

Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

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The President and Mrs. Ford will host a black-tie dinner for Prime Minister and Mrs. Harold Wilson of Great Britain Thursday, Jan. 30 at 8 p.m. Soprano Beverly Sills of the New York City Opera will perform during after-dinner entertainment in the East Room.

The decor selected by Mrs. Ford for the State Dining Room stresses American folk art and is part of an overall emphasis Mrs. Ford hopes to give to American crafts during the President's term of office.

Focal point of each table will be an antique wooden decoy, placed on a natural swamp or marsh-like setting. Each centerpiece varies, centering around a different bird or birds. Each setting incorporates natural earth materials, such as moss, cattails, fresh mushrooms and other natural dried materials. Gravel and stone are also used.

The decoys are painted and date from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. 39 of the decoys will be used, including replicas of a variation of ducks and geese as well as shore birds done in natural colors.

The decoys are on loan to the White House from the Museum of American Folk Art in New York, whose entire decoy collection numbers 147. The collection was a gift to the museum from Alastair B. Martin, a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The table settings which surround the decoys were created by Jack Bangs, chief designer for The Gazebo of New York. Mr. Bangs donated his services to the White House and worked with Mrs. Ford both on the overall theme for the dinner and the design. (Prime Minister Wilson is an amateur ornithologist.)

Replacing the usual silver or vermeil candlesticks surrounding the centerpieces will be candleholders made from antique wooden spools used in the mills of New England from the turn of the century through 1945. The wood has a shine created from the lanolin of the yarn which was deposited on the wood. Some of the candleholders are trimmed in brass and others in pewter.

The Johnson china will be used on the taffeta and antique satin tablecloths in shades of bright pinks. The menu includes turtle soup with sherry; supreme of royal squab with wild rice and sauteed zucchini; hearts of palm salad and brie cheese; praline mousse; and demitasse. Robert Mondavi Pinot Noir will be served with the main course and Shramsberg Blanc de Blancs with dessert.

Dancing in the Grand Foyer to the Marine Dance Combo will follow Miss Sills' performance.

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