself. In an effort to make amends with the Russian Empress Catherine II, who was a connoisseur of porcelain, King Frederick VI of Denmark commissioned the creation of a majestic porcelain set. He tasked Johann Christoph Bayer and the Royal Danish Porcelain Manufactory with creating the "most impressive porcelain the world has ever seen."⁷

The pattern beautifully illustrates Danish flora recorded from 1752 to 1771. Over 3,240 flowers and plants are recorded and rendered in 51 books titled *Flora Danica*. The surface of each piece of porcelain features a plant or flower, and the Latin name appears in black underglaze on the verso. Finally, a notation directly relating to the book volume and copper plate seen in *Flora Danica* identifies the piece.

Catherine the Great died before the collection was completed, so the finished collection became part of the official royal dishes of the Danish royal family. By 1802, Bayer and his team completed a dinner service of 100 place settings comprised of 1,802 different hand-molded and hand-painted porcelain pieces. The stunning pattern garnered recognition among the elite and royal circles, becoming a prized possession. Today, the hand-made, 24-karat gold rim porcelain continues to stun even the most discerning collectors.

The Flora Danica pattern is the largest collection of dishware owned by the Annenbergs. The introductory set was purchased in London and was used at Winfield House, the official residence of the United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. More pieces were added to the collection through the years, totaling 437. The collection includes six different types of plates—dinner, service, salad, dessert, fish, and bread and butter plates—totaling 38 complete place settings. Nontraditional pieces include handled wine coolers, oval stands, and ice cream dishes with domed covers.

At Sunnylands, the pattern was used routinely. Friends, family, and former employees all agree that the Flora Danica pattern was the most often used pattern. It was utilized during family gatherings, private gatherings, and historic events, including the 1983 visit of HRH Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, and the 1990 official dinner between Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and President George H.W. Bush. Supreme Court justices, American presidents, and dignitaries dined on the famed porcelain.

In 1976, when the renovation of the dining room was completed, select pieces of the set were permanently displayed on acrylic shelves in the dining room, where they are still seen today.

Opposite

A table fit for a Queen. Flora Danica porcelain, by Royal Copenhagen, amongst the finest in the world, was enlisted for most of the elegant events at Sunnylands. A luncheon for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, held in the dining room in 1983, was such an occasion. Paired with French Baccarat stemware, Léron linens, and punctuated by Boehm ceramic roses named after Leonore Annenberg, the combination creates an arresting tableau. The inlaid table paired with brown tortoiseshell-motif leather and gold-tooled chairs—all designed by William Haines—created a sophisticated and glamorous setting for every occasion.





*"Your Majesty, your presence brightly
rekindles our five-and-a-half years in Britain,
certainly the proudest years for Lee and me."*

Walter Annenberg

The dining room at Sunnylands reflects the Annenbergs' gift for combining midcentury modern space with William Haines-designed furnishings and their collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. Adding favorite objects from different eras and countries, they created tablescapes that captivated their guests.



Detail—Each piece of Flora Danica porcelain by Royal Copenhagen is hand-painted, depicting individual examples of flora and fauna specific to Denmark.



Opposite

Detail—An exquisite close-up of a tureen in the Flora Danica pattern by Royal Copenhagen, one of four tureens in the collection, reveals faux wood handles, gilding, and applied flower reliefs.

Cheviot Green

20th century
Minton, United Kingdom
Bone China
Sunnylands Collection:
2009.1.10897

In 1793, Thomas Minton opened his pottery company in Stoke-on-Trent, England. In 1799, with the aid of his partner Joseph Poulson, Minton perfected a bone china recipe, and they began producing bone china. Between 1799 and 1816, they designed over 900 different patterns.⁸ After Thomas Minton's passing, his son Herbert led the company and created award-winning designs. Minton bone china continues to be prestigious and popular today.

The Cheviot Green pattern with a delicate laurel design and gilded, scalloped edges caught the attention of the Annenbergs before they left London in 1974, following Walter's time as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. They purchased 60 place settings, sending half of the pattern to their Pennsylvania home called Inwood, and the other half to Sunnylands. The color complemented the interior design of both homes. At Sunnylands, the bone china was routinely used Friday, the first night of the weekend. In 2007, after Inwood was sold, both halves of the pattern reunited at Sunnylands and became the second largest collection of china with a combined total of 427 pieces. Like all of the other dish patterns, the Minton is made available for use during retreats. Most notably it was used during the 2016 U.S.-ASEAN Special Summit that brought together heads of state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States of America.

This page

The detail in a custom-designed Léron placemat features two of Leonore Annenberg's favorite design elements: nature and the color green. The delicate circular mat lays upon a damask tablecloth in celadon, both by Léron.

Opposite

The west side of the living room provides a warm sun-dappled location for this contemporary tablescape. Club chairs in seal grey surround a hexagonal-shaped table designed by William Haines, creating a perfectly tailored setting for six. Two rock crystal giraffe-form sculptures and two rock crystal bird figures, all by Boucheron, Paris, create an alluring menagerie attracting diners to the table. The partition wall in celadon painted redwood paneling intersecting with a coffered overhang reminds us that the residence was designed by famed midcentury architect A. Quincy Jones.



This table, featuring a complex intersecting geometric inlay that divides the table into six sections, was designed for this location by William Haines.

The table is laid with Léron linens specific to Sunnylands; silver-gilt flatware in the Renaissance pattern by Tiffany & Co.; and Cheviot Green bone china by Minton.





Detail—engraved with the letter “A,” this 394-piece flatware set is stored in a custom box with a brass nameplate reading, “Sadie Annenberg.” Sunnylands’ pantries hold various family tableware inherited from Walter’s mother, Sadie, including this remarkable flatware set in silver-gilt by Tiffany & Co. in the Renaissance pattern.



Detail—Leonore Annenberg was consistent in her predilection for flower motifs. A botanical Léron linen napkin flawlessly accompanies the Cheviot Green bone china by Minton.

