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WINTER 2025
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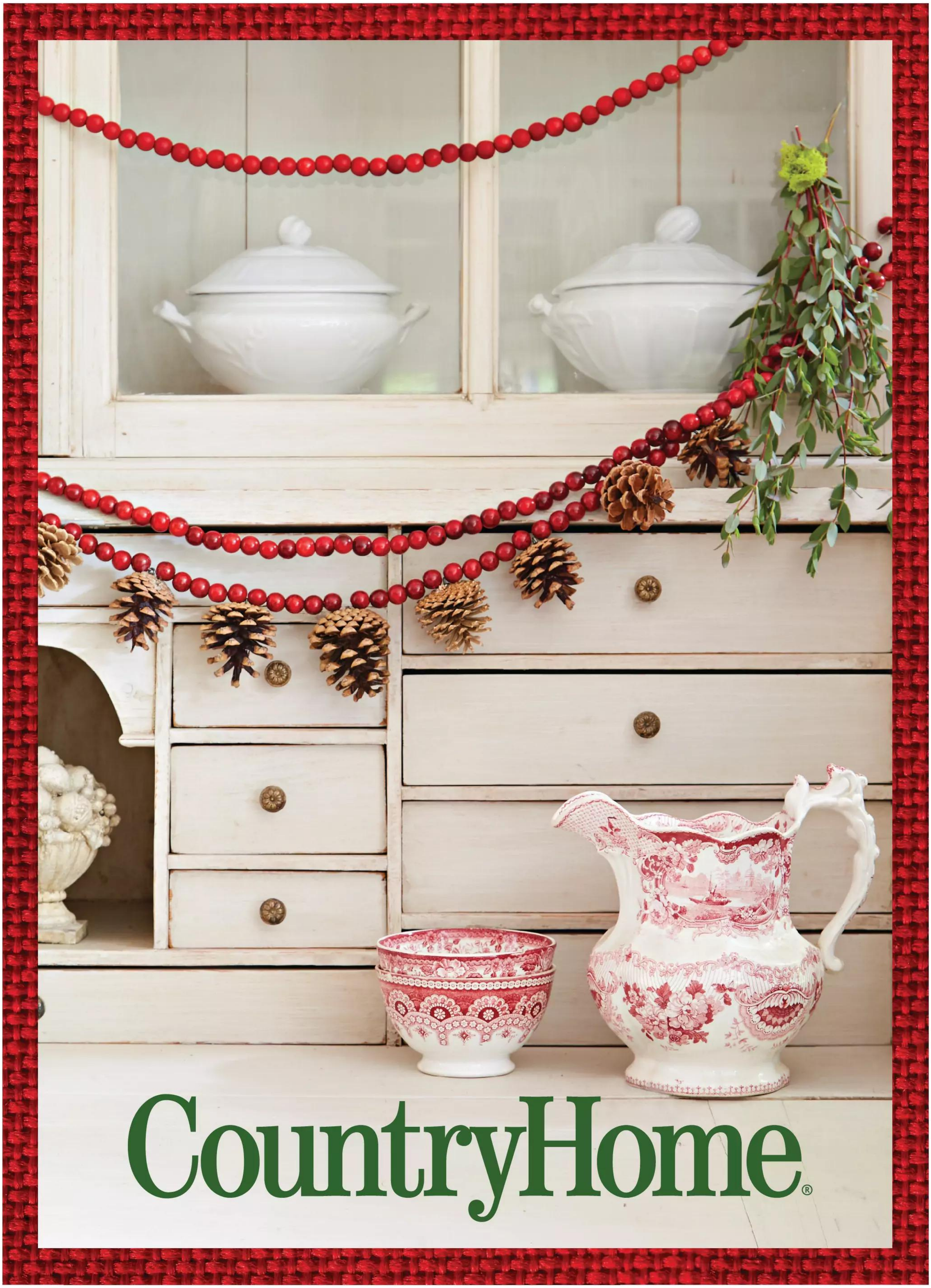

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

14 **Making Merry in the Midwest**
A character-rich 1920s Wisconsin cottage becomes a festive gathering spot for friends—and their pups.

26 **Evergreen Style**
A Virginia designer decks out her farmhouse with greenery galore to celebrate her family's favorite season.

36 **Branching Out**
Make your tree a holiday scene-stealer by starting with a merry theme and layering in vintage collections.

46 **Dreamy White Christmas**
In the wintry fields of rural Ontario, a restored 1885 brick farmhouse provides comfort, warmth, and serenity.

58 **Comfort & Joy**
A young Minnesota family settles into their historical Victorian home, reviving old traditions and making them their own at holiday time.

68 **Nature Sings**
After decades of living in town, a couple finds peace in the pines and builds a new home tailor-made for their beloved antiques—and the holidays.

80 **Let It Snow**
A flurry of paper decorations sparks delight for a budget-conscious homeowner who picked up her scissors and couldn't put them down.

88 **Wreath Remix**
Extend your season's greetings with a floral designer's original takes on wreaths that are made to last.

6 **Seasonal Style**
94 **Resources**
96 **Parting Gift**

ON OUR COVER

The tree is undoubtedly the centerpiece of a holiday scheme. When you get yours home, turn it into a memorable one with the sparkling ideas in "Branching Out" *(page 36)*.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:
MARTY BALDWIN

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THIS ISSUE IS ALL ABOUT MAKING A SCENE—IN A GOOD WAY!

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Every issue of this magazine is a pleasure to create. But when our publishing calendar flips to the Winter issue, an extra measure of pure joy infuses our work. In this special issue, the homes we photograph are wearing their holiday finery to be sure. Even more, the folks who graciously invite us into their homes share their "reasons for the season"—their traditions, inspirations, and hopes. On these pages, beautiful rooms have been transformed into magical settings that are ready for making merry and creating memories.

For Brittany Goodman, decorating her Virginia farmhouse *(page 26)* for the holidays pays homage to watching *Little Women* (the 1994 Winona Ryder version) with her sister and mom and falling in love with how the March family decked their halls. "There was something about all the natural elements that spoke to me, all the drapey garland everywhere," she tells us. Now she watches the film with her three kids and husband surrounded by her own take on greenery that is equally inspiring. In Vonda Wurzburger's Wisconsin cottage *(page 14)*, her character-rich, mostly white home gets a cozy layer of plaid fabrics, a few merry pops of red, and lots of green trimmings—all to ready the place for festivities with friends (and their pups). And we know you're going to love Wendy Lau's Toronto house *(page 80)*—it's so playful and a true reflection of her joyous spirit. It glistens with fairy lights and wows with the abundant paper snowflakes Wendy crafts. It's not only a happy scene but a budget-friendly affair as well.

If there's one element that always seems to set the scene (and often steals it!), it's the Christmas tree. We turned to designer Karin Lidbeck-Brent and übercollector Bruce Elsass to dream up themes for magnificent trees that twirl together vintage treasures and creative ideas for tree trimming, gift wrapping, and holiday decorating *(page 36)*. Whether your holiday style leans folksy, flashy, or light and feathery, their ideas will no doubt inspire your own fun versions of a collected tree. (Bonus: They also share tips on collecting vintage holiday decor to help you assemble items from Christmases past.)

Now that my journey has taken me from the snowy fields surrounding our Iowa farmhouse to the white sands of our Gulf Coast cottage, the season takes on a new complexion. But this time of year reminds me that no matter where my rooms are located, 'tis always the season to create joy—and ever more memories. Sand or snow, the real sparkle is provided by family, friends—and food, of course.

May all your days be merry and bright!

Sandra S. Soria

SANDRA S. SORIA, EDITOR

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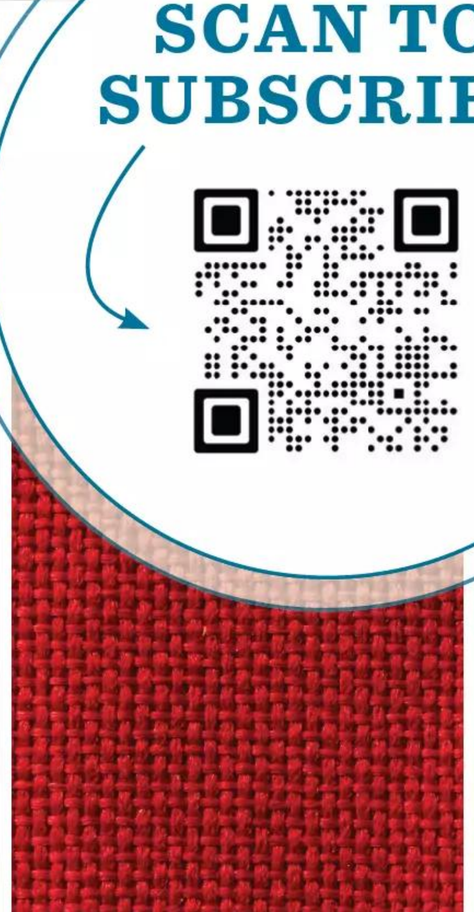

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A COLLECTED *Christmas*

AN ANTIQUES COLLECTOR AND SELF-TAUGHT PHOTOGRAPHER MARRIES HER TWO PASSIONS—OLD THINGS AND PRETTY PICTURES—TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS AT HER HOME IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

WRITER **PAIGE PORTER FISCHER** PHOTOGRAPHER **DAWN CONTRERAS**

DAWN CONTRERAS NEVER PLANNED TO BE AN INFLUENCER. "I DON'T FOLLOW ANY trends," she says. "In fact, I tend to avoid them altogether." Nevertheless, the antiques collector—who sells her found objects on Instagram @earlydawn22—has amassed quite the following with her stunning vignettes of antiques, collectibles, and flowers. A self-taught photographer whose favorite pastime is combing flea markets and antiques stores on road trips with her husband, Joseph, Dawn began posting her "storied scenes" a decade ago.

