

FIELD GUIDE · A WORLD BY TANGLED THISTLE

The Aurora Ice Court

Once each winter a palace of pale stone and frosted glass opens for one evening. It looks severe, it treats you warmly, and nobody sits above anyone else. This is your first look inside.

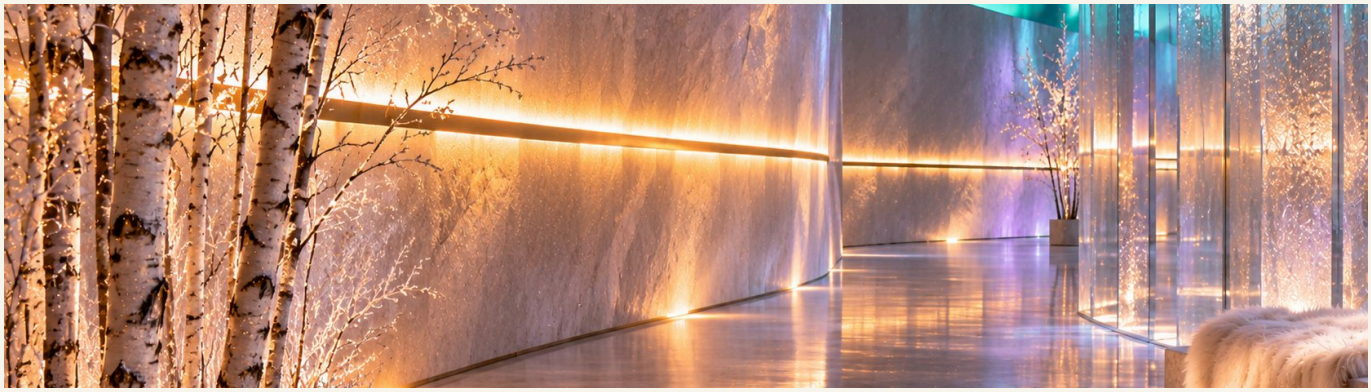
TANGLED THISTLE · EDITION 1.0 · NOVEMBER 2026

FREE PREVIEW · 16 PAGES

THE WORLD · ONE

A pale court with one warm line

Stone, wool and a hot supper below it; ribbed and canted glass above it, where a slow aurora travels after dessert.



The unbroken line. Concept visualization. One warm line runs through every room of the court and is never dimmed.

Winter is usually drawn as something to be endured or to be dazzled by. I wanted to know whether a room could look crystalline, even severe, and still make every person in it feel looked after from the first minute to the last.

The Aurora Ice Court opens once each winter in a palace of pale stone, frosted glass and reflective planes. It is not a fairytale ice palace. It is a contemporary court of honest materials, plaster, stone-look surfaces, ribbed clear panels, brushed silver, wool and linen, and every label says what a thing is made of.

Through every room runs one warm line of light at the height of your hand. Everything below it is warm to the touch: stone, wool, linen, timber. Everything above it is cool to the eye: clear, ribbed, smoked, mirrored or white. The guest lives below the line. The weather lives above it.

Guests come for three things: a court they can walk through freely, at their own pace; a hot supper at ten-place tables, lit by table lamps; and two minutes after dessert when a slow band of aurora color crosses the glass and the leaves overhead, while every plate stays in warm light. Nothing is asked of anyone in return for food, a seat or the view.

IN THIS FIELD GUIDE

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WHAT THIS IS

A free first look at a World: design documentation for whoever will make the evening. It shows the idea and how it feels, and leaves the counts, plans and recipes to the packages. Nothing here has been built, cooked or tested, and every picture is a concept visualization.

THE WORLD · TWO

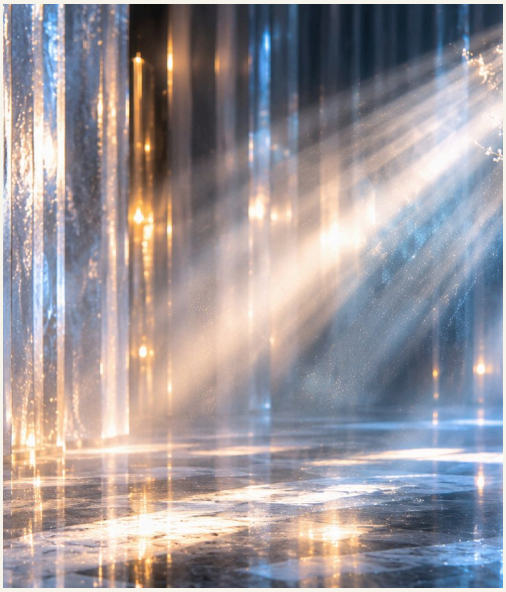
The first aurora was weather

The Court tells its own beginning in two sentences, and has arranged every room around it since.

