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I L L U S T R A T E D



The Art of the Table

The League Club of Naples' annual design event, Naples Tables, unfolds this year through a stunning video that teaches and inspires while supporting the community

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Last year, 600 people attended The League Club of Naples' unique fundraising event, Naples Tables, at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples. The three-year-old table showcase was created as an innovative way to raise grant money for local nonprofits while elevating the design of the table into the next stratosphere through artistic partnerships between interior designers, florists, jewelry designers, and antique, fine art, fashion, and furnishing experts. This year, the much-anticipated gathering was cancelled due to the pandemic, but that didn't stop the club from bringing together local talent to share their insight and tips in the professional 35-minute video **Naples Tables 2021 "Serving Our Community in Its Time of Need."**

It also didn't stop the Naples-based League Club made up of 600 members of Junior Leagues from across the nation, Canada, England, and Singapore from raising \$385,000 this year solely through donations from its own Circle of Friends and event patrons. Since 2019, Naples Tables has already raised and distributed more than \$1 million for nonprofits in Collier and Lee counties. The League Club has granted more than \$5.6 million to nonprofits since 1986.

The 2021 "Serving Our Community in Its Time of Need" video features: **League Club** President **Maria L. Arends** and Vice President of Fundraising Events **Denise Hadley**, introduce the club, the event, and its purpose. They explain 2021 is clearly a time "to be innovative" with the event's format while also noting it's a critical time "to create beauty in your homes and lives when you really need it."



Karen Abell

Karen Abell, owner and curator of **Patina Collection**, shares the beauty of her Tuscan casali (farmhouse), and tips for al fresco dining, mixing antique and heirloom tableware, and using potted herbs in the décor. The pandemic has emphasized, she says, that “we never know what life will put in our laps, and we need to take advantage of every opportunity we are given. Light your candles, gather your flowers, put your tablecloth on, and have fun.”



Amanda Jaron and Wilfredo Emanuel

Wilfredo Emanuel, founder of **Wilfredo Emanuel Designs**, and **Amanda Jaron**, of **Jaron Fine Jewelry**, partner on an '80s-themed tablescape featuring black and 18-karat gold Versace china, sterling silver napkin rings that can be used as bracelet cuffs paired with Swarovski napkin rings, and \$1 million in Jaron's artistic jewelry pieces. “Accessorizing the home is no different than accessorizing the body,” she says.



Jett Thompson and Kaleigh Grover

Jett Thompson, owner and principal designer of **Jett Thompson HOME**, and **Kaleigh Grover**, publisher of **Naples Illustrated** and **Florida Design Naples**, discuss the first Naples Table, how *Naples Illustrated* became the original media sponsor of the event, and how it became a wild success that drew national designers in its second year. Thompson is also a League Club member. The fact that the League Club powered forward this year to raise funds and create a virtual event, she says, “speaks to the commitment in our community” to find ways creative to help others in need.



Rufino Hernandez, Matthew Kritis, and Judith Liegeois

Rufino Hernandez, creative director and managing partner of the **Garden District**, and his head floral artist, **Cindy Zack**, partner on a white-themed arrangement that mixes natural elements with a gold metallic accents and incorporates European flowers, South American orchids, and subtropical foliage. The Garden District arrangement was created for **Judith Liegeois Designs'** table. **Liegeois** partnered with her creative director, **Matthew Kritis**, to

create a whimsical and unexpected table design, with each setting different from the next. "The idea is to have each guest bring their own idea to the table," Kritis explains. Liegeois adds, "There is so much to chat about before the food comes." (Even the chandelier becomes a multi-faceted dinner guest.)

The video ends with the big reveal: The designer for the 2022 in-person Naples Tables that will take place on March 2, 2022: **Bunny Williams**, founding partner of New York-based **Bunny Williams Interior Designs**. She invites viewers into her Connecticut conservatory as she sets a table for three with hand-marbled placemats, mix-and-match silverware, antique salad plates, handmade French wine and water glasses, and even place cards for the intimate event.

"It's so much fun having a beautiful table, and such a gift. And one of the things that's so important as a hostess is to make your guests feel comfortable," Williams says. She is looking forward to her 2022 Naples Tables visit, she says, where "your table will be waiting for you."