

DESIGN & DECORATING

An Eloquent Breakfast in Bed

Nothing tells Mom she's appreciated like an elegantly served, if slightly burned, Mother's Day meal

BY MIEKE TEN HAVE

MOTHER'S DAY breakfasts in bed, as prepared by children, are often rather basic or charmingly inept. "It was usually as simple as cornflakes and milk," entertaining expert Cathy B. Graham remembered of the annual ritual when her kids were young, adding that she'd jump back in the sack to play along with the surprise.

"It's so nice to indulge in just staying in bed," said New York and Chicago interior designer Alessandra Branca, whose husband brings her warm lemon juice and coffee each morning. "It is a tradition we ought to return to," she added of the largely horizontal meal.

A large cloth napkin comes in handy during this potentially precarious repast.

There's a big difference, however, between a bowl of soggy cereal, lukewarm coffee and paper napkins hastily assembled on a wobbly tray and the real, spoil-the-matriarch deal. With a little help from Dad—and good design—the morning's repast can be a polished presentation, though he may still want the kids to sweat over their endearing jalopy pancakes or unwittingly crunchy scrambled eggs. For those looking to truly surprise, here's how to do it.

First, the foundation. The tray must stably hold the whole tableau, unfolding before the recipient like she's queen for a day. For a thoroughly mod-

ern mom, Kaymet's tray (below right) might work, though Ms. Branca prefers a throwback. "A traditional tray on stands, preferably with slots for newspapers and magazines, is elemental," she said. She included such a tray, a vintage rattan version, in the sumptuous bedroom she designed for the Kips Bay Decorator Show House, currently welcoming visitors in New York. She topped it with linens of her own design and a white lettuce-ware teapot by Dodie Thayer with its attendant cup and saucer.

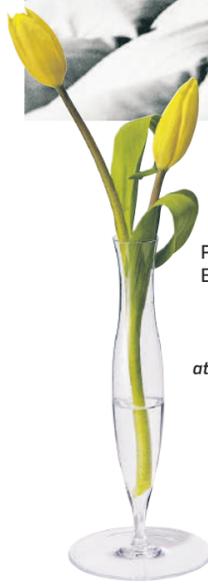
Manners authority Emily Post was delightfully stringent about particulars such as matching china. "Nothing looks more 'down at heel' than odd crockery," she wrote in "Etiquette," first published in 1922. "It is as bad as unmatched shoes," she added damningly. Nearly a century later, Ms. Graham, author of "Second Bloom: Cathy Graham's Art of the Table," agreed, explaining, "You only need one of everything: egg cup, plate, coffee pot, cup and saucer, creamer," she said. While most companies don't sell ready-made breakfast sets anymore, it's easy to buy single pieces of the same suite from classic china manufacturers such as Royal Copenhagen and Gien.

"If you can't drum up matching china," said Ms. Graham, "make sure the linens match." And need we say that cloth napkins, even if you forgo every other upgrade here, elevate the meal, with their whiff of room-service indulgence? Besides, a large dinner napkin comes in handy during this potentially precarious meal. One or two seasonal flowers in a petite bud vase, small enough so as not to crowd the tray, will serve as the final tray-top flourish.

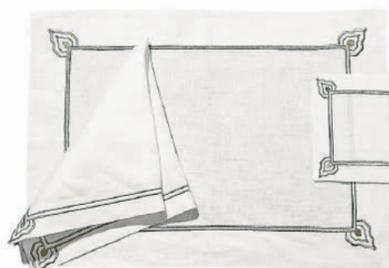
RICH FOOD With a sufficiently pretty tray, Mom might feel as regal as Baroness Fiona Thyssen-Bornemisza and her daughter in 1963



GETTY IMAGES (TOP); F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, STYLING BY ANNE CARDENAS (VASE, LINENS)



Flower Vase BV39 III by J. & L. Lobmeyr, \$179, ateliercourbet.com



Alessandra Branca Linens, from \$76 for 2 place mats, branca.com



Kaymet Lap Tray, about \$177, kaymet.co.uk

Royal Copenhagen Blue Fluted Collections, from \$50 for egg cup, fjorn.com



FRESH PICKS

BATHING BEAUTY India Mahdavi's new fixture collection for Bisazza, in strawberry



THE FIXTURES
Splashes of Color

Though nervy aesthetes have recently been investing in exuberantly patterned and colored bathroom tiles, the actual sinks, toilets and tubs have remained unrelentingly neutral for at least the last 30 years.

At April's Salone del Mobile in Milan, India Mahdavi—the designer behind Sketch, a very pink London restaurant—

staged a no-less courageous protest against boring bathroom design.

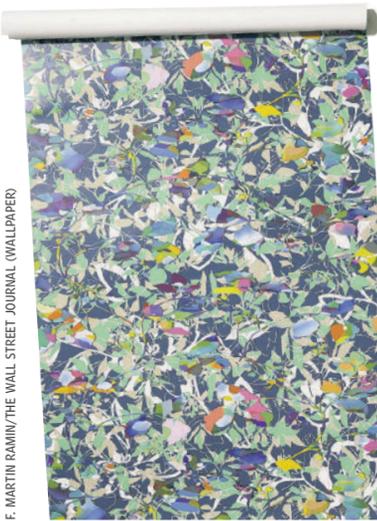
The Paris-based designer's eponymous bathroom line for Italian luxury brand Bisazza includes a bathtub, mirror and wash basin available in three colors: strawberry, pistachio, and blueberry. "It's a contemporary interpretation of our childhood bathroom

memories," said the self-identifying chromatic "polyglot" in an email, adding that she deploys color specifically to elicit joy. "They're like human-scale toys for a sensitive and sensorial experience," Ms. Mahdavi said of the fixtures, "a purification through color." The Mahdavi Collection, from about \$563 for wash basin, bisazza.it.

THE WALLPAPER
Music to Your Eyes

Revered by music nerds as a pioneer of ambient music, a genre more meditative than melodic, Brian Eno has designed a similarly atmospheric new collection of wallpaper with the British company Graham & Brown. After approaching Mr. Eno, Graham & Brown introduced the artist, musician and music producer to its 40,000-piece design archive, which he used as a jumping-off point for his creations. Said Paula Taylor, the company's lead design stylist, "He took those original repeat files and actually began mixing them together and blending them digitally, as one would blend oils or pastiche papers over one another." The result: "The Mask Series," consisting of "Flower Mask Jade" (shown) and the slightly less dense "Flower Mask Blue." Said Ms. Taylor, "Wallpaper is effectively 'ambient' art." Brian Eno Flower Mask Jade Wallpaper, \$120 per roll, grahambrown.com —Eleanore Park

◀ Wallpaper designed by artist Brian Eno.



F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (WALLPAPER)

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Pictured: Stand Up To Cancer Ambassador, **Bradley Cooper** along with American Airlines team members currently fighting, surviving and co-surviving cancer.

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