The Court's first aurora, it says, was weather that everyone could see from outside the palace walls. So the rulers abolished their raised thrones and replaced them with one long horizon line: nobody sits above anyone else.

That line is still there. It is the warm light you follow from the door, and it decides the height of everything that places a guest. There is no dais, no head table and no throne. Every chair is the same height and every table is the same height, so when the court gathers, the room sees one level line of seated heads.

The cold is real, but it stays overhead, in the glass and the pale ceilings, where it can be admired. The warmth is practical and close at hand: a coat taken, a cup given, a seat that is always free. Visually glacial, physically warm. The Court enjoys that contradiction, and so do its guests.



Light through glass. Concept visualization. The court's cold lives in its glass, overhead and out of reach.

WHAT IT BELIEVES

Cold can sharpen beauty without requiring anyone to feel excluded, distant or uncomfortable.

WHAT IT ASKS

Can a winter room feel crystalline and severe while its hospitality feels unmistakably warm?

WHAT IT PROMISES YOU

Warm all evening, seated at the same height as everyone else, with a good view of the sky.

What the court will not do

No seat above another. No dais, head table, throne or place card that ranks anyone.

No ice queens. No royalty, frozen-fantasy characters or costume. Dress is an invitation, never a rule.

No color on a plate. Aurora color is light only. It never lands on food, a face or a step.

No ice underfoot. No skating surface, real ice or snow on the floor. Snow stays outside.

No candelabras. No candle carries the light here; the warm line and the table lamps do.

No test. Nobody performs, plays or answers anything to be fed, seated or shown the sky.

“No seat above another.”

ONE OF THE COURT'S LINES

THE WORLD · THREE

The night it is for

Held, never ranked. The Court has three habits, and after dessert they all meet in one slow change of light.

Equitable

Every seat the same height, every table the same height, no crest and no head of the room. Guests are welcomed, never presented.

Lucid

The warm line orients every view, signs use plain words, and labels tell the truth: resin is never called ice.

Protective

Warm seats, food light and the warm line stay on through every change of light. Color never lands on a plate or a face.



Let the room change first. Concept visualization. The lanterns and crystal sculpture are the picture's own; the court lights itself with lamps and the warm line.

AFTER DESSERT, FROM YOUR CHAIR

Dessert and hot drinks have reached every table. The strings settle. Nobody asks you to move, and nobody needs to: the view is the same from every seat, because every seat is at the same height.

Then color begins at the back of the room. A low band of emerald and violet travels forward through the translucent leaves, across the open silver canopy and over the pale ceiling, slowly, for two minutes, and then holds, quiet and low. The table lamp in front of you never changes. Your plate stays warm and gold.

Afterward the floor opens for anyone who wants to move, and stays seated and hosted for anyone who does not.

IN THE COURT'S OWN WORDS

"Welcome. A warm drink first. Every place here has the same welcome."
AT THE DOOR

"Let the room change first."
BEFORE THE AURORA

"Keep the horizon warm."
THE COURT'S STANDING INSTRUCTION

"Warm hands, clear glass."
ON THE CARD YOU MAY TAKE HOME

EVERY GUEST HAS, JOINED IN OR NOT

- A warm cup in the first minute, before any explanation
- Water and a backed seat in every room
- A hot supper, with every dietary plate landing at the same moment
- The aurora from a seat at the same height as everyone's
- Late baked apple, cocoa or tea
- The clear court seal, theirs to keep

The guest I design for first is the one who declines everything. Here they are warm, fed, seated and looked after all evening without doing, saying or showing anything, and they still see the sky change and go home with the seal.



ONE ROOM · THE HORIZON SUPPER

Where the cold room becomes a warm table

Of the eight rooms, this is the one I would sit you down in first, because it is where the court keeps its promise. Separate ten-place tables, never joined into a banquet. A lamp on every table, linen, and the pale court rising quietly above. Sit anywhere: tables are numbered, and no place card ranks anyone.

WHAT YOU NOTICE, IN ORDER

1. Lamps and linen, and a low band of hellebore and paperwhite on every table
2. Warm bread on the table before anyone explains anything
3. A planted rail along one side, with the warm line running behind it
4. An open canopy of silver and translucent leaves overhead
5. Above it all, a calm pale ceiling, like a winter sky before color

FOOD LIGHT HOLDS STEADY.