Derby Panel Green

1961–present
Royal Crown Derby, United Kingdom
Porcelain
Sunnylands Collection:
2009.1.10898

Andrew Planche started Derby Porcelain Factory in 1750 in Derby, England. His company garnered a reputation for its craftsmanship, catching the eye of King George III who “recognized the uniqueness of Derby porcelain in 1775 when he granted the factory the rare honor of being able to incorporate a crown into the back stamp.”⁹ It was then called Crown Derby. In 1890, Queen Victoria also gave Crown Derby her seal of approval “not only by awarding the royal warrant, but by granting the title The Royal Crown Derby Porcelain Company.”¹⁰ The company remains one of the few manufacturers of china in Britain, and it continues to be revered by china collectors.

Leonore personally chose this china pattern. The beautiful classic design features green flowers and foliage decoration set against alternating panels of pristine white and gleaming 22-karat gold. Its design and color scheme fit perfectly with the Sunnylands aesthetic. Over 30 place settings comprised of 201 pieces were purchased in 2003, making the Derby Panel Green the third largest pattern in the Annenberg dinnerware collection. During weekend festivities, the pattern either accompanied the Cheviot Green Minton bone china, or was used alone, taking the place of the Flora Danica. Today, the pattern is the most frequently used pattern during retreats, with the most notable being the 2013 presidential summit between President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China.

Detail—a scalloped floral napkin by Léron.

Opposite

The Sunnylands Trust today interprets the Annenbergs’ approach to luxury utilizing contemporary flourishes such as this succulent arrangement, a nod to sustainability practices.



A table set for a king. A tablescape incorporating desert plants as a centerpiece is similar to the one designed for President Obama when he hosted King Abdullah II in the dining room in 2014.

Derby Panel Green plates by Royal Crown Derby are paired with Baccarat stemware, Léron linens, and flatware in the Acorn pattern by Georg Jensen.



Detail—Botanicals appear throughout Sunnylands including this embroidered Léron napkin set upon a Royal Crown Derby plate in the Derby Panel Green pattern. Gilding the lily, a place plate by Haviland & Co. in the Illusion pattern is tucked below for a layered effect.



The charming Acorn pattern by the renowned Danish silver company, Georg Jensen, was introduced in 1915 and features a subtle acorn design at the tip of each piece.



Detail—a Léron linen placemat layered above a green damask tablecloth.

Opposite

A stunning winter view from the upper terrace at Sunnylands is punctuated by snow on Mount San Jacinto.

Green Bordered Queen Victoria

1851–present
Herend, Hungary
Porcelain
Sunnylands Collection:
2009.1.10896

“Herend is the world’s largest manufacturer of hand-crafted luxury porcelain goods.”¹¹ After mastering the craft of porcelain during his time in Vienna, Vince Stingl founded the Herend manufacturing company in 1826. Stingl moved to the small village and company namesake of Herend, Hungary, where the original company began its production. A decade later, Mór Fischer took ownership of the company and shifted the focus from producing daily dinnerware to producing dinnerware replacement pieces for European royalty. This proved to be a successful venture for Herend, and within a few years, the company received its first major commission—an order from Queen Victoria.

Showcased in 1851 at the Great Exhibition in London, the Queen Victoria pattern has become Herend’s most famous pattern. Decorated with colorful butterflies and flora reminiscent of Hungarian meadows and finished with gilded edges, the pattern was a hit with the queen, who ordered a full set for Windsor Castle the same year. By 1872, the title of Supplier to the Imperial and Royal Court, the highest recognition from the imperial court, was bestowed on the company.

Due to the variety of pieces in the Sunnylands Collection, this regal porcelain was placed in service throughout the day. Small gatherings among the Annenbergs and their family and close friends were occasions for its use. The pattern pairs well with the Sunnylands ambiance, as it is a visual feast of flora and fauna like the surrounding environment of the historic estate.





Service plates by Haviland in the Illusion pattern support the green-bordered Queen Victoria porcelain plates by Herend.

Champagne brunch for four. The marble table is set with Léron linens and a lively mix-and-match selection of china patterns.

Center and bread plates by Royal Worcester in the Blind Earl pattern and Tiffany & Co. flatware in the Bamboo pattern are arranged in a contemporary setting.



Detail—enchancing butterflies and flowers are hallmarks of the Queen Victoria pattern by Herend.



A butterfly shows its colors on a pepper shaker in the Queen Victoria pattern by Herend.

Rothschild Birds

1860–present
Herend, Hungary
Porcelain
Sunnylands Collection:
2009.1.10895

Detail—embroidered rose
placemat by Léron.

Opposite

Detail—Rothschild Birds
porcelain, by the Hungarian
luxury brand Herend, is
a narrative pattern that
captures the story of birds
and a lost necklace.

When Mór Fischer took control of the Herend company in 1839, he needed the financial means to expand. Fischer secured a loan from the Rothschild banking family, considerably expanded the company, and increased production. As a thank you and a sign of respect, Fischer created a pattern for the Rothschild family.

One day Baroness Rothschild went for a stroll in her garden in Vienna and lost the pearl necklace she was wearing. An exhaustive search by her staff yielded nothing. A few days later, a gardener noticed the birds were excitedly chirping and fluttering around something, and he went over to investigate. That is when he discovered the birds had taken a liking to the Baroness' necklace, which was caught on a tree branch.¹²

Inspired by the story, Fischer created a pattern depicting a necklace in a tree surrounded by two birds, insects, and butterflies. The pattern illustrates 12 different variations of the narrative, all containing the birds, the necklace, and the tree in a white background painted on a scalloped gilded dish. Because birds serve as a symbol for love, "the designers deliberately chose to feature a pair of birds, a male-female couple, to add a romantic element."¹³ Over the years, Herend has continued to produce the popular pattern, which can now be found with various colored borders.