"My son, Alex, is an artist who taught me tips and tricks about photography, and I started experimenting with light and framing," says Dawn, whose previous career was in retail merchandising. "My husband built me a cottage behind our home that serves as my studio. Just about everything in it and our home is repurposed. I'm always setting up little scenes and posting photographs because it's a creative outlet for me. I honestly never set out to get recognized. I simply wanted to have fun playing with all my little treasures. It's wonderfully cathartic for me."

During the holidays, she brings all her spaces—and Instagram photo grid—to life with vintage Christmas touches that look as though they belong in a storybook. "It's a wonderful time of the year to play with my favorite color, green, and to weave simple, beautiful pieces of nature into my home. I don't stage photographs just to deconstruct them. These are authentic moments around our home. This is the way I decorate, and I leave it this way for us to enjoy. These pictures are the stories of our life here." □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

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1. BOOK MARKS Dawn repurposed a wire basket as a bookshelf and filled it with vintage books, most of which she bought for $2 or less at antiques stores. “Green is my favorite color, and I collected all these books with green spines over the years,” she says. “I group them at Christmas as a way to acknowledge the season. I love the way they look against the chippy shiplap we have on our family room walls.” She grows fresh rosemary in her garden and uses it to adorn rustic twine garlands to hang throughout the house. “They’re so aromatic and simple but impactful,” she says. Vintage and antique trophy cups become vessels for holding more greenery, like the air plant—a gift from her sister.

2. A DIFFERENT DRUM

Dawn used a very old kids drum as the container for a vintage tree (which includes its own stand). “I just turned it upside down and laid moss around the base of the tree,” she says. The ornaments, like the bird she placed on top, are all flea market finds. “This little scene is on my potting bench, which is this delightful green color, and the leaves are from the trees outside. I was about to brush them off, but when I saw them through the lens, I thought they were quite beautiful sprinkled around the little tree.”

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3. TABLE SETTING "I love when nature meets vintage," Dawn says. "That's my favorite connection of all." She created a stunning visual out of orange slices she dried herself. "I layered them with cranberries and pinecones from a local park to create a pretty scene on our dining room table, which is an old principal's desk that I found at an antiques store. I love building little scenes. I delight in it actually."

4. ORANGE GARNISH "When I find a great antique, I usually leave it in its primitive form, not touching the finish except for dusting it off," says Dawn, who found this old hutch years ago at a flea market and put it in her kitchen, which is clad in mottled bold turquoise shiplap. She added homemade citrus garlands fashioned out of dried orange slices and twine and a few pomegranates on the top shelf for more holiday color. To complete the scene, she placed an antique angel on the wall beside it and filled simple tin cans with fresh herbs. "I love the graphics on tins, like the Italian tomato cans. I repurpose the good ones, whether they're new or old, as vases."

5. LIGHTHEARTED FEATHER TREE Dawn found the petite vintage feather tree in its original urn at an antiques store. A pair of old red books serve as its base. "We got that pink chippy chair for five bucks at a flea market, and I have used it in the house in so many photographs," she says. The tiny gold tree is accessorized with whimsical antique bird ornaments that clip to its branches. She repurposed the antique green tapestry behind it as a curtain.

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6

6. SIMPLE JOYS "Some things I buy to sell, but then I decide that it's too hard to part with them," Dawn says. Such was the case for the primitive red bookshelf and green wood boat she paired in her family room. "I loved the patina on both of them—only time can create that kind of character. That's why I appreciate my old leather-bound books. They've been handled and read across the years. They are well-loved, and you can feel that when you touch them." She filled the shelf with books that boast red leather bindings and hints of gold embossing. A garland made with twine and clutches of rosemary hangs across the top shelf, adding that natural green element Dawn enjoys layering throughout her little cottage.

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7. BOOKISH BEAUTY

Dawn placed a small real tree in an antique stand and draped a dried citrus garland on its branches. She added candles in vintage holders and red birds she sourced at various antiques stores. “I find old flannel shirts at consignment stores that I cut up to create garlands and ribbons for added texture and character,” she says. For fun, she grouped red books instead of gifts at the tree base. The red barn door is an antique she and Joseph repurposed, and the mission painting is a flea market find.

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8. PIANO LESSON When they found an old baby grand piano that had been out in the elements, Dawn and Joseph decided to repurpose it. "It was well beyond repair, but I felt like it still had some life in it," she says. Joseph cleaned out the inside, added shelves, kept the ivory keys, and hung it on the wall in the front parlor as a bookshelf. For the holidays, Dawn tied long velvet ribbons around both a chalice and a stack of old books to add Christmas color and placed a vintage child's jacket on an old luggage rack for playfulness. The painter's palette was something she found in Rome and couldn't leave behind.

9. POPS OF RED Even the simplest arrangements are sensational here. Dawn filled an old tin bucket she found at a flea market with dried rose hips, whose red notes play to the red rain boots and the vintage long johns she picked up at an antiques store. "I thought I'd hang them here as if Santa had left them behind," she says. "I love incorporating whimsy into my home—those unexpected, not-too-serious moments that bring a bit of life." Unframed antique paintings deliver rich color to the shiplap wall.

10. BRIGHT BRANCHES Dawn's favorite live tree is the noble fir, whose airy branches allow her to decorate with vintage mini lampshades. "I love their beautiful shapes, so I decided to string them from velvet ribbons on my tree this year," she says. When Dawn felt the tree needed a few more shapes, she bought new shades in perfect sizes and embellished them with vintage fabrics. She casually draped more velvet ribbons on the branches like tinsel. "I didn't overthink it. I just draped it wherever the branches seemed to beg for a bit of color." The old wooden ship's sail is made with a vintage painting that was in tatters, her son Alex's idea.

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11. BECKONING COTTAGE STYLE A pair of vintage doors lead inside Dawn's cottage, which serves as her design studio. "My husband designed the space and built it with our contractor for me, mostly out of reclaimed materials." They applied a light stain in green on the pine boards to add character to the exterior. Dawn outfitted the entrance with one of her favorite holiday accessories: fresh pomegranates. "I've sort of become known on Instagram as the pomegranate lady, because I use them so much. They are an affordable way to incorporate color at the holidays, and they last forever." The duck is an antique, and the small table is an old piano bench with the cushion removed. She strung a vintage basket beneath the windowsill using mossy twine.

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12

12. A TREE FOR SANTA

When Dawn couldn't find the perfect vintage tree to host some favorite antique ornaments, she bought this one from a Dollar Tree store and removed a few of its branches to make it feel vintage and open it up. "I didn't want these sweet little ornaments to get buried in the tree," she says. The pink Santa is a Harold Gale original from the 1950s. "The pink ones are sought after and very hard to find, and I absolutely love this one. He makes me so happy." She created a garland above the scene with vintage paper bells strung from lengths of flannel. "I repurposed old nightgowns for this one," she says. Old snowshoes nod to the season, and Dawn hung the vintage art haphazardly above them, "so the scene would feel even more playful and not too staged."

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MAKING MERRY *in the* MIDWEST

A RIVER COTTAGE BECOMES A NEW HOME BASE FOR ITS OWNER AND A FESTIVE GATHERING SPOT FOR FRIENDS TO UNWIND OVER LONG WEEKENDS.

WRITER AND PRODUCER **KELLY RYAN KEGANS** PHOTOGRAPHER **CHAD HOLDER**

ABOVE Backed by a 500-foot-tall bluff, Vonda Wurzburger's 1920s white-clapboard house overlooks the Mississippi River and Alma, Wisconsin's historic village. From her perch above Main Street, she can view the thousands of birds that migrate through or reside year-round. **LEFT** Vonda installed French doors between her dining and living rooms to separate them and up the architectural character. The dining room table is made from a 150-year-old felled white pine tree and has a rough-hewn finish. "My contractor sanded it a little, but it's very raw, so people have to be careful from getting a splinter," she says with a laugh. The black-and-white theme used throughout the home shows up here in various textures, such as white-painted wicker side chairs, a sleek black Windsor-style head chair, and a nubby woven rug.