Concept visualization. The picture shows one long table; the court seats its guests at separate ten-place tables.

ONE ROOM · HOW IT FEELS

Lamplight below, a pale sky above

Comfort first: you are warm, seated and fed before anything else is asked of the room. Then wonder, which arrives without anyone having to leave the table.

ATMOSPHERE

Warm, lamplit and unhurried. The room smells only of what is real in it: bread, soup, tea and the flowers on the table. The court uses no added fragrance anywhere.

BOTANICAL CHARACTER

A low band of hellebore and paperwhite over fir tips on every table, kept low enough to talk across. Flowers keep their own colors; nothing is sprayed white or dusted with glitter.

SOUND

Cello and viola through supper, lowered for the soup pour and again for the main course, so the table can talk.

DECORATIVE DIRECTION

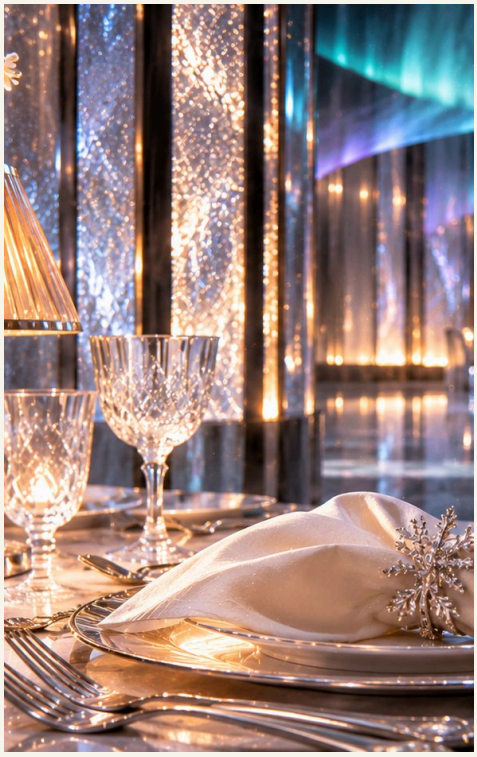
Three calm layers, one above the other: low linen and flowers, an open canopy of silver and leaves, then the pale ceiling. Frost lines run along the frieze, branching at fixed angles like rime on a window.

LIGHTING APPROACH

A warm table lamp on every table and the warm line along the walls, both steady all night. The color travels overhead later, and never reaches a plate or a face.

SERVICE

Bread comes before explanation. Plant-based and dietary plates land with the standard plates, on the same plate shape, at the same moment.



A lamp at every table. Concept visualization. The votives are the picture's own; in the court, the lamp carries the light.

Soup poured at my place.

ONE OF THE MEMORIES THE EVENING IS DESIGNED TO LEAVE

FIRST TEN SECONDS

Warm and ready: lamps, linen and a low band of white flowers on every table.

AFTER THE SOUP

You have been served at your place, and the music came down to let you hear the table.

AT THE AURORA

Color moves across the leaves and the ceiling above you. Your lamp, your plate and your neighbor stay exactly as they were.

In the packages. The Horizon Supper at three sizes, with its tables, lamps, linen, canopy and table flowers drawn, counted and timed, is in the Complete Design Concept Guide, the Floral & Tablescape Detail Pack, the Materials & Object Guide and the Planning & Scaling Toolkit.

AT THE TABLE

One course, one drink

Here is one dish and one drink, described the way I would describe them to you across the table: what they are for, not how to make them.



Blackcurrant before the sky. Concept visualization. Developed recipes, not kitchen-tested.

DESSERT · THE HORIZON SUPPER

White-chocolate buttermilk mousse

With blackcurrant, oat crisp and pear

ITS JOB

A cool, sweet finish, and the first color. Blackcurrant is the first strong jewel color on any plate all evening, and it arrives just before the room's own color begins.

HOW IT TASTES

Soft, lightly tangy buttermilk and white chocolate, sharp dark fruit, a crisp of toasted oats and a cool slice of pear.

EQUAL, ALWAYS

Every dietary version is a complete dessert, served at the same moment and on the same plate shape.



Warm Horizon. Concept visualization. The candles are the picture's own; no candle carries the court's light.

ARRIVAL · THE FROST COURT

Warm Horizon

White tea, pear, lemon and honey, served warm · zero-proof

ITS JOB

A warm cup precedes every explanation. It is in your hand within the first minute, after your coat and before anything is said about the court.