It is no surprise that the charming pattern made its way to Sunnylands. Both of the Annenbergs loved birds, and their home became a repository for bird motifs. Walter and Leonore used the pattern for their own private breakfast service. Plates, butter dishes, teapots, and toast holders were placed on acrylic trays that were taken to Walter's office where he would have his breakfast before Leonore joined him. With the exception of the color of a small rose topping their teapots, and the size of the elements of the tray, the contents were identical.

Like the Queen Victoria pattern, this set was exclusively used at Sunnylands and not at the other Annenberg residences. The lively and delightful set was added to the rotation of dinnerware and was sometimes used to welcome guests during their arrival dinner. On rare occasions, the pattern was made available as a breakfast service for guests or used for small intimate dinners during the week. The pattern continues to enchant all who see it and has garnered popularity among new collectors.



The Rothschild Birds pattern by Herend was used for Walter and Leonore Annenberg's breakfast trays delivered to their private quarters each morning.



A typical breakfast setup for Walter included coffee and cream, toast displayed on a rack, butter and jam, and an entrée.



Viola silvatica Fr.

Definitions: Porcelain, Fine China, and Bone China

The singular word “china” is broadly and generically used to describe many types of dishes. The high-fire, hard, flawless, lustrous material used for formal dishes was invented in the country of China during the Tang dynasty (618–907). After the Portuguese introduced porcelain to Europe in the sixteenth century, the popularity of dinner sets exploded, making them a precious commodity. Due to high demand, it became extremely difficult to bring dinnerware from China to Europe, so the Europeans developed their own techniques to create a variety of china. Known as porcelain, fine china, and bone china, these materials can be easily mistaken for one another.

Porcelain and Fine China

Porcelain and fine china are terms used to describe the same product. “Fine china” is most commonly used in the United States, whereas “porcelain” is the preferred term in Europe, where the country of origin precedes it, for example Danish porcelain, made by Royal Copenhagen.

Porcelain and fine china are made from china clay, a combination of feldspar, quartz, and kaolin minerals. During the Tang dynasty, the Chinese used kaolin, a fine white mineral made from decomposing granite, to create the first porcelain dishes. Kaolin allows the clay to be fired at a higher temperature, producing heavier, thicker, and harder dishes with an even brighter white-colored and blemish-free appearance. If banged together, the pieces create a deep sound with no echo. Over hundreds of years, improvements were made to the inaugural dishes. Still, it was not until the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) that the dishes started to resemble the type of china we see today.



20
39-49



Marks on the reverse side of china provide information on the maker, material, and in some cases, the date of production.

Opposite

The small bar underneath the G in COPENHAGEN seen on the reverse of the Flora Danica plate indicates that the plate was produced from 1969 to 1973. The three blue waves signify the important bodies of water in Denmark. The letters on the right of the waves are the initials of the artisan who created the plate. The numbers on the left of the waves form the pattern number associated with the image. The markings under the blue waves are unique painters’ marks given to the plates by each artist.

Right

The design of the Minton back stamp identifies this piece as being made after 1951. The name of the pattern “Cheviot” is seen above the crown, and the type of china “bone china” is under the laurel leaves. The characters “s-503” are the pattern identification number.

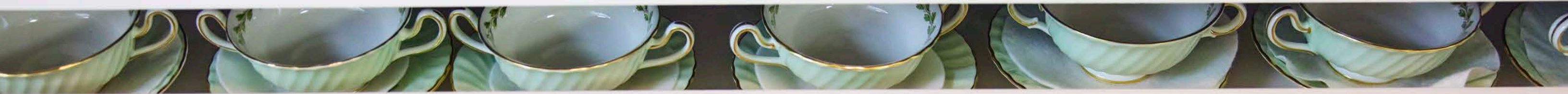
Bone China

Unlike fine china, bone china was not created in China. Joseph Spode II of England is credited with developing this new formula. Spode combined the minerals used in china clay and added cow bone ash to the mixture. “His basic formula of six parts bone ash, four parts china stone, and three and a half parts china clay remains the standard English body.”¹⁴ Fired at a lower temperature, the addition of bone ash produces a thinner, porous, lighter, milky colored, strong vessel. Due to its thin makeup, when two pieces of bone china collide, the noise is higher pitched and has an echo. Bone china is translucent and has warmer color tones than the brighter fine china. Its transparency is the most effective method for identifying bone china. When holding bone china to a light source, shadows are visible through the piece.

Marks

Most fine china and bone china manufacturers will add markings, commonly known as backstamps, to their pieces. Markings vary per manufacturer and can be either impressed, handwritten, or printed on the bottom of each piece. Each company has its own iconography that is used to date the piece; identify the pattern, artist, and manufacturer; and authenticate the pieces. The markings continuously change in order to match the date of manufacture. This is subtle and noticeable only upon closer inspection. To read the markings, a comparison between the maker’s database of the markings and the piece must be conducted.





“Not only did Mrs. Annenberg plan wonderful meals, magnificent place settings, and superb flowers, but also every detail to make guests comfortable in their quarters.”

Estate Manager Linda Brooks

A WITNESS TO HISTORY



Oversized, deep, pull-out drawers specifically designed to house multiple china patterns were built into the infrastructure of the kitchen hallways. Here, Cheviot Green tableware by Minton await their next appearance in the dining room.



A Witness to History by Mary Velez

Mary Velez is the senior art handler for the Sunnylands Collection. In 1996 while the Annenbergs were still in residence, she joined Sunnylands as housekeeper, where her professionalism and attention to detail resulted in her promotion to the position of parlor maid. When the Trust inherited the property in 2009, Velez transitioned to a new role with the title of senior art handler, reflecting the new museum structure for managing the house and its contents. Drawing on her knowledge of the house, its varied collections and furnishings, and its history, Velez continues to safeguard and care for the museum collections and is an invaluable eyewitness historian for Sunnylands.

Growing up, I loved going through architecture books and looking at interior design and home décor, so working for Mr. and Mrs. Annenberg was an absolute dream. Seeing this beautiful midcentury modern home and the landscape astounded me. I was employed as a parlor maid by the Annenbergs from 1996 until Mrs. Annenberg's passing in 2009. At Sunnylands, a parlor maid was someone who took care of the main house area, answered the front door, and worked in the dining room. I had a heavy involvement with day-to-day events and special gatherings at Sunnylands.