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ABOVE In the cozy living room, a flocked faux tree from Balsam Hill shows off a mix of shiny glass baubles and vintage finds collected over the years. Vonda gave the fireplace a facelift by painting the dark brown bricks white and adding a chunky salvaged wood mantel. Handmade ceramics on the mantel include Vonda's mosaic cardinals and unglazed wabi-sabi style flowerpots made by her friend Brad Meier. Black-and-white tiles on the hearth add pattern and echo the kitchen's bold floor tiles. Vonda's beloved puggle Betty is dressed for the holidays—and the palette.

FOR VONDA WURZBURGER, FINDING THE JUST-RIGHT PROPERTY MEANS LOOKING FOR CHARACTER TRAITS AND IMPERFECTIONS— the same flaws that might drive away other potential buyers. For instance, when she bought her 1920s cottage in southwestern Wisconsin, it came with a falling-down outdoor shed that she asked her contractor to reinforce but with one stipulation: Don't fix the sagging roof. "I wouldn't want a new house and to start from fresh," she says. "I like to keep the quirkiness and as much of the original things as I can."

It all plays into the old-school charm that sold Vonda on living in the tiny town of Alma, a historic village built into towering bluffs along the Mississippi River, which also is the border with Minnesota. The area is noted for its wildlife—bald eagles nesting at the lock and dam, migrating tundra swans, and walleye and other sport fish in the river. Vonda first visited the town some 15 years ago and ended up buying a small house as a weekend

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getaway from the Twin Cities, where she worked full-time as a commercial banker. A few years later, she wanted a slightly larger cottage to accommodate visiting friends, and she found it just down the street.

Structurally, the clapboard house had good bones, even if the interiors were a bit dated. Pieces of the past were intact, such as the original kitchen cabinets, hardwood floors, and ceiling beams. Although Vonda made some minor modifications to the floor plan, her updates honored the home's history while making room for her own memories. "I love the proportions of a smaller house, and I like a pretty simple background," she says.

To that end, Vonda painted the main rooms white and peppered in black accents with interior doors, lighting, and tiled surfaces. The black-and-white scheme is a thread she pulls through her rooms, providing a visually unified backdrop for her classic country furniture and collections of handcrafted pottery and art.

ABOVE LEFT The cherry red rocking chair is a find Vonda picked up in a shop on Main Street in Alma. Tin cowbells ring in more farmhouse mirth. The blanket is a Minnesota woolen classic from Faribault Mill. **TOP RIGHT** Vonda makes these ceramic gift tags using cookie cutters and leftover bits of clay. They are fired in the kiln, and the "painted" parts are actually glazed. **ABOVE RIGHT** Dried orange slices on the garland and burlap stockings add to the rustic mood of the cottage; jingle bell flourishes keep the playful spirit alive.

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ABOVE When Vonda bought the house, the kitchen's vinyl flooring of black-and-white checks needed to be replaced. She found this cost-saving alternative of bold diamond ceramic tiles at The Home Depot. "All the seams are kind of worn, so they look vintage," she says. She also swapped out an old door for the new Dutch door her contractor made; it is painted Black Magic by Sherwin-Williams. Chunky ceiling beams and other wood accents add warmth, countering clean subway tile backsplashes for contrast.

There's a fresh yet authentic farmhouse energy throughout, thanks to Vonda's roots growing up on her family's farm in southern Minnesota. "I used to make pets out of our sheep," she says. "I named them, bottle-fed them, tamed them, then we took them to the 4-H fair to show them."

Today, sheep and other farm animals show up in the cottage through art, and hints of her family appear in objects all around, like a wall-mounted yardstick bearing her grandfather's implement shop name in the sitting room and an old army trunk that belonged to her father. It now has a permanent spot in the mudroom entrance where Vonda sees it every time she enters the house. "I like to decorate with things that make me smile and make me happy," she says.

She also enjoys being a frequent host to friends in town from the Twin Cities, especially in the lead-up to Christmas, her favorite time to decorate. The storybook cottage, which is Vonda's main home now that she's retired, gets a festive turn in early December, decked out in plaids and trimmed in

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ABOVE Vonda invites friends from the Twin Cities for weekends in the country. At the holidays, they often have their dogs in tow. Brad Meier (left) and Brian Borgelt are happily pressed into dog treat baking duty. The group makes doggie treats with enough left over to give to other friends' dogs as gifts. See our favorite dog biscuit recipe, *page 96*. **RIGHT** Vonda's contractor built the kitchen island out of a 70-year-old fallen pine. It doubles as open storage for dishes on the dining room side and houses the microwave and cooking utensils on the opposite side. **BELOW** Lorri Borgelt takes a break from packaging treats to share a couple with Memphis, one of her two not-so-patiently waiting Labradors.

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LEFT The homemade dog treats are festively packaged in clear bags tied with checked ribbons. The bone-shape tags (bought in bulk on Amazon) made of painted plywood double as memorable ornaments. **RIGHT** Vonda closed off a hallway to create a walk-in pantry trimmed in salvaged wood. Open shelves store glass jars of foodstuff and small appliances. The open pantry plays into the humble charm and gives Vonda's mosaic pig pride of place in the kitchen. **BELOW** The wood counters and built-in cabinets and hardware are original, but Vonda added an apron-front sink and the ticking fabric sink curtain. "That was my first sewing project here," she says. She gives Betty a homemade treat, and Memphis and Stella hope they're next.

RIGHT Vonda painted the sitting room floorboards black (Peppercorn by Sherwin-Williams), giving the small space a cabin vibe. Black-and-white ticking covers the cushions on an antique English mahogany caned sofa Vonda had in a previous house. The east-facing window overlooks the backyard bluff and garden shed. When the wood-burning stove is lit, it's a warm spot to enjoy morning coffee with the sunrise. **BELOW** An antique-inspired Heartland cookstove is enhanced with a new tongue-and-groove range hood. The framed scratchboard cow is by Wisconsin artist Jenna Hestekin *(thecozyred.com)*. Similar scratchboard artwork of hers is in the bathroom and leaning on the console table in the sitting room.

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evergreens. “That’s really why I wanted this house,” she says, “for friends to come and enjoy it.” Sometimes—and especially during the holidays—those visitors include furry friends to keep company with Betty, Vonda’s 18-month-old puggle.

It’s all hands (and paws) on deck when it’s time to make doggie treats, which Vonda is known for gifting. “I don’t need to have a bunch of cookies sitting around, so I started making them for my friends who have dogs,” she says. “Then I started bringing them to work, and people would get so excited every year. Now these are the only kind of cookies I make.”

This long-running tradition elicited a heartfelt shout-out a couple of years ago, which she couldn’t have predicted when she posted a photo of her holiday baking on social media. “We used to make Christmas cookies in that same kitchen decades ago,” one special comment read. “You gave our former family home new life and love, and we are so grateful.” □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

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ABOVE Vintage wood snowshoes found on Etsy become art above an aged console table in the sitting room. Above them, Vonda displays a Wurzburger Implement Co. yardstick, a memento from the shop her grandfather owned in Sibley, Illinois. Baskets full of woolen blankets are close at hand for Vonda and her visitors to wrap up in and ward off Wisconsin's winter chill.
RIGHT Vonda and Betty bundle up for their daily 2-mile walk around the neighborhood in Alma's historic village, where they are on a first-name basis with many of the residents.

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FAR LEFT Previous owners added on a lofted space at the back of the house that Vonda uses as her creative arts studio. The built-in shelves provide plenty of storage and display space for supplies and mementos. A counter-height, multifunctional table is perfect for wrapping presents. **NEAR LEFT** In the narrow mudroom just off an enclosed side porch, a painting made from a photo of Vonda's father taken when he was about 7 years old hangs above her dad's old army trunk. A red-and-white ticking cushion lightens the wood bench, a handy spot to pull off snow boots. Vonda packed in plenty of practical function in the compact space with wall hooks and cubbies for woolens and Betty's dog gear. **BELOW** Tree stumps serve as tables for steaming mugs of cocoa around the firepit, where Vonda and her friends gather for cozy catching up in the fall and winter.

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OPPOSITE White shiplap walls, black-and-white hex tile, and a trough-style sink channel the fresh farmhouse feel in the new bathroom that Vonda added shortly after she moved in. **BELOW** Guests can peer out on the Mississippi River from the upstairs bedroom. Holiday touches keep the festive mood going with a garland-wrapped black iron headboard and red-striped quilted duvet. The guest room is painted light blue (Quicksilver by Sherwin-Williams) to make the room more peaceful. It's the only room Vonda painted the walls in a color other than white.