WHAT IT IS

Pale white tea with pear, a little lemon and honey, served warm in a handled cream cup. It has no garnish: its pear-gold color against the cream cup is the whole decoration.

"Welcome. A warm drink first. This is Warm Horizon — white tea, pear, lemon and honey."
AT THE DOOR

The menus come from a separate culinary kit by Salt Notes at saltnotes.blog, *Supper on the Warm Horizon*, with every course, every drink and every dietary version. It is included in the Complete World Package. Zero-proof drinks are the full program, never a consolation. Developed recipes, not kitchen-tested.

ONE OBJECT · THE COURT SEAL

A clear oval that keeps the sky

At the door, after your coat and your warm cup, a host offers you a small clear seal in a soft gray sleeve. It is yours, whatever you do with the evening.



Linen, glass and frost. Concept visualization. The textures the seal belongs to. The court uses no real ice: what looks like ice is glass or a clear stand-in, and is labeled so.

A clear oval with a brushed-silver border and one small prism notch. On the back, a line from the Court's founding. It is the only curve in the whole court that you hold in your hand.

It is offered after comfort, never before, so it reads as welcome and not as admission. It is not a ticket, a token or a test. Some guests carry it all evening; some never take it out of the sleeve.

The seal is clear on purpose. It shows color only when light crosses it, which is the court's idea in miniature: the color belongs to the light, never to the thing.

ON THE WAY HOME

At the door your coat, your seal and a cup of tea come back together, and a thin silver collar is clipped around the seal. Tilt it at a window the next morning and it throws a small glint of emerald and violet: the aurora carried in light, not ink.



felt sleeve, one stitched line — clear seal, silver border — with its collar, going home

The color belongs to the light, never to the thing.

One oval, one notch, one border.
The glint at the collar is light,
not print: nothing on it is colored.

Concept diagram, drawn in proportion. Concept design — not for construction; sizes, materials and finishes are in the Materials & Object Guide.

WHAT COMES WITH IT

A smoke-gray felt sleeve with one stitched line, and an optional folded card: “Warm hands, clear glass.”

WHAT IT NEVER DOES

It never decides a seat, unlocks a course or proves you joined in. Nothing is collected from you, and no contact is taken.

IN THE PACKAGES

The seal, sleeve, collar and card, drawn and specified, with how to brief a maker, are in the Materials & Object Guide.

DESIGN DNA

Level line, canted blade, clear oval

Everything in the court is drawn from long level horizontals with canted or folded verticals standing against them. The only curve you hold is the seal.

THE TWELVE COLORS

Warm Ivory Wool
#EFE6D6
Linen and wool

Snow White Plaster
#F7F7F4
Matte plaster, porcelain

Pale Court Stone
#D9D3C7
Court walls and the bar

Brushed Court Silver
#B4B7B8
The seal's border, flatware

Smoke Gray Glass
#8A8C8E
Smoked glass, the sleeve

Deep Night-Blue Edge
#1C2541
Edges, the Mirror Walk

Aurora Emerald Light
#5FA88A
Light only

Aurora Cyan Light
#7FB9C4
Light only

Aurora Violet Light
#8C7BB0
Light only

Aurora Rose Light
#C7949F
Light only

Champagne Horizon Glow
#D9BF8C
The warm line

Silver Fir
#5E6F66
Pine and fir, sparingly

THREE MARKS

The warm line

One continuous warm light at hand height through every room, visible from every seat and never dimmed by a cue.



The canted blade

Tall pale planes leaning a little off true in the White Audience Hall: ceremony without a throne at the end of the room.



The clear oval

The court seal: the one curve held in the hand, clear until light crosses it. Leaves and mirrors fold; only the seal is round.

PATTERN

Rime frost on a cold window, branching at 30° and 60° only and crossed by a silver rule. A small prism notch repeats once per bay. Pattern stops at the warm line.

MATERIALS

Stone-look surfaces, matte plaster, ribbed clear panels, brushed silver, smoked glass, wool and linen. Warm below the line, cool above it.

BOTANICALS

Hellebore, paperwhite, white cyclamen, magnolia, white pine, silver fir and paper birch, in their own colors. Abundance stays low.