These are my memories of how a dinner party would take place.

Left

Detail—edge of Léron linen napkin.

Clockwise from top left

Hired in 1996, Mary Velez was an integral part of creating a world-class experience for Sunnylands guests.

Photo courtesy of Mary Velez.

Actor James “Jimmy” Stewart poses for a photo with the Sunnylands staff.

Mary Velez cleaning Auguste Rodin's *Eternal Spring* at the Sunnylands Center & Gardens, where it is currently exhibited.

Photo by JCRR Design.

Mary Velez and other staff members line the hallway leading to the dining room before dinner is served.



Before the party

Events were always discussed between Mrs. Annenberg and the house manager Michael Comerford. They usually sat at a leather-topped card table in the atrium, either mid-morning or mid-afternoon, when it was nice and quiet. They would discuss the guest arrivals, the agenda, and table arrangements. They would choose the china, silverware, tablecloths, flowers, and music, whether a pianist, quartet, or even a jazz band—like Peter Fountain and his New Orleans jazz band, who I remember played for the Ambassador's birthday party on March 13, 1998.

If the event the Annenbergs were planning was for 38 guests or less, they used their exquisite china, like the Royal Copenhagen Flora Danica, which is a very extravagant set, luxurious enough to use for a royal dinner. Or, sometimes, they used the Minton china, which they have in a couple of sets—and, of course, the Royal Crown Derby, which is the china later chosen for the historic dinner and meeting between President Barack Obama and President Xi Jinping of China in June 2013, here at Sunnylands. But in order to accommodate a much larger event, Michael ordered plain white or off-white china with either gold or silver rims, which really made the dining tables look nice.

Mrs. Annenberg and Michael also discussed the guest seating arrangements. Mrs. Annenberg seldom sat couples together only because she wanted her guests to be able to mingle and have engaging conversations with the other guests besides their husband or wife—unless, of course, they were not able to sit alone. The secretaries, Julia Dixon and Lesley Coleman, ensured that place cards with each of the guest's names for the seating arrangements were created.

Fresh flowers were important to the setting, so the Annenbergs employed Dan Lewis as greenhouse supervisor, and Leo Aguayo as his assistant, to grow and arrange favorite flowers, like the orchids, lilies, and bromeliads that were placed throughout the house. Dan took great pride in his work and was very good at what he did. After those details were confirmed, the Annenbergs discussed with chef Michel Venaut, trained in French cuisine, the menus for dinner, dessert, and hors d'oeuvres.

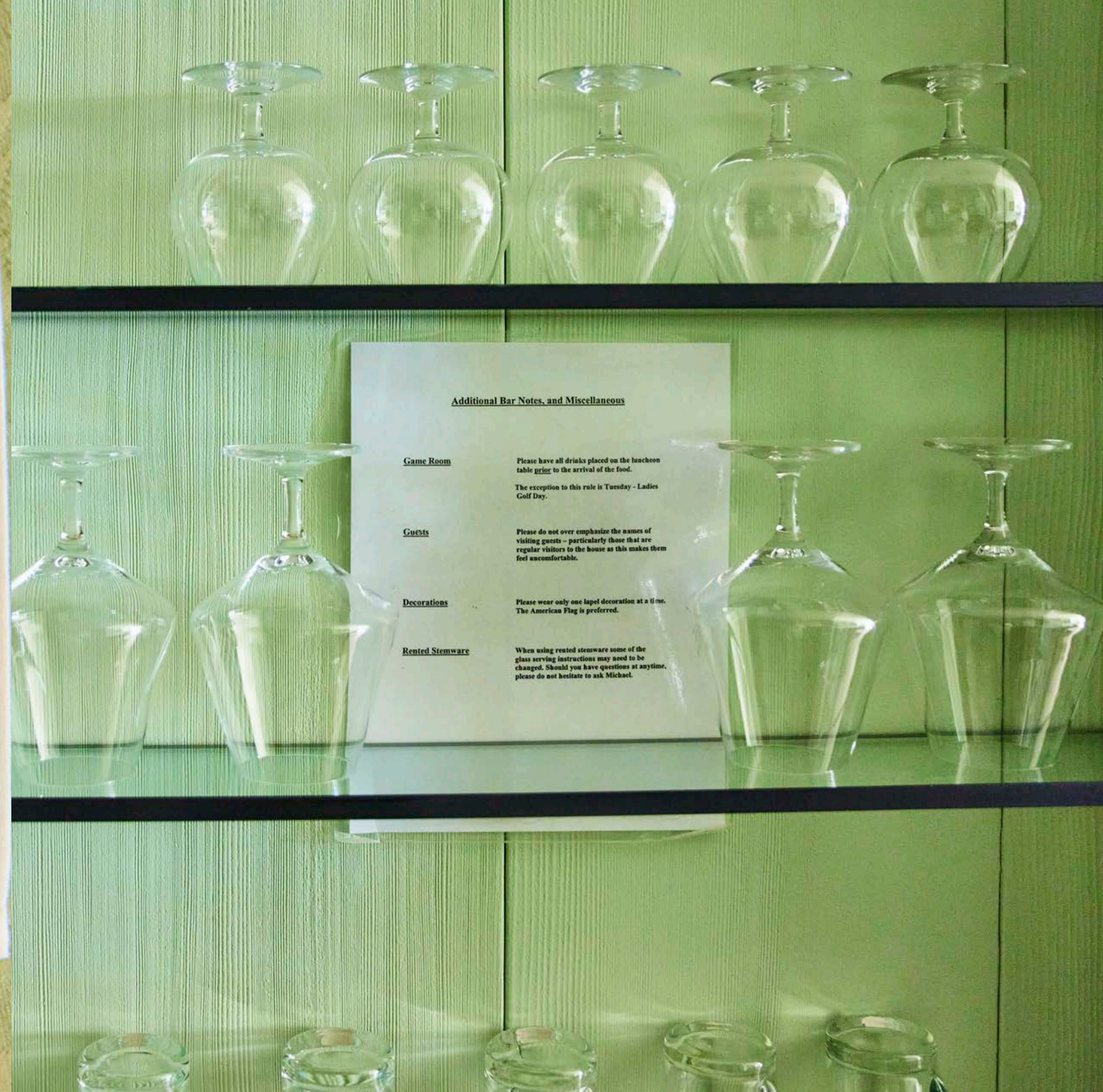
Sometimes my daughter, Monique Velez, who was also employed by Sunnylands as the staff maid, helped me during these special events to clean and polish all the silver in the main house, as well as the silver being used for the dinner. The silver that we always used in the dining room included the beautiful Georg Jensen silver centerpiece that sits

