



# Crystal CLEAR!

**Suneeta Sodhi Kanga** demystifies the glassware that graces a table in a formal setting



PICS: OMKAR KOCHAREKAR



**A**TABLE setting may have many elements, especially on formal occasions. Glassware or stemware is placed on the table in a way that is convenient, symmetrical and determined by the dining occasion. At a formal affair, because the majority of people are right-handed, stemware is aligned symmetrically at the top right of the cover. The arrangement of stemware is based on space. At a formal multi-course meal, there is a lot of tableware, including a water goblet and two or three wine glasses. To save space, stemware is arranged in the shape of a triangle or a diamond. At a simple meal, two or three courses are served and less stemware is required. Usually one wine glass is used along with a water goblet. The table setting is uncrowded and there is room to arrange stemware in any way one chooses, such as in a straight line parallel with the edge of the table or a diagonal line angled toward the table's edge. Stemware is placed on the table in the order of use.

**Water Goblet:** Because water is taken throughout a meal, particularly a four-to five-course meal that incorporates a variety of seasonings, the goblet is placed in a position closest to the hand, approximately 1 inch above the tip of the dinner knife to eliminate hitting the goblet when the dinner knife is lifted for use. The water goblet has a full body glass with a short stem. Hold the glass by the stem to preserve its chill.

**Juice Glasses:** The juice glass is placed in the centre of the cover on a small underplate when juice is served as a first course: for example, tomato juice at dinner or orange juice at breakfast. If juice is served to accompany a meal, the glass is placed directly on the table at the top right of the cover.

**Wine Glasses:** Wine glasses are placed on the table in the order that accommodates the service of wine. Normally at a simple meal, one wine is served, and the way the wine glass is placed on the table is not important. But a typical multi-course menu begins with light courses, proceeds to the main course, and is followed by a light course or two. To accommodate the course in service, the appropriate wine glass is placed nearest the hand, a position that works from the left toward the water goblet. Clear, uncut, tulip-shaped glasses are ideal for tasting and drinking. They capture all the aromas of the wine and funnel them straight to your nostrils. Wine connoisseurs agree that each type of wine needs a particular type of glass to bring out

the distinctive bouquet. Using a narrow glass for a rich Burgundy, for example, won't allow enough room to swirl it around in, and it's the swirl that brings out its bouquet. The glass also needs to taper toward the top so that it captures the bouquet yet allows for sipping. In general, the stem of a glass should be long enough to keep hands from touching the bowl, which can affect the wine's temperature, and therefore its bouquet.

**Champagne Glasses:** The champagne glass is placed on the table to the right of the water goblet when champagne is the only wine served with a meal. If champagne is served to accompany a particular course, such as an appetiser or dessert, its glass is placed on the table in the order of use. It is a narrow fluted glass, which reduces the wine's surface area and keep the bubbles from dissipating. Hold it from the stem.....always!

**White Wine Glasses:** The white wine glass is arranged in the form of a triangle or a diamond. It is placed to the lower right of the red wine glass. In the diamond arrangement, this glass is placed to the lower left of the red wine glass. It is a slightly smaller glass with wider bowl to capture the bouquet. Hold the glass by the stem to preserve its chill.

**Red Wine Glasses:** This glass is also placed in a triangle or a diamond arrangement. In the triangle, it is placed to the upper left of the white wine glass, generally above the spoon. In the diamond arrangement, it is placed to the upper right of the white wine glass. This glass has the biggest bowl and must be held at the bottom of the bowl where it meets the stem.

**Dessert Wine Glasses:** The dessert wine glass is angled to the right rear of the water goblet when space is at a premium. Otherwise, it is placed directly to the right of the water goblet. Because they are small they may be held from where the cup meets the stem.

**Tips:** Always use your right hand to drink from a glass on a table. Hold a glass from its base. Never hold a wine glass from the cup, always from the stem. Cognac is served after dessert in a snifter. Roll it between both hands and then cup it in one hand. Warming the glass brings out the bouquet in cognac. ☞