OBJECTS

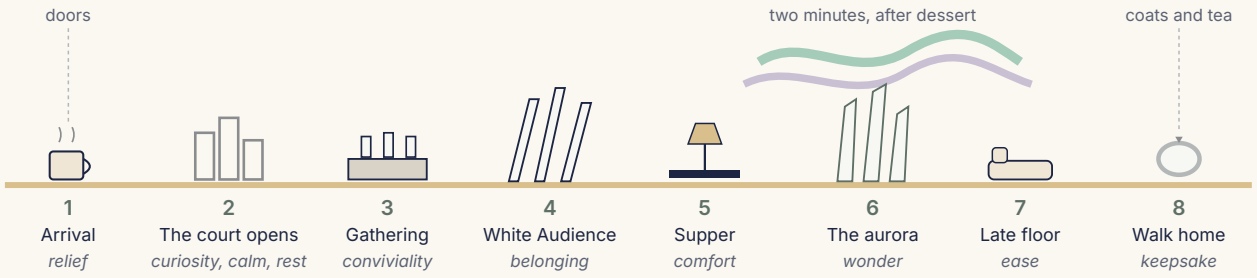
A clear seal in a felt sleeve, ten-place tables with lamps, a ribbed smoke-gray water glass, and an open canopy of silver and leaves.

Never in the court: raised seats, real ice or snow underfoot, ice queens or royal costume, candelabras, a blue flood or a neon rainbow, sprayed-white greenery or icy-blue food. Aurora colors are light only. The colors' weights and every material, finish and size are in the paid packages.

THE EVENING, STEP BY STEP

One evening along one warm line

Every guest follows the same horizon, joining in or not. The feeling of each room is planned; the pace is yours.



Read left to right along the warm line. Each mark is a room or a moment; the feeling under it is the one each is designed to give. A guest's-eye view, not a run of show.

RELIEF

1 Arrival

THE FROST COURT

Coat first, then a warm cup in your hand, then the clear seal in its sleeve. A host is already sitting at the landing.

CURIOSITY · CALM · REST

2 The court opens

GALLERY · MIRROR WALK · CONSERVATORY

Three kinds of clear, a passage where the warm line holds, and birch and tea. Any order, or straight past.

CONVIVIALITY

3 Gathering

THE HORIZON BAR

Zero-proof first, on silver: the first color of the evening is something you drink.

BELONGING

4 The White Audience

THE WHITE AUDIENCE HALL

Everyone seated level under the pale blades while a short chamber phrase plays. A welcome, then one toast, sitting down.

COMFORT

5 Supper

THE HORIZON SUPPER

Bread before explanation, soup poured at your place, a hot main and the blackcurrant dessert.

WONDER

6 The aurora

THE LEAVES, THE CANOPY, THE CEILING

Color from the back of the room forward, for two minutes, then held low. Your lamp never changes.

EASE

7 The late floor

THE AURORA FLOOR

Baked apple, cocoa or tea, and music for anyone who wants to move. No dance is required.

KEEPSAKE

8 The walk home

BACK THROUGH THE COURT

Coat, seal and tea returned together, a silver collar on the seal, and a wool wrap for the cold.

Hospitality, not the clock, decides when the sky changes.

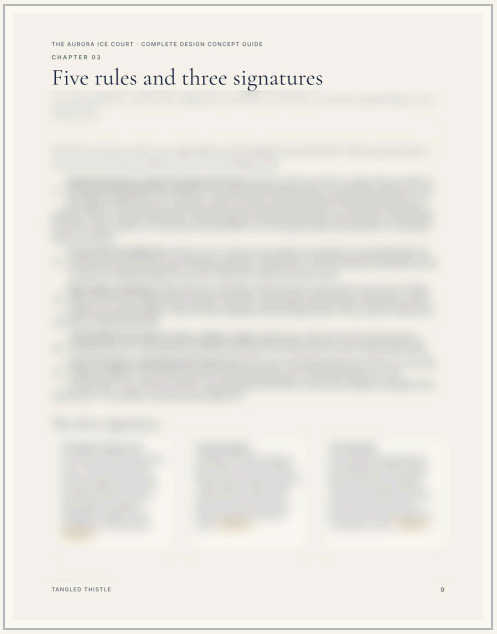
The aurora waits until dessert and hot drinks have reached every table. If the color cannot run, the warm white court and its service simply carry on.

The quiet way through: the Mirror Walk, the Conservatory and a quiet corner of the Aurora Floor stay open all night, with seats and the same food and drink. The cues, clock, routes and staffing behind this evening, and the three-day version, are in the Planning & Scaling Toolkit.