Left

Detail—edge of Léron linen napkin.

Opposite

A note for staff found in a drawer is seen in the bar in the living room, surrounded by barware organized by type and displayed on thick glass shelves.



Additional Bar Notes, and Miscellaneous

Game Room

Please have all drinks placed on the luncheon table prior to the arrival of the food. The exception to this rule is Tuesday - Ladies Golf Day.

Guests

Please do not over-emphasize the names of visiting guests - particularly those that are regular visitors to the house as this makes them feel uncomfortable.

Decorations

Please wear only one lapel decoration at a time. The American Flag is preferred.

Rented Stemware

When using rented stemware some of the glass serving instructions may need to be changed. Should you have questions at anytime, please do not hesitate to ask Michael.

on the dining table, the pair of Georg Jensen presentation candelabras, and presentation tureen and cover that are placed on the celadon credenza.

For every event, I was a little anxious because I knew there was so much to be done, and we all worked very hard together with Michael—the secretaries, kitchen workers, butlers, maids, extra help, greenhouse workers, and the gardeners all made sure the Annenbergs were satisfied—especially for events like these, which were exciting not just for the Annenbergs and their guests, but for us as well.

Morning of the party

On the morning of the event, I would come in around 6:45 a.m. and make sure everything in the main house was perfect. Michael was very busy on those mornings either on the phone with the secretaries or with Mrs. Annenberg, or making sure everything was organized.

In the basement, we kept gold-colored dining chairs, which we brought up for fancy events. Cushion covers for those chairs were selected to match the tablecloths and napkins that the Annenbergs were using for that night. Four favorite tablecloth colors and patterns included the Queen Mother pink damask, the salmon/peach damask (chosen by Mrs. Annenberg for the Ambassador's birthday parties), the celadon damask that went very well in the dining room because of the celadon walls, and the white damask tablecloths. The tables were arranged by the gardeners however Michael wanted them, often situated in the dining room. We had many of our New Year's Eve dinners in the dining room, with cocktails in the living room—and when we had larger dinner events (such as the Ambassador's birthday parties), those would take place in the atrium and living room with cocktails throughout.

We had three different sizes of round tables—80-inch, 72-inch, and 66-inch—to choose from, and we usually placed a big round mirror at the center of each table to create an elegant reflection of the table settings. Later, Dan Lewis and Leo Aguayo would bring in the flower arrangements that they had created and set them on top of the round mirrors.

Left

Detail—floral embroidery on a Léron linen.

Opposite

The pink rose identifies this as Walter's breakfast coffee pot rather than the yellow flower that adorns the top of Leonore's tea pot. Rothschild Birds pattern by Herend.



I remember some of their arrangements as beautiful cut roses, mums, or carnations—usually in yellows, pinks, and whites—handcrafted into tight, circular displays.



If we were having a very small dinner party and using the original dining tables, we would use placemats (with matching cloth napkins) in a variety of colors instead of tablecloths to show off the gorgeous contemporary faux ivory-inlaid rosewood pedestal tables. If we did use tablecloths, we didn't use placemats at all.

Once all the china, silverware, and glassware were placed, Michael would start placing decorations, depending on what his ideas were. Michael was very creative, and Mrs. Annenberg and her

friends all loved his decoration ideas. There were glass votive candleholders, silver-gilt pieces, or Flora Danica—like the large ice cream dome on top of a matching plate with a candle inside, or oval baskets with handles, or small boxes. All these pieces made the table settings look very elegant and beautiful. He placed the tableware all around the centerpieces and carefully positioned the guest place cards. At this point, Mrs. Annenberg would come in to make sure all her guest place cards were where she wanted them, and that she approved the decorations and place settings.

If it were a really fancy dinner for someone like former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Michael would use the tall silver-gilt candlesticks with tall candles. We always had a large collection of candles on hand inside the drawers in the large butler's pantry. We had tall white, ivory, light pink, dark pink, and red candles ready at all times. Besides the tall candles, we also used votive candleholders that were placed on the mirror and around the floral centerpiece; it was a charming and stunning design. Michael's favorites were the light pink and clear votive candleholders. Depending on what china was used, the tall

Inset image left

Heraldic English candlesticks were polished and brought from the pantries for special occasions such as this dinner with Margaret Thatcher (left), Walter Annenberg, and Gayle Wilson. February 12, 1994.

Left

Detail—scalloped edge of a Léron linen.

Opposite

Part of the success of the Sunnylands interiors is a strict adherence to symmetry and balance. Inlaid geometric patterns on this William Haines dining table add to its elegance, but also provide lines on which to align place settings.



silver-gilt, small silver-gilt, or silver candlesticks would be selected. Of course, there were always candles lit on the candelabras on top of the celadon credenza, as well as the crystal candelabras on the tall wooden stands next to the marble side table.