ABOVE The pair of paintings by artist William Beaupre *(william-beaupre.com)* above the vintage white wood side table depict Vonda's Alma cottage and a historic building in St. Paul, where she has a city condo. She bought the goat painting from a vintage dealer in Minneapolis. **LEFT** The weathered 1890 outbuilding, which Vonda has been told may have originally been a toy factory, is now a roomy garage. She added rusty metal panels to the sliding barn doors and painted the white X designs for added character.

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RIGHT In Brittany Goodman's convivial dining room, an antique cupboard found on Facebook Marketplace showcases her collection of white serving pieces. A vintage cane chair adds another warm wood feature. "I mix as many wood elements into a room as I can, because they give the feeling of an immediate sense of history," says Brittany, who also selects art that delivers a yesteryear ambience. **OPPOSITE** One of Brittany's favorite holiday design moments in the house is the entrance to the dining room. "The garland around the case openings is my nod to *Little Women*," she says. The family enjoys a real Christmas tree placed in a wicker basket. Brittany keeps it simple—with only white lights and a wood bead garland—so it doesn't steal attention from the wallpaper (Vinnie in Classic Blue by Sandberg Wallpaper). Simple chairs go with a Parsons-style dining table.

EVERGREEN STYLE

A Virginia designer transforms her family's farmhouse into a visual celebration of their favorite season, using all-natural accessories to enliven every space.

WRITER PAIGE PORTER FISCHER PHOTOGRAPHER JAY WILDE STYLIST ANDREA NORDSTROM CAUGHEY

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WHEN BRITTANY GOODMAN RECALLS THE BEST MOMENTS OF PAST HOLIDAY SEASONS, ONE MEMORY ALWAYS RISES TO THE TOP.

"EVERY CHRISTMAS, MY MOM AND SISTER AND I WOULD WATCH *LITTLE WOMEN* TOGETHER, THE ONE WITH WINONA Ryder," Brittany says. "And I fell in love with the way the March family home was decorated for the holidays. There was something about all the natural elements that spoke to me, all the drapey garland everywhere. That movie set became my ultimate Christmas inspiration." The designer replicates that same look each December in the home she shares with her husband, Aaron; their three children, Maddie, Emma, and Colton; and two golden retrievers, Copper and Scout.

Situated on 8 acres in Crozier, Virginia, the family's farmhouse was built from the ground up and designed by Brittany—a former math teacher who became a designer after falling for "the whole experience" of building the home. As much as she loved the process of choosing paint colors, wallpapers, fixtures, and finishes for the house (which she shares on Instagram @thegoodmanhouse), she especially enjoys dressing it up for the holidays.

"My motto as a designer is to surround yourself with things you love, things that feel like an authentic expression of yourself," she says. "It's the same philosophy when it comes to how I decorate for Christmas. For us, that doesn't mean

ABOVE LEFT Copper, one of the family's golden retrievers, peeks out the front double doors awaiting guests. Brittany adorns the custom lanterns (she had a small shop make them to match those at her grandmother's farmhouse) with swags of greenery and effortlessly draped ribbons. The doors wear simple wreaths, and a pair of concrete planters hold boxwoods. "I love playing with all the shades of green at Christmas," she says. **TOP RIGHT** Brittany and husband Aaron read a favorite Christmas story at their home in Crozier, Virginia, with kids (from left) Maddie, Emma, and Colton and their other golden retriever, Scout. **ABOVE RIGHT** "The dresser and the glass lamp belonged to my grandmother, and they will always have a special place in my home," Brittany says. She enhances the vignette for the holidays with a small evergreen tree, a bottle-brush tree, and a snow globe. **OPPOSITE** Brittany painted the pantry door a soothing green (Dried Thyme by Sherwin-Williams). At Christmas, she hangs a store-bought wreath she's adorned with velvet ribbons and citrus fruit.

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"WE HAVE 8 LOVELY ACRES AROUND US, SO I LOVE TO GATHER MOST OF MY GREENERY STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE—OUR BACKYARD."

—HOMEOWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER BRITTANY GOODMAN

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LEFT Brittany decorates for the holidays the same way she does her house year-round—always using things she loves. She chooses neutral earthy colors for her foundation furnishings, such as the sectional sofa in caramel leather and an ottoman wearing pale gold velvet. The pieces welcome unexpected accents. She also loves grouping favorite collections, like the candleholders that make a statement on the mantel. Streams of colorful ribbon on one side fall from the lush, casually draped evergreen garland, balancing a mix of well-loved stockings on the other side. **ABOVE** Vintage ornaments in muted colors complement the velvet ribbons Brittany ties around the branches of the faux tree from Balsam Hill. The family's dried-to-perfection orange slices are wired on and provide more rich, natural color.

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fancy decorations. We love to add greenery wherever we can. We drape it over picture frames and door casings. We like lots of candles and tiny white twinkle lights everywhere. And we always favor nostalgia over any kind of theme."

One of the family's favorite traditions is drying orange slices and weaving them into the garlands that embellish every space. The oranges take on a deep, burnt-yellow color that accentuates the rich greens and pomegranate reds Brittany incorporates in each room. "I love earthy colors, wild and natural things that look like they've been harvested from the landscape around us, and lots of warm wood tones," she says. "I find that layering these elements during the holidays works with my everyday, year-round decor."

Brittany's intentions each Christmas are simple: Create a space that makes her family want to be home with one another even more, soak up the simple pleasures of the holiday season—like baking sugar cookies or enjoying Christmas music dance parties—and, of course, cozying up on the sofa for the annual viewing of *Little Women*. □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

ABOVE A devotee to "anything deVol," Brittany looked to the British company for inspiration for her kitchen—the hub of holiday fun for her family. "I loved the idea of open shelves with brass rails, typical of old English kitchens," she says. The shelving gives her maximum real estate for display of old and new paintings and antique copper pots. Amid utilitarian objects, she tucks in little nods to the holidays with crimson tapers, greenery, and vintage bottle-brush trees. The cabinets wear a custom color, a warm, pale taupe, that ups the English country vibe. Wood barstools, old breadboards, and unlacquered brass hardware add patina.

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LEFT In a nod to the holiday palette, an arrangement of pomegranates, red pears, and backyard clippings fills a modern pottery piece. **BELOW** "There's almost no combination I love more than wood tones, antique copper, and brass," says Brittany, who puts them all out on her kitchen's open shelves. She ordered the brass rail and S-hooks from deVol and admits they are perhaps her favorite element in the kitchen.

"IF I USE SOMETHING BRAND-NEW, I LOVE TO GIVE IT A LITTLE SENSE OF HISTORY BY ADDING SOMETHING VINTAGE FOR THE PATINA."

—BRITTANY GOODMAN

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LEFT A traditional pedestal sink pops against the bold walls (Rosedust by Sherwin-Williams) in the powder room. Brittany adds holiday-inspired tea towels, a stark wood Christmas tree, and a relaxed cluster of crimson ranunculus to acknowledge the Christmas season. **BELOW** For Maddie's room, Brittany ordered downloadable holiday-theme prints off Etsy and placed them into frames she had. Throw pillows from Garnet Hill with holiday motifs add color to neutral bedding. And she put a flocked tree in the corner for good measure. "Who doesn't want a Christmas tree in their bedroom?" she says. She hung paper stars from fishing wire for more magic.

LEFT In the primary bedroom, Brittany kept the color palette neutral. "I really like to layer shades of brown and incorporate plenty of texture," she says. She hung an "untamed" wreath above the bed between the windows to acknowledge her favorite season and placed small vases filled with berries, holly, and evergreen on the bedside tables. **OPPOSITE** Brittany's office wall is punctuated by a work of art that belonged to her grandmother. "I always layer garland over this piece, because it's the first thing you see when you walk in the door," she says. A small decorated faux tree is on the dresser below the artwork. A simple wreath sits on the open shelves, where she gathers an intriguing assemblage of items inspired by her grandmother. "Ariel had her seashell collection, her treasures," she says, "and I like to think of this as my little treasure trove. I fill the shelves with all of my favorite things."

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“I LOVE MIXING OLD AND NEW, INCORPORATING FAMILY HEIRLOOMS WITH NEWER PIECES. THAT’S HOW A HOME BEGINS TO TELL A STORY, WHEN YOU CREATE MOMENTS THAT ARE NOT EXPECTED.”

—BRITTANY GOODMAN

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branching out

THE TREE IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE CENTERPIECE OF A HOME DECKED OUT FOR THE HOLIDAYS. MAKE YOURS A SCENE-STEALER BY STARTING WITH A MERRY THEME THEN LAYERING IN VINTAGE COLLECTIONS AND HANDMADE TOUCHES.