INSIDE THE PACKAGES

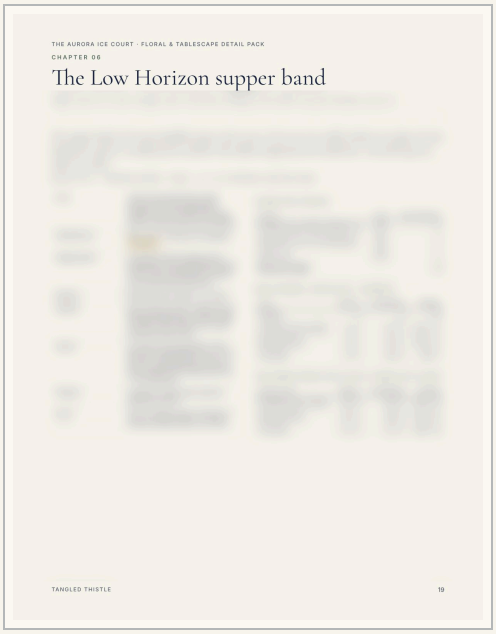
One page from each

A real page from each of the four parts. The titles stay clear; everything else is blurred in the picture itself.



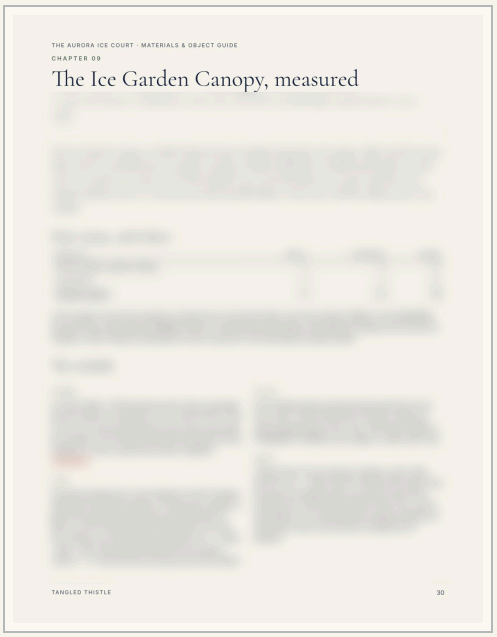
COMPLETE DESIGN CONCEPT GUIDE · PAGE 9

The five rules every room keeps, and the three signatures that make the court recognizable.



FLORAL & TABLESCAPE DETAIL PACK · PAGE 19

The low band of flowers on every supper table: its stems, placement and care.



MATERIALS & OBJECT GUIDE · PAGE 30

The canopy of silver and leaves over supper, measured module by module.



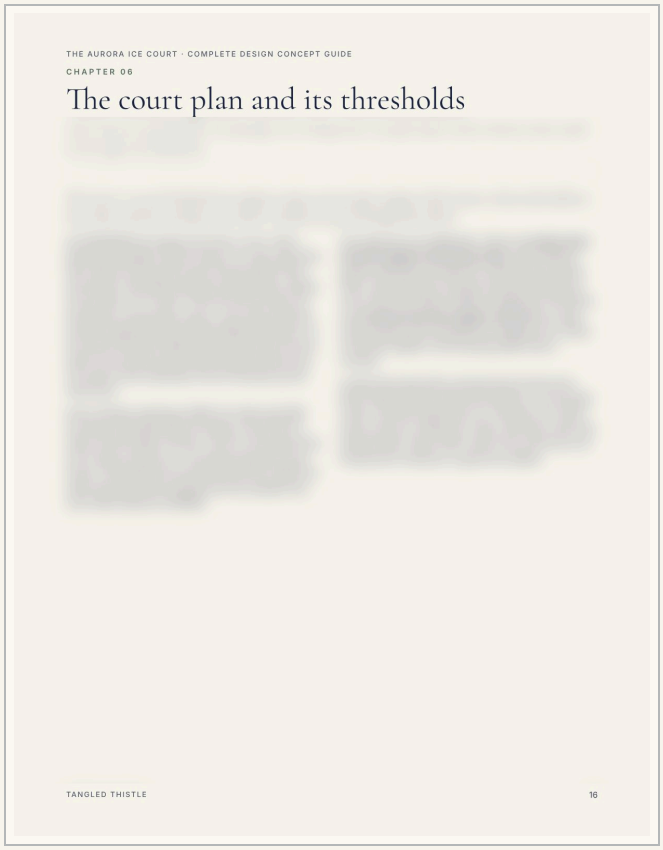
PLANNING & SCALING TOOLKIT · PAGE 7

SMALL, STANDARD and GRAND side by side, line by line.