Afternoon of the party

My schedule allowed me to go home in the afternoon. After returning from my break, I dressed in the grey uniform—which was a little more formal looking than the regular white uniform we wore on regular days—with a white sweater, and white nurse’s shoes. The butlers wore their brown suits or black tuxedos, looking very formal for all dinner parties. To set the mood and atmosphere, the butlers and I turned on the ceiling and painting lights and opened the drapes. The laundress, Lidia Cardoza, had made a celadon-colored piano cover that matched the green found throughout Sunnylands. The piano, often situated in the living room for parties, was draped with this beautiful cover before guests arrived. If we didn’t have a pianist playing as the guests were coming in, Michael would turn on the music.

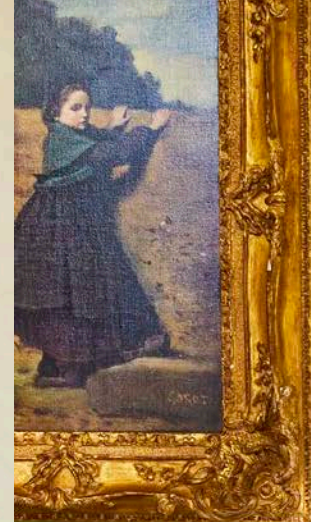
On the brown backgammon table next to the photos in the Royal Sitting Room, we’d place a guest book so the Annenbergs’ guests could sign their names and write a little comment if they wished. This, to me, was a great idea the Annenbergs had. Today, we have all the guest books that they saved throughout their years. We have them all here at the archives building, and they are very important pieces of history.

Left

The exquisite delicacy of embroidered table linens by Léron is one component of many that created a truly spectacular dining experience for guests.

Opposite

Although Sunnylands was a private home, its recorded history reveals that the house was used for diplomatic entertaining at an international level from the moment it was completed in 1966. Formal uniforms for house staff is not a common practice today, but no doubt lent a formal tone for events at this home of two ambassadors.



Party time

The evening of the party was really exciting for me. As the guests were coming in, the butler had drinks ready for guests, and a black leather chart was available so that guests could find where they were sitting for dinner.

I loved seeing Mr. and Mrs. Annenberg and their guests dressed formally during a big event, the men in their tuxedos and the ladies in their gowns. The extra help who came to work for the bigger events always asked me what the guests were wearing, or they would try to get a glimpse of the guests just to see what the ladies were wearing.

Once all the guests had arrived, I'd go into the kitchen and get a brief explanation of the different hors d'oeuvres (tiny pizzas, mushrooms with crab meat, sausage rolls in pastry, quiche, parmesan squares, peanut butter bacon, smoked salmon, olive toast, and many more) we would be serving. Halfway through the cocktails, I'd slip away to go into the dining room and start lighting all the candles on the dining tables and candelabras on the credenza and tall stands. Then we would start filling all the Baccarat water glasses with cold water.

Eventually, we would hear the guests walk down the gallery, where the Steuben glass is displayed, toward the dining room. We let chef Michel know that the Annenbergs and the guests were on their way.

Mr. Annenberg, Mrs. Annenberg, or another guest would usually make a toast once they were seated. After that, Mrs. Annenberg let Michael know either by a nod or by pressing a little electric box with a buzzer that they were ready for dinner. The servers would already be in line in the gallery hallway, ready to enter the dining room and place the warmed dinner plates onto the chargers at our designated table. Wine and champagne were offered during dinner.

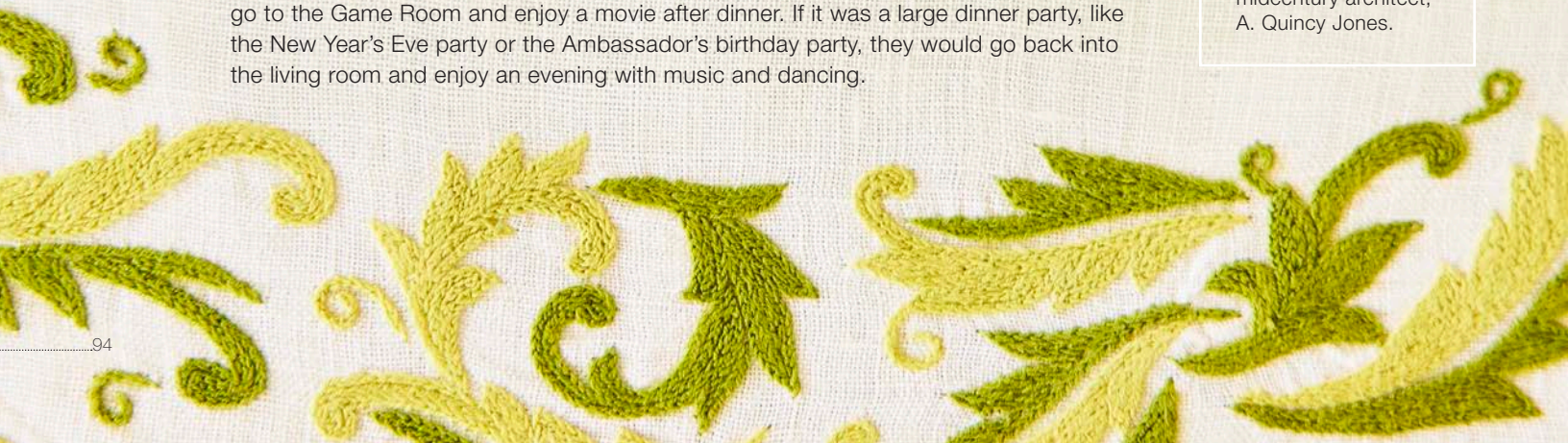
We would provide coffee while serving dessert, and again when the guests were back in the living room. When it was a small dinner party, the Annenbergs and their guests would go to the Game Room and enjoy a movie after dinner. If it was a large dinner party, like the New Year's Eve party or the Ambassador's birthday party, they would go back into the living room and enjoy an evening with music and dancing.

Left

Detail—embroidered placemat by Léron.

Opposite

The Chinese porcelain figure of Guanyin, goddess of mercy, overlooks a table set for an imagined presidential lunch. Guanyin's pedestal dates the house to the modern era in shape and style and complements the walnut and leather-tooled William Haines dining chairs. A formal George III crystal candelabra and gilt-wood *torchère* draws the eye west where the view of an exterior concrete block wall reminds guests that Sunnylands was designed by midcentury architect, A. Quincy Jones.