WRITER SARAH HALVERSON PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN BESSLER
PRODUCERS KARIN LIDBECK-BRENT AND BRUCE ELSASS

PHOTOGRAPHER: (BRANCHES) LILIGRAPHIE/GETTY IMAGES

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frosty fellows

A CHEEKY TAKE ON A TREE WITH SNOW-LADEN BRANCHES, THIS FLOCKED TREE GETS AN EXTRA LAYER OF FROSTING FROM SMILING SNOWMEN THAT CAN'T HELP BUT AMP UP THE HOLIDAY CHEER.

THE GOODIES These collectible snowmen include blow-mold figures on the floor (circa 1950s and originally used as outdoor decor), conventional ornaments, and fun candy containers that come apart in the middle to hold sweet treats.

COLLECT IT Vintage snowmen, women, and children are widely available, although they're getting harder to find. Blow-mold pieces start at $85 for a small one and go up to $175 for larger ones. Antique ornaments and candy containers were often made in Japan or Germany, and they can be had for $10–$200 on eBay.

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HANDMADE GIFT TAGS

Keep the gifts as heartfelt as the tree with plain brown kraft boxes, grosgrain ribbon, and handmade gift labels. Delicious tags made out of gingerbread and labeled with icing designate who gets what box. To make them: With the same gingerbread dough used for the tree ornaments, create the shapes you want with a knife or cookie cutter. To imprint designs on the dough, press with a cookie stamp. Pipe names on the tags with white royal icing.

folksy & fabulous

THIS TREE IS INSPIRED BY PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FOLK ART AND FEATURES HOLIDAY DESIGNS YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF.

THE GOODIES Often seen on quilts or in framed folk art, motifs such as hearts-in-hands, horses, birds, and stars are rendered here in rich brown gingerbread. They're brightened by dried orange slices that shine in the sunlight and resemble stained glass. Round out the plainspoken theme with pinecones, vintage-look electric candles, and snowflakes in antiqued and metallic finishes.

MAKE IT Whip up a batch of your favorite gingerbread dough. The trick to getting ornaments to bake up flat is to roll the dough out directly onto a cookie sheet, trace your shapes on it with a sharp knife, and peel away the excess dough—that way you don't have to move the unbaked ornaments and risk distorting them. Poke a hole for a ribbon loop (for hanging) with a straw and bake as the recipe directs. Dry orange slices in a low-heat oven two hours, then remove to cool and air-dry overnight (this preserves their color). A warning: Dogs and cats will sniff out these delectable ornaments, so you may have to blockade the tree.

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Borrow the bold motifs found in folk art for classic gingerbread shapes to create a statement tree.

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birds of a feather

AN OLD-FASHIONED WHITE FEATHER TREE—STRAIGHT, SPARE, AND ELEGANT IN ITS SIMPLICITY—IS THE RIGHT STRUCTURE FOR DELICATE OR ORNATE DECORATIONS. TREASURED ORNAMENTS HAVE A BOLD IMPACT AMONG THE REFINED BRANCHES.

THE GOODIES Feather trees originated in Germany at the turn of the 20th century as an alternative to cutting down live firs—they were the first faux trees. Turkey or goose feathers were coiled around wire to create branches, which were then secured to a wood post for a trunk.

COLLECT IT Vintage feather trees are hard to find and are expensive, running $200–$500 for a small one on Etsy or eBay. Ours is a new tree handmade by Dennis Bauer, who crafts them in the old German style. His feather trees are made to order and available for about $100 for a 24-inch tree. You can order them through these small businesses: Apple Tree Gallery *(appletreegallery.com)*, Home Traditions *(hometraditions.com)*, and Dresden Star Ornaments *(victorianornaments.com)*.

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1

2

3

1. CLIP-ON ORNAMENTS

These birds are ideal companions in a feather tree. Germans were the first to fasten birds on their Christmas trees, and the variety of feathered friends—songbirds, roosters, storks, pigeons, pelicans, flamingos, hummingbirds, to name a few—is astonishing. Simple songbirds are the most common, costing $20–$30 for a single bird. Peacocks, roosters, and storks are rarer and more costly, coming in at $55–$65 each. Find them at antiques malls and on eBay.

2. PAPIER-MÂCHÉ SCULPTURES

Debbee Thibault's papier-mâché sculptures may be discontinued—she wound down her company about 20 years ago—but they are more popular than ever on the secondary market. Her work was inspired by antique toys and folk art, and collectors adore the characters' expressive faces and charming details—all made in America. The best source for these sculptures is eBay. A tall Santa might go for $450, Santa with a sleigh $350–$450, and a snowman blowing a horn $225.

3. PUTZ HOUSES

These cardboard structures made in the 1920s–'40s in Germany and Japan are tiny enough to create a village around or place on a small tree. Group them together for more impact. Early Putz houses are the most sought-after, and they run $75–$125 each. Search for them on eBay and at estate sales.

MEET THE TEAM

They affectionately call each other Mrs. and Mr. Holiday, but their real names are Karin Lidbeck-Brent and Bruce Elsass. And these designers are experts in collecting Christmas trappings and arranging them into dreamy decor. They are the talented producers of this story.

Karin is a longtime top stylist for *Country Home* magazine, but her favorite season is the jolly one. That's because there are so many vintage treasures to gather into stunning vignettes. "It brings me back to a more nostalgic Christmas," she says. "It's not modern. The designs and the graphics are so beautiful and old world, and I'm that kind of person. It feels more like genuine Christmas to me."

Bruce is an uber collector of Christmas—he has the largest trove of vintage holiday pieces we know of. "My parents made it so fun for us," Bruce says. "Mom loved decorating and Dad chimed in, doing the tree and decorating the house. We didn't have a ton of money, so we would make projects." He bought his first vintage postcard as a high school freshman. From there, one thing led to another, and now he has a sizable collection of Christmas ephemera and makes a living designing seasonal holiday decor.

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bejeweled boughs

THIS TREE BREAKS FREE FROM THE TRADITIONAL RED AND GREEN PALETTE AND IS ABSOLUTELY LOADED WITH ORNAMENTS AND GARLANDS IN RICH JEWEL TONES.

THE GOODIES Vintage glass pieces from all over the world (the former Czechoslovakia, Japan, Germany, Poland, and the good ol' USA) sparkle on this gorgeous tree. Look closely and you'll find a slew of baubles, including sequined ornaments that Leewards, a craft retailer, sold in kits in the 1950s and '60s. People carefully attached trim and sequins to silk-covered foam balls (or bells, drums, or stars) with pearl-head pins for these homemade decorations.

COLLECT IT Find sequined ornaments pretty readily in thrift stores and antiques shops for $10–$15 each. Snowmen, Santa Clauses, and other complicated-to-craft figures can cost at least $50.

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1

2

3

1. HOLIDAY CARDS

To complement our jewel-encrusted tree, we embellished the gift boxes underneath with rich-hued paper, lavish ribbons, and thrifted bling. The charming gift tags are vintage Christmas cards. To secure the bows on each box, fasten a bit of costume jewelry—a brooch or clip-on earring—to the ribbon. Classic Christmas cards, with their fanciful fonts and old-fashioned graphics, make thoughtful labels for presents. To save your collection of truly old cards, either purchase new reproductions or make color copies of old ones, gluing them onto cardstock for stiffness. Find vintage earrings and pins from the 1950s and '60s at thrift stores and antiques shops for a song—you can often find a bag or jar for $20 or less. Hunt for new-but-retro Christmas cards on Etsy and Amazon; a pack of 20 can be had for about $6.

2. GLASS BEAD GARLANDS

Crafted in Germany and often running 9 or 12 feet long—these strings of glass beads are light-years ahead of today's plastic versions. Their sparkle and glow are unmatched. Antique glass garlands can cost $59–$79 a strand.

3. REFLECTOR ORNAMENTS

Also tucked in the tree are Shiny Brite reflector ornaments (also called indent ornaments), which were all the rage in the '60s for their rich colors, sugary glitter, and recessed sides, which reflected light beautifully. Vintage Shiny Brite reflectors can cost $150 for a box of 12, but new ones are still made by Christopher Radko *(christopherradko.com)*. A box of nine new ornaments is about $39, and you can often find them at HomeGoods and T.J. Maxx stores early in the Christmas season.

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santa stuffed tree

BY GOSH AND BY GOLLY—COULD OUR TREE BE ANY MORE JOLLY? SWARMING WITH SANTAS OF NEARLY EVERY SIZE AND AGE, OUR FLOCKED 9-FOOT BALSAM HILL FAUX TREE IS CHOCK-FULL OF THE WHIMSICAL JOY OF CHRISTMAS.