INSIDE THE PACKAGES

Up close, and held back

Two more pages, larger: real pages, flattened into pictures and blurred before they were placed here.



COMPLETE DESIGN CONCEPT GUIDE · PAGE 16

The whole court in plan: its rooms in guest order, the routes between them and the openings that join them.



MATERIALS & OBJECT GUIDE · PAGE 37

The seal from page 8, drawn and specified, with its sleeve, collar and card.

HOW THESE PREVIEWS ARE MADE

Each page was rendered from the finished package and blurred in the picture itself, leaving only its running head, title and page number sharp. There is no text layer under the picture, and the full page is not hidden inside this file. What you cannot read here is exactly what the packages are for.

THIS FIELD GUIDE SHOWS

- The idea, its beliefs and how the night feels
- One room and one object, described
- One course and one drink, described
- The twelve colors and the court's three marks
- The guest's path through the evening

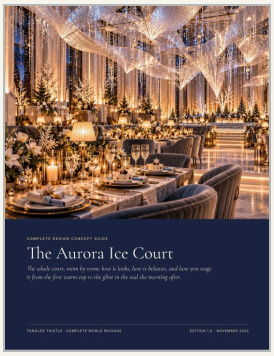
THE PACKAGES HOLD

- Every room at three scales, with plans
- Every stem, material and object, counted and sized
- The run of show, staffing and the three-day version
- A live-formula workbook, Word templates and drawings
- Every recipe, in the culinary kit from Salt Notes

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Four parts, one court

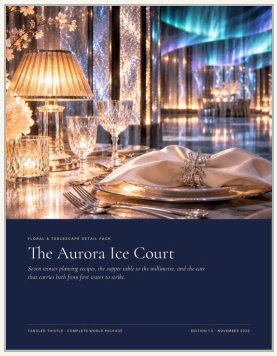
Each part stands on its own. Together, with a Start Here guide and the culinary kit, they are the Complete World Package, and every World I make comes in the same family, so you always know where to look.



Complete Design Concept Guide

65 PAGES · 6 DRAWINGS

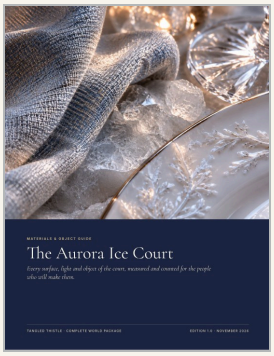
The whole World: the idea and its rules, the palette, every room in guest order with its light, sound and scent, the evening hour by hour, the aurora, the menu at a glance, the discoveries and quiet routes, three scales and the three-day version.



Floral & Tablescape Detail Pack

43 PAGES · 4 DRAWINGS

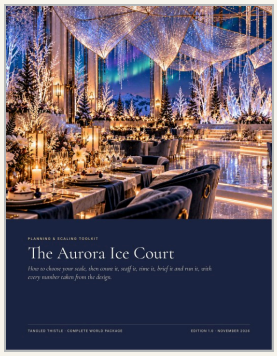
Every planted composition, from the green threshold to the supper band, counted at each scale, with the supper table laid in detail, plants kept off the plate, care and strike, and ordering sheets.



Materials & Object Guide

60 PAGES · 8 DRAWINGS

Every surface and object in the court: the palette as material, the three kinds of clear, the blades, the leaves and the canopy, the seal and keepsakes, tables, lamps and light, with maker briefs and a procurement checklist.



Planning & Scaling Toolkit

55 PAGES · WORKBOOK · TEMPLATES · 6 DRAWINGS

How to choose a scale, count it, staff it, time it and run it: the three scales compared, a calendar, quantities, a budget framework, the run of show, the three-day program, vendor briefs, role cards and fallbacks.

THE COMPLETE WORLD PACKAGE

All four parts together, with a Start Here guide that tells you which file to open first, how the parts connect and how to choose your scale, plus the live-formula workbook, nine Word templates and twenty-four drawings.

It also brings the culinary kit from Salt Notes, *Supper on the Warm Horizon*: every course and every drink, with every dietary version. Developed recipes, not kitchen-tested.

EXPLORE THE COMPLETE WORLD PACKAGE

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND VENUES

Ask about a hospitality edition at tangledthistle.blog/contact/. It is a separate conversation, by inquiry only.

This Field Guide is free and separate.