While the Annenbergs and their guests were enjoying themselves, staff would go back into the dining room and start picking up the glassware from the tables, blowing out the candles, and removing the floral arrangements and table decorations. The name cards with holders were taken to Michael's desk or the secretaries' office. Then we rolled the tables and chairs to the back if they were rentals or to the basement if they belonged to Sunnylands. The two William Haines tables and chairs would be put back in place in the dining room the next morning by the gardeners.

Little by little, as the night went on, guests would start to leave. If it was a cold night, Michael and I would have their coats and stoles ready for them as they were departing. Just before they were leaving, they would give us a ticket for the valets so their cars could be brought up to the front entrance of the house, unless they had their own drivers waiting for them.

After the party

Once everyone was gone, we'd tidy the rest of the house, picking up glassware, blowing out any candles, and turning off the lights. I took special care to fluff up the sofas and pillows in the living room, and put chairs and stools back in place. Butlers would close the drapes and make sure all the doors were locked.

Then we helped the dishwashers finish washing all the china, silverware, and glassware. It's important to note that our fine china was always hand washed and never placed in any of the dishwashers. There was always a fear of these delicate pieces being chipped or nicked if not cared for skillfully by hand. By the time that the pantries were cleaned, the laundry readied, and the trash taken out, it was pretty late, sometimes close to 1:00 a.m. We would leave for home and be back the next morning.

Left

Detail—pink scalloped bordered Léron napkin with embroidered pink and yellow flower.

Opposite

Crystal is both beautiful and notoriously more fragile than glass, but the feel in the hand is often worth the danger. Note the cautionary reminder for Sunnylands staff.



R E M E M B E R
**PLEASE WASH AND
HANDLE THE BACCARAT
GLASSES WITH CARE.
THEY ARE VERY FRAGILE**



SETTING THE TABLE FOR DIPLOMACY

The Annenbergs' renowned hospitality enlisted the finest tableware and linens in the world. Not only did they establish a new American standard for opulence, but their signed guest books record a new standard for making social and political history in a private home. Their vision in gifting Sunnylands to the nation includes the continuation of their efforts to make a positive change in the world and to advance international diplomacy through gracious hospitality.

Today, Sunnylands retreat protocols employ the tools of culinary diplomacy that Walter and Leonore Annenberg instinctively brought to their table coupled with diplomatic tools that the White House and other organizations carefully enlist to set a perfect scene to host symbolic meals to advance relationships. Sunnylands embraces the sentiment best described by renowned chef José Andrés: "Instead of building higher walls, let's build longer tables."¹⁵

Right

Detail—white damask Léron napkin.

Opposite

Desert succulents are paired with English floral china. Dishes: Derby Panel Green by Royal Crown Derby; Léron linens; Baccarat crystal stemware; Acorn pattern flatware by Georg Jensen.

Interpreting Opulence Today

The royal-pedigreed Flora Danica china and paper-thin, delicate Baccarat glassware are only occasionally laid on the tables at Sunnylands today. Degradation of historic property is a consideration but, more importantly, times have changed. Selecting less ornate, fragile, and precious tableware reflects our retreat guests' contemporary sensibilities and the new optics signaling a slightly more relaxed definition of elegance.

When the State Department diplomatic staff began to arrive at Sunnylands in 2013, weeks before President Obama's dinner with President Xi Jinping, tableware was a major consideration. Everyone knows intuitively that there is a huge tonal shift if they use the picnic plasticware or the "good" china for a family meal. The White House staff is expert in establishing the correct tone for relationship building. Numerous iterations of tablescape setups were considered for such an important dinner. White House staff were provided access to a "look book"—a binder containing all the Sunnylands selections available for table settings. The binder also provided the all-important provenance describing for whom the china had been laid previously and on what occasions. For instance, Chief of Protocol Capricia Marshall was interested in every aspect of tableware that was used when President George H. W. Bush dined at Sunnylands with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu in 1990. Because the 2013 U.S.-China summit was scripted by both countries to be informal, the Flora Danica china and other royal-pedigreed options were not chosen for the dinner table. The Royal Crown Derby pattern was selected and a textured tablecloth was custom made for the long rectangular table. When President Obama chose Sunnylands to host King Abdullah II of Jordan in 2014 for a historic dinner, many tableware and linen choices were considered. Because White House staff indicated that it was to be a "working" dinner, tableware from the pantries was chosen to signal a more relaxed topography on which to open binders and to provoke a warm, relaxed-yet-memorable setting for relationship building.

Successful Cultural Exchange

The Annenbergs knew instinctively that dining together, now known in the political realm as gastro-diplomacy, or sharing culture through food, is a strong relationship builder. In 2012, Hillary Clinton launched the State Department's Diplomatic Culinary Program (DCP) to essentially deputize a corps of American chefs as important "food statesmen."¹⁶ The DCP, in partnership with the James Beard Foundation, activates chefs to assist the State Department in formal diplomatic functions. This informal ambassadorial role-in-action was evident when White House-selected chefs arrived at Sunnylands over the last decade. Celebrity chef Bobby Flay (who entered the dining room to formally introduce his menu to the esteemed guests); chef Benjamin Ford; and former White House executive chef Cristeta "Chris" Pasia Comerford, the first Asian-American and first woman to hold that post, prepared meals for important Sunnylands dinners.

Today, at each gathering—whether a networking dinner, retreat, meeting, or formal dinner—there is an opportunity to build on the enchanting and memorable events that Leonore and Walter curated for their guests. Richard Nixon, a frequent guest at Sunnylands described the experience as, "wholly unobtrusive thoughtfulness."¹⁷ This observation captures the working ethos of Sunnylands today. The many selections of historic fine china, silver flatware, and exquisite linens facilitate our ability to set the proper stage for impactful conversations to occur at the table. This collection, and the history made with it, is celebrated in this exhibition.