THE GOODIES Vintage Santa Clauses are highly collectible; the ones on and around this tree, *opposite,* range from the 1920s to the '60s. Nestled among the gifts, the waving Santa figure with a cotton beard is from the '40s. The ball ornament with a waving Santa inside, *above left,* is called a diorama; made of glass or plastic, they depict scenes inside the orbs. Ours is a 1960s Jewelbrite piece. There is such a wide variety of Santa collectibles—many classified as kitsch—that collectors find it to be a fun, nostalgic, and fairly affordable category.

COLLECT IT Find Santas at antiques malls, garage and estate sales, and on eBay. Glass dioramas can be found for $40–$85; plastic ones cost less ($55–$65) for a whole box. The unusual German-made die-cut metal Santa flying an airplane, *right,* might cost $125–$150. □
RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

PRINTED CHRISTMAS BOXES

These beautiful boxes need neither wrappings nor trappings—their pretty prints are fancy enough on their own and suit the vintage vibe of a Santa tree. Then as now, paper gift boxes were sold in various sizes to hold specific items (ties, jewelry, stockings, blouses, etc.) and be displayed under the tree. But these older versions (often called holly boxes) were so sturdy and attractive that people kept and used them for storage year-round, stashing sewing notions, board games, and other things inside. You can still find specimens from the 1920s! Depending on the age and condition, boxes cost $29–$69, with those used for advertising—like the one labeled White's Ye Quaint Shop—fetching more.

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When collecting kitschy Santa Clauses, the more the merrier seems a fitting goal.

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THIS PHOTO, FROM LEFT Christine, Steve, Carl, and Laura Murphy ready their Ontario farmhouse for the holidays. Christine (holding Millie, their French bulldog) grows and sells lavender locally, and she prefers using natural materials for seasonal decor, sharing her ideas on Instagram @lavenderflowerstudio. The ornate brick and the tops of all the arched windows were covered in old white siding when they bought the house in 2006. "Once we started taking the siding away, we discovered all of it," she says. **OPPOSITE** An antique zinc French grape hod for harvesting grapes holds branches and dried pomegranates as a holiday greeting on the front porch. Other times of the year, Christine brings it inside and fills it with dried wheat or lavender.

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dreamy WHITE CHRISTMAS

In the wintry fields of rural Ontario, a restored historical brick farmhouse provides holiday comfort, warmth, and serenity.

WRITER SARAH EGGE

PHOTOGRAPHER ROBIN STUBBERT

ILLUSTRATIONS: EKATERINA ROMANOVA/ GETTY IMAGES

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WHEN THE BUSTLE OF CHRISTMAS IS WRAPPED UP, THE MURPHYS—CHRISTINE, STEVE, CARL, LAURA, AND MILLIE, THE FRENCH bulldog—head to their farm. It's just an hour's drive from their home in Mississauga, Ontario, but it feels worlds away. The 1885 brick Italianate farmhouse is set amid 50 acres of snow-dusted fields, and it's still. Very still.

"We go to the farm for peace and quiet," Christine says. "We like to spend Boxing Day through New Year's there." Born and raised in Manchester, England, Christine's reverence for the December 26 holiday celebrating the feast of St. Stephen is not the only British tradition she brings to the farm. She starts Christmas cakes in September by soaking fruit in sherry, then serves her holiday-season mince pies with hot cuppas. Her decorating style also includes English country elements, such as scrubbed-pine floors and furniture, natural linens, and casual slipcovers.

The spare simplicity of the spaces contributes to the sense of calm. Christine lets items gathered on her nature walks dictate how—and how much—she decorates. "I don't like things looking heavy. I like light things," she says. One year, she and Steve brought home a dead pine tree and strung a strand of lights on the bare branches. "It was beautiful," she says. "I like the farm to look as natural as possible."

This year, they chose a full tree with loads of lush green needles, but when it came time to hang baubles and ornaments, Christine paused. "I thought, *I just can't,*" she says. "It's orange slices, pinecones, lights, and berries. That's it."

The staircase also showcases her restraint: It's a focal point of the main floor and one of her favorite features ("If we ever sell the place, I will leave a ladder behind

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OPPOSITE LEFT Taking down a wall dividing the entry from the living room opens up the space and allows the grand staircase to be on view. Christine uses a French daybed as a seating and lounging spot because it's low enough not to congest the space.
OPPOSITE RIGHT A weathered stepladder holds a throw blanket and a star covered in wool pom-poms.
THIS PHOTO Immediately after the rush of Christmas Day, the family likes to come to the farm to enjoy quiet wintry days. With a cozy woodstove and bay windows overlooking the fields, the living room is a natural gathering spot.

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LEFT When Christine visits family in her native England, she adds days to her trip to shop antiques markets in France. She looks for vintage French crocks, such as this jam jar, to hold sugar, coffee, tea, or flowers and snippets of greenery. **BELOW** Christine makes small English Christmas cakes every year, following a family recipe and decorating them with marzipan. "I used to make one big one, but now I make individual ones and give them away. You only need a little slice with a cup of tea. It's lovely," she says. "When I bite into it, it's Christmas right there." **OPPOSITE** Potpourri simmering on the Lacanche range fills the house with fragrance. Christine collects French copper cookware at antiques stores. "I'm still looking for a skillet, and I'll find it eventually," she says.

and take the stairs with me because they're so beautiful," she says with a laugh). To accent the elegant curved staircase, she strings a garland of artificial holly on the banister at intervals and secures it with slender red velvet bows. Though she usually opts for fresh, natural materials, this faux holly is closer in appearance to the English holly she remembers from her childhood than the locally grown kind. Baby's breath and white paper snowflakes complete the subtle adornment.

In general, Christine prefers a bright white palette accented with natural woods, but she brings in a little color at the holidays. Shades of green spring up in eucalyptus, pine, cedar, and boxwood branches, and small potted trees and crockery filled with evergreens dot accent tables. Drops of red splash in from berries, pomegranates, and ribbons. "In my house in town, I don't use red, but I find that red works here at the farm," she says. Colorful plaid and striped throw blankets drape over the French linen-covered beds and chairs.

The farmhouse doesn't require much to make it special, Christine says. Its historical character and natural setting are enough. "It's all wide open," she says of the landscape. "The sunrises and sunsets are breathtaking." □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات ، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی
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“MY STYLE REFLECTS A BIT OF BOTH: MY ENGLISH UPBRINGING AND MY LOVE OF HISTORICAL HOUSES. I JUST LOVE THE COZINESS OF SMALL ROOMS.”

—HOMEOWNER CHRISTINE MURPHY

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OPPOSITE TOP Christine uses French cane chairs with a Canadian farmhouse table in the kitchen eating area. To make seat cushion and table covers, she buys a single French bedsheet and parcels it out. "They're massive and quite heavy," she says. Christine uses one of her cut linens as a runner, gathering it into gentle swags at each end and tucking in greenery. Kraft paper treat boxes look like little houses, a favorite motif in her holiday decorating. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM** A rustic wood box is filled with eucalyptus, rose hips, dried orange slices, and pomegranates. "It's hard for me to use artificial decor," she says. "I harvest rose hips in October. My hands get ripped to shreds because of the thorns, but they dry lovely." **THIS PHOTO** This west-facing window, which had been boarded up on both sides, was a happy discovery. It perfectly frames sunsets.

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"THE FARM DECORATING IS WOOD AND WHITE, AND THEN I LIGHTLY LAYER ON THE CHRISTMAS."

—CHRISTINE MURPHY

ABOVE A small ceramic cone holds fragrant greens and hangs from an antique door Christine bought many years ago because the doorknob backplate says "Made in England." **ABOVE RIGHT** Laura's room is flooded with natural light through the restored arched windows, this one highlighted by a metal lit à couronne and sheer curtains. Christine found a metal bed in France and dressed it in a combination of new and vintage linens. **RIGHT** This space is often labeled a mudroom, but Christine grew up calling it "the boot room." She fitted it with a boot cupboard and a sign she made from salvaged wood with the farm's name. **OPPOSITE** An enamel sink and wall-mounted fixtures add character in the small bath. The mirror was a flea market find, as was the ladder Christine uses to hold linen hand towels.

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OPPOSITE Christine furnished the porch so the family can sit and revel in the country quiet. The white pieces pop against the brick backdrop, uncovered in their restoration work. The Murphys restored the farmhouse for a year, covering red-painted walls, shoring up the foundation, installing mechanical systems, and modernizing the kitchen and bathrooms. **RIGHT** Hot cocoa and wool blankets warm chilly days. **BELOW LEFT** Christine loves the natural linen table runner and casual style of the embroidery. She gathers pinecones on her nature walks to fill her collection of white stoneware and ceramics. **BELOW MIDDLE** Millie's jacket keeps her warm and suits the wintry decorating scheme. **BELOW RIGHT** The farmhouse is surrounded by 50 acres on which a local farmer grows soybeans and wheat. Steve has added grapevines and cherry, apple, and pear trees.