Every part is a US Letter PDF to print or read on screen; the Planning & Scaling Toolkit adds its workbook and templates. Design and planning documentation for your own occasions, not an event service.

FIELD GUIDE OR THE PACKAGES

What you have, and what you would get

This guide is meant to make you want the court. The packages are meant to let you make it.

	THIS FIELD GUIDE	THE PACKAGES
The idea	The premise, beliefs and personality	All of it, with the five rules, the three signatures, the voice and the resolved views
Rooms	One room, described	All eight and the court that joins them, each with its plan, light, sound and scent, at three scales
Objects and materials	One object, described; the rest named	Every object and material family with its finish, nominal size, quantity and a brief for the maker
Flowers and the table	Named, as character	Every planted piece and the full supper table, counted at each scale, with care, safety and ordering
Menu and drinks	One course and one drink, described	Every dish and drink at a glance; every recipe in the culinary kit from Salt Notes, in the Complete World Package
The evening	The guest's path	Run of show and cues, the three-day version, routes, and what holds the aurora
Discoveries	Not included	What a curious guest may notice, and how each is offered, never required
Counts, staffing, budget	Not included	By scale, with a live-formula workbook and a budget framework
Templates and drawings	Not included	Nine Word templates and twenty-four editable drawings for briefing makers and running the night

Which part for which job

IF YOU WANT TO …	START WITH
Fall for the idea, and share it with the people deciding with you	This Field Guide FREE
Decide what your version of the evening looks like	Complete Design Concept Guide
Brief a florist and set the tables	Floral & Tablescape Detail Pack
Make or source every surface and object	Materials & Object Guide
Choose a scale, then count, staff, schedule and run the night	Planning & Scaling Toolkit
Cook the supper and pour the drinks	The culinary kit, in the Complete World Package
Do all of it, culinary kit included	Complete World Package

BEFORE YOU DECIDE

Is this World for you?

I would rather you knew now: this is a calm, generous World, and very good at one kind of evening.

30	80	340
GUESTS · SMALL	GUESTS · STANDARD	GUESTS · GRAND
A private court: fewer hosts, each covering more than one room, and the whole sequence intact.	The reference version of the World, with one host in each room.	More tables and more hands, and still one warm line and one aurora.

The same rooms and the same story at each size; the scales are alternatives, never added together. There is also a three-day version: five occasions in the same court, from a lit threshold to a breakfast called First Light.

IT SUITS YOU IF

You want a winter evening that looks crystalline and feels warm from the first minute.

You care that every guest is seated level, fed well and looked after, whether or not they join in.

You are planning for a household, a society, a company or a hall, and want the same story at whatever size you are.

You have rooms with some height, and people to make it, a builder, a lighting designer, a florist, a kitchen, or you will brief them.

You like an evening whose big moment is quiet, slow and shared.

IT MAY NOT SUIT YOU IF

You want an ice palace. No real ice, no skating and no snow underfoot; no ice queens and no royalty.

You want spectacle all night. The aurora is two minutes, once, after supper. The rest is a steady, warm court.

You want a ranked occasion. No head table, no dais and no place cards that rank anyone.

You need someone to run it. This is design and planning documentation, not an event service: no staff, venue, catering or installation.

You need permission to trade. The packages grant no hospitality or commercial-venue rights.

WHAT YOU WOULD BE BUYING

Design and planning documentation for your own occasions and projects. It is concept design: nothing in it has been built, cooked or tested, and every picture is a concept visualization. Site, venue, engineering, supplier, kitchen and permit decisions are yours, made with the people who know your building. The overhead canopy, the pale ceilings and the color lighting in particular want qualified hands.

MAKE IT SMALLER

If you keep only one thing from this World, keep the warm line: one unbroken warm light at one height through every room, never dimmed, with everyone seated below it at the same level.



The last empty seat. Concept visualization. Every room keeps a quiet place to sit.



Build the World.

KEEP THE HORIZON WARM

If the court has your attention, the rest of it is waiting on the World's page at Tangled Thistle. Every part is there, one by one or together as the Complete World Package, which also brings the Start Here guide, the workbook, templates and drawings, and the culinary kit from Salt Notes.

WHERE TO FIND IT

tangledthistle.blog

The Aurora Ice Court

EXPLORE THE COMPLETE WORLD PACKAGE

1

Read

The Complete Design Concept Guide, straight through, the way a guest would walk the court.

2

Choose

Your size: 30, 80 or 340 guests, or the three days and five occasions.

3

Keep

The warm line, whatever else you change. The sky waits until everyone has been fed.

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