Left

Detail—floral embroidered white Léron napkin.

Opposite

Place cards for visitors, many of whom returned regularly, were handwritten and reserved for future use. Today, this ephemera is a treasure trove of recorded social history.

"You can make connections around a dinner table you can't make around a conference table."

Secretary of State John Kerry





Right

Detail—a sunny yellow placemat, a color used exclusively in the Game Room.

Opposite, clockwise from top left

Leonore Annenberg strikes a pose poolside in 1968.

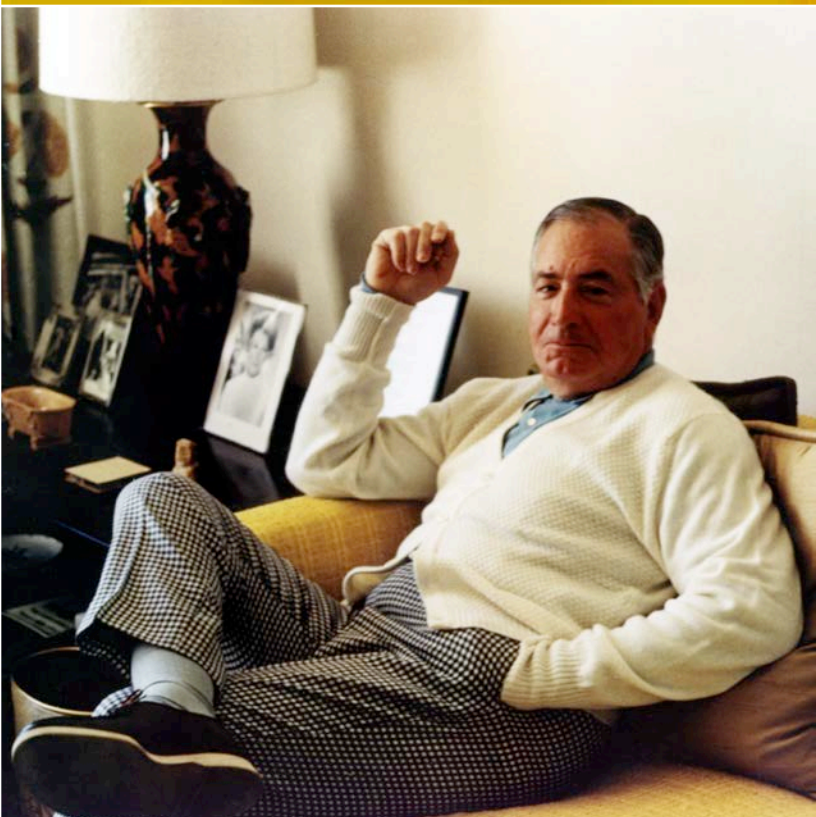
Photo by Gloria Etting.

Whimsical monkey-motif napkins are paired with department store midcentury flatware and a plastic serving tray.

Walter Annenberg in his study in 1968.

Photo by Gloria Etting.

Hand-painted detail on a plate by Gmundner Keramik in the Flamed pattern in yellow.



Endnotes

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- 17 From the Sunnylands Collection 2009.1.1210.

Acknowledgments

The gatherings arranged by Walter and Leonore Annenberg at Sunnylands are legendary. The resulting social legacy is celebrated in this exhibition through the glorious tables they set. Continuing this tradition, The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands sets the table for leaders from around the globe who share the Annenbergs' interest in improving the world. We thank the following people for contributing to the exhibition, this catalog, and accompanying programs.

The board of trustees of The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands provided generous support for this exhibition and publication. Trustees are Wallis Annenberg, Lauren Bon, Diane Deshong, Howard Deshong III, Leonore Deshong, Elizabeth Kabler, Elizabeth Sorensen, Charles Annenberg Weingarten, and Gregory Annenberg Weingarten. David J. Lane, president of The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, also provided valuable encouragement. The collections and exhibitions department staff imagined and directed the exhibition.

India Hicks, author, philanthropist, and style setter, used her distinct voice to echo the Annenbergs' time-honored tradition of the art of entertaining. As the goddaughter of HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, her unique historical perspective enlivened this catalog and exhibition, and we thank her and her colleague Jeanette Zachs for their valued contributions.

Zulma Brennan, collections manager, co-authored this catalog and provided critical photographic support. Mary Velez, senior art handler and a key member of the Annenbergs' staff from

1996-2009, contributed her vast knowledge of the Sunnylands tableware collections and social history, as well as a personal essay for this catalog. Frank Lopez, librarian and archivist, lent valued archival and editorial support to the exhibition. Michael Comerford, former house manager for Sunnylands, provided historic context for the linens and tableware.

Additional Sunnylands staff who helped with the project were Janice Lyle, editor, and Ashley Santana, managing editor, who ensured the quality of the catalog text and layout. Mike Reeske, David Montoya, Gerardo DeLeon, and the entire facilities team prepared the exhibition space. Ken Chavez and Eric Ornelas of the communications department added their expertise in marketing the exhibition. Michaelleen Gallagher and the education staff—Ivonne Miranda Correa and Vanessa Smith—supported the exhibition through innovative programming.

Many additional people outside Sunnylands were instrumental in a variety of ways. Kamil Beski of Beski Projekts in Los Angeles led the fabrication and installation of the exhibition exquisitely designed by Karina White. David Forster, President of Léron linens, contributed a valued oral history describing the customization process for linens at Sunnylands. Lighting designer Geoff Korf lit the exhibition beautifully.

Finally, celebrated photographer, David Loftus, created glorious photographs for this catalog which was expertly designed and art-directed by Robin Rout and John Crummay of JCRR Design.

Anne Rowe
Director of Heritage

The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands acknowledges the people who first lived in the Coachella Valley and whose descendants reside here today. Sunnylands occupies a space where indigenous people gathered and built community. We hope that engaging in important conversations on national and world affairs honors those who came before us.