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COMFORT & JOY

A young Minnesota family settles into their historical home, adding pieces of the past one at a time while reviving old traditions and making them their own during the holidays.

WRITER KELLY RYAN KEGANS PHOTOGRAPHER CHAD HOLDER
STYLIST LACEY HOWARD PRODUCER ANDREA NORDSTROM CAUGHEY

OPPOSITE A DeGroot family portrait hangs above their living room mantel, which is adorned with homespun linen stockings and strung with dried orange slices and pretty ribbons. The gas lamplike sconces add to the glow of candles and twinkle lights. **ABOVE LEFT** A pair of shapely wing chairs in the living room were a lucky find during a trip to New Orleans, one of the couple's favorite cities to visit. **ABOVE RIGHT** Homeowners Katherine and Seth DeGroot hang out in the nursery with the children: Penelope, 2; Theodore, 4 (in front); Langston, 5; and Priscilla, 7.

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OPPOSITE "This is the only room that works for us if we all want to sit together and eat, so we spend a lot of time in here," Katherine says. At one end of the dining room, a glass-front cabinet that belonged to Seth's grandmother now houses the young family's collection of brown transferware, floral dishes brought back from Germany by Katherine's grandfather, and Bavarian dishes gifted to the couple by a family friend. "I love using these meaningful pieces," Katherine says. **ABOVE LEFT** The family's Christmas cards from years past are clipped to a garland around a mirror in the piano room. **ABOVE RIGHT** The double front doors are painted glossy black to set them apart from the allover matte black exterior. Gothic-style windows are a classic architectural feature of the Victorian Revival. **FAR LEFT** The antique piano came with the house but was too expensive to restore to working order. The couple decided to keep it for added character. "I enjoy treating the piano kind of like a second mantel," Katherine says. Above it is a landscape painting from 1stDibs. The black-painted Gothic wood mantel in the room just beyond the doorway is in a space Seth uses as his home office. **LEFT** The 1872 Victorian Revival in Stillwater, Minnesota, is a striking silhouette rendered in charcoal-black paint. A tower creates a fourth story, with a window peering out over the neighborhood of historic homes; beyond is the St. Croix River.

Christmas is one of Katherine Louise DeGroot's favorite times of the year, but that doesn't mean she's in a hurry to put up her holiday decor.

SIMILARLY, AS MUCH AS SHE AND HER HUSBAND, SETH, ENJOY THE THRILL OF HUNTING FOR ANTIQUES AND SCORING THRIFT FINDS, THEY AREN'T RUSHING TO furnish their 1872 Victorian Revival home. "I love the idea that home takes time," Katherine says, "even this time of year, when there's so much rush and pressure to buy, buy, buy and add, add, add."

As the seasons shift, borrowed and new traditions unfold slowly in this household, further connecting the couple and their children with one another. The setting itself, in walking distance to Stillwater, Minnesota's historic downtown along the St. Croix River, provides endless inspiration. Proudly perched on a corner lot, the DeGroots' house—with its Gothic windows and a central spired tower—is a local icon, originally built for state senator James Castle and now painted a dramatic black that recalls its original paint color.

"We knew we wanted to make an offer on it before we finished the tour," Katherine says of the first time they walked through the stately residence. In a matter of several months, the couple closed on the house, got married, and hunkered down in 2020 as the pandemic spread.

It was a new beginning on many fronts. The pair had been living in a modern industrial loft in downtown Minneapolis. But as they discussed their future, they knew they wanted a place to spread out and eventually raise a large family, which now includes four young children and Astro, their long-haired German shepherd.

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"I've found that people here seem to embrace the simple pleasures in life, *which feels like a balm to my soul.*"

—HOMEOWNER KATHERINE LOUISE DEGROOT

The history of the home, which was renovated by its previous owners, spoke to both of their passions. For Seth, the Gothic architecture and moody color palette played into his love of dark academia, candles, and books. Katherine leans toward a Shabby Chic meets 1990s Ralph Lauren vibe, with floral prints, chippy furniture, quilts, and lighter colors. "When we came to this Victorian, we started to merge our styles," she says. Rooms are warm and romantic—some spaces dark, others light—reflecting a seamless combination of the couple's styles.

Heirloom family pieces mingle among furniture that either came with the house or they have mined from nearby antiques and thrift stores or on Facebook Marketplace. When their babysitter is available, Katherine and Seth go

ABOVE The family makes heavy use of its galley kitchen, as Katherine enjoys baking and Seth loves to cook. The house underwent extensive renovations by the previous owners, who carefully restored or replaced architecture that would have existed originally. The kitchen's floor-to-ceiling cabinets wrap around three walls and feature period-style hinges and bin-pull hardware. Seth found the painting above the range on 1stDibs. "If you're looking for original art, 1stDibs is a really good source," Katherine says. **OPPOSITE** Concrete countertops amplify the utilitarian style of the kitchen, which Katherine accessorizes with crocks from her collection. She added a small peg rail on the subway tile backsplash next to the sink to keep smaller items close at hand. Windows above the farm-style sink overlook the side yard.

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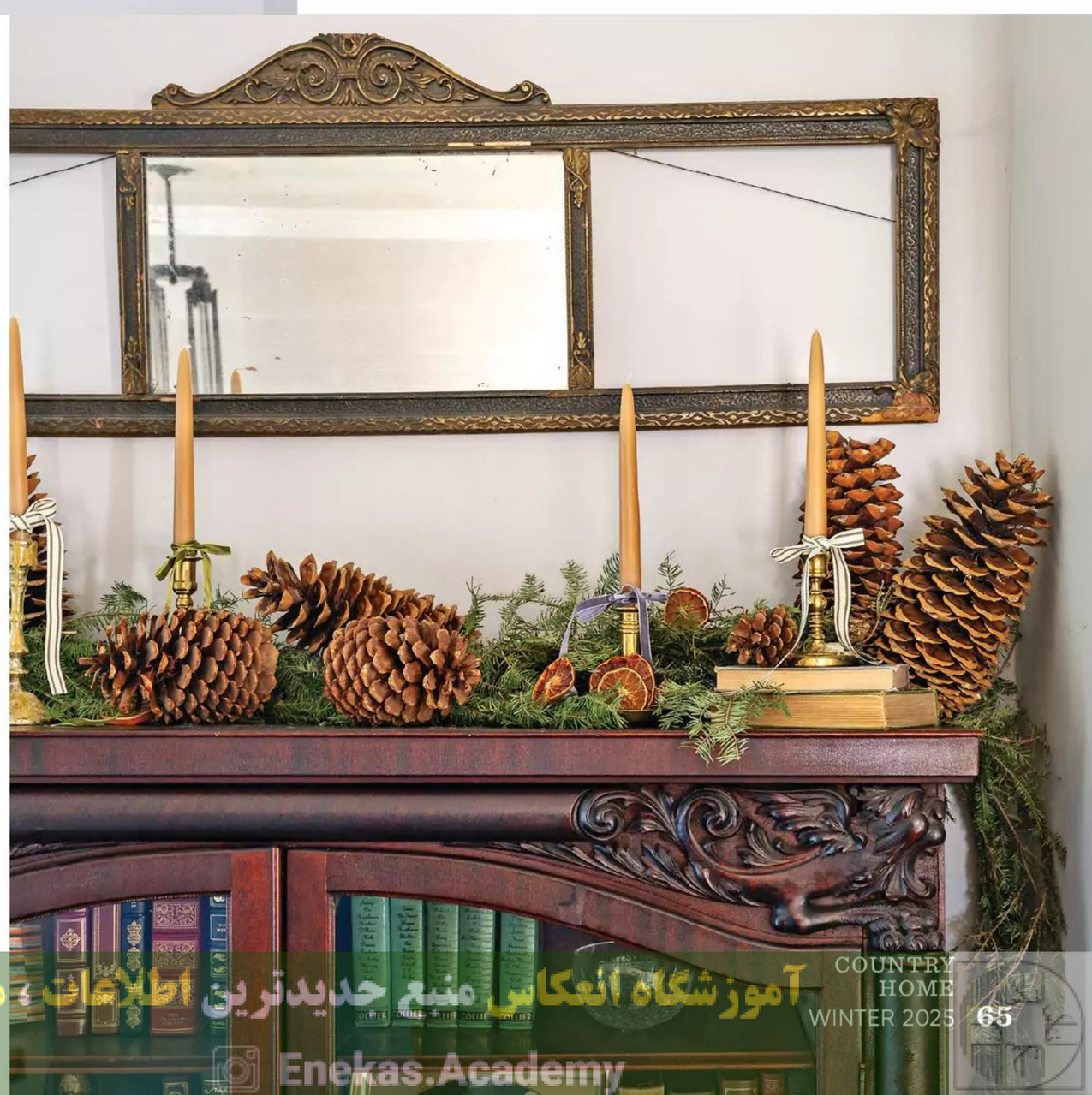
OPPOSITE Paper snowflakes Katherine and the kids made string along the staircase where Katherine, a photographer, formed the gallery wall using black-and-white family photos mounted in gold frames. "Right now, this is just our immediate family and grandparents, but my goal is to have all our extended family here," she says. She turned an unused nook under the stairs into a niche to hang seasonal outdoor gear and shoes by adding a peg rail, shelving, and baskets. **LEFT** Where there's a wall, there's a way to pack in some handy storage. Katherine adds peg rails in many of the rooms to hang items and uses shelves to display art, flowers, and mementos. She also collects baskets, keeping them up and out of the way. Hanging on S hooks, the baskets are easy to grab when she heads out to the garden or to fill with treats to gift to her friends and neighbors. "I have tons of baskets, and I get them from Goodwill, sometimes for just $2 or $3," she says. **BELOW** On the stair landing, a mahogany bookshelf serves up seasonal flair with clusters of pinecones, evergreens, and beeswax candles. The mirrored frame above it came with the house.

on day dates, antiquing in the town's storied shops that line Main Street. Katherine finds design inspiration in vintage decorating books and movies featuring older homes, and she shares her own ideas and images on Instagram @ katherinelouisedegroot.

During spring and summer, Katherine forages for fresh flowers she tucks into vintage pitchers and old crocks, allowing many of them to dry in place. Come Christmastime, she uses dried orange slices in garlands with fresh swags of mixed evergreens to adorn doorways and mantels. Pots of bright red amaryllis tuck in and around pinecones and cedar branches. "Every time I add a real garland to our house, it feels a little too dramatic for a few minutes," she says. "And then I say to myself, *No, it's perfect.*"

But none of the decorating begins until well into December. "We host Thanksgiving here, so I'm not ready to put away my



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LEFT Peaceful blue walls (Dutch Tile Blue by Sherwin-Williams) cozy up Theodore and Langston's bedroom, outfitted with a pair of twin beds that came with the house. The chest of drawers was found in Chicago for $40. Both the chest and the rocking chair ($25) were spotted on Facebook Marketplace. Simple tied-on linen draperies soften the windows. **BELOW LEFT** An antique pine dresser that once belonged to Seth when he was a little boy outfits the room with durable pieces. Katherine drenched the room in pale pink paint (Faint Coral by Sherwin-Williams), including the peg rail she commissioned from a maker on Etsy. A bottle-brush tree collection lends color and sparkle for the holidays. **BELOW** Embroidered ornaments join other favorites on Priscilla's faux Christmas tree. The homespun felted ornaments are handmade by Craftspring (for Target). "I'm drawn to natural materials when it comes to decor, especially at Christmastime," Katherine says. She loves Craftspring "for the unique, sweet designs" and appreciates that it's a company devoted to fair trade practices. **OPPOSITE** In Priscilla's bay windows, curtain rods are mounted at ceiling height to emphasize the room's soaring dimensions. Readymade curtain panels hang from clip-on rings. Katherine chose the brown and cream check pattern to tone down the pink walls and pick up the furnishings' wood tones.

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"I put Christmas trees in every room.
They're just so magical."
—KATHERINE LOUISE DEGROOT

fall things the day after; that feels very rushed to me," she says. "I'm interested in the liturgical calendar as a different way to mark time." Observing traditional celebrations such as St. Nicholas Day, the kids put out their shoes the night before December 6, then they awake to simple gifts of oranges, nuts, candy canes, pajamas, and books.

Everyone in the family also relishes time together making their own decorations and gifts, including handmade wreaths, paper snowflakes, and cookies. "My favorite pieces of decor are usually foraged or crafted," Katherine says.

She and Seth and the kids are settled in their slow way of living, knowing that good things come to those who wait. And with a nod to the six stockings hanging from the living room mantel, come this time next year, that means hanging a seventh stocking to welcome another baby's first Christmas. □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات ، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی
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NATURE SINGS

After decades of living in town, a couple found peace in the pines. Decked with cuttings of those evergreens and a lifetime collection of antiques and heirlooms, this Ontario farmhouse reflects their favorite time of year—starting at the front door.

WRITER KELSEY LEPPERD PHOTOGRAPHER ROBIN STUBBERT STYLIST CHRISTINE HANLON

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OPPOSITE Lush greenery and twinkling lights welcome guests at Sonya and Daryl Kinkade's front door—painted a holiday-ready dark olive shade. "That was important to me," Sonya says. "I was picturing how it would look at Christmas." French bulldog Olive approves.
THIS PHOTO In the front hall, an antique sideboard from Sonya's grandmother adds depth against paneled walls and slate flooring. Vintage frames, flickering candles, a small evergreen, and a festooned mirror nod to the season.

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AFTER 30 YEARS IN AN OTTAWA-AREA COMMUNITY THAT WAS BECOMING EVER BUSIER WITH DEVELOPMENT—Sonya and Daryl Kinkade yearned for something quieter. Hoping to find an old stone house that matched her love of European farmhouses, Sonya, an interior designer, and Daryl, a general contractor, spent months searching for the perfect place without much luck.

Then, on a spontaneous drive in the country, they stumbled across an undeveloped lot tucked behind towering pine trees. It was so alluring they pivoted to building a new home that would match Sonya's vision. They found the owners in the first house they came upon."We didn't even know it was for sale," Sonya says. "But we knocked on the neighbors' door, Daryl went in, and a week later, the lot was ours."

The road to building the house, though, was not always smooth. The couple purchased the property in 2016, but after years of delays they finally began building their dream home in 2022. "It was a lot of weekends and late nights," Sonya says. "We couldn't just stop our work to build our new home, but we managed to make it happen." Still, she found an upside to the interruptions. "I had a lot of time to think about what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it. I had a lot of time to change my mind."

Designing the home was a personal journey for Sonya. Drawing inspiration from their travels through Italy and the South of France, she wanted to layer in a sense of greater age—and did so with architectural elements like substantial moldings, stone walls, and knotty pine paneling.

She also needed to be able to envision holidays spent within its walls. "I actually designed this house around Christmas," she says. "It's my favorite time of year, and it was my mom's favorite too. It's tradition for me." With a front door painted green and a porch exuberantly dressed for the occasion, Sonya announces her Christmas spirit before that door is opened. Inside, every room gets a full holiday treatment. "There's no in-between for me," she says.

Throughout the home, heirloom pieces—like her old-world figurines and a World War II-era typewriter passed down from her mother—add character and personal plot lines to Sonya's holiday decorating. Live greenery is a signature element, weaving in natural warmth and a connection to the piney surroundings, and vignettes centered around her collections of vintage brass pots and postcards surprise and charm

OPPOSITE Soft textures, warm tones, and a roaring fire make the living room an inviting hub for lounging. A flocked tree twinkles amid cozy armchairs and a mix of antique and upholstered pieces. "The living room tree is always filled with little things I've collected through the years," Sonya says. "Brass pots, tiny wineglasses, vintage photos—things tucked in for people to discover." **TOP RIGHT** The sleigh on the porch isn't just a decorative touch—it's also a treasured heirloom. Sonya's parents surprised her and Daryl with it as a wedding gift after lovingly restoring the piece by hand before their January ceremony 30 years ago. "It was in our wedding photos, and I still use it every year," she says. **MIDDLE RIGHT** The Kinkades' newly built four-bedroom, three-bathroom home features a front porch dressed for the season. "There's never a plan to it at all," Sonya says of her holiday decorating. "I just drag my stuff out, lay it all out, and start working in an area knowing I want to do it a little bit different than the year before." **BOTTOM RIGHT** With 12 acres of open fields and forest on the property, the couple designed their firepit to sit right at the edge of it all—perfect for taking in the quiet beauty of a snowy evening. "We're cocooned in nature," Sonya says. "You feel like you're almost living in the wilderness and no one can touch you."

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at every turn. Plaids, toiles, and houndstooth are swapped in for the season, adding rich layers. “Texture is really important to me,” Sonya adds. “I might have beige pillows on the sofa, but every single one has a different texture.”

For Sonya, Christmas decorating is about more than creating a beautiful home—it’s about sharing the family’s story and sparking conversation. “People love coming up to the Christmas tree and finding something new they hadn’t noticed before,” she says. “It’s fun for them, and it’s fun for me. I can’t do the same thing every year. I have to keep it interesting.”

And when the holidays are over, the couple look out their windows and find peace. “It took a long time to get here with the hustle and bustle of our lives,” Sonya says. “No matter what morning it is, we wake up and can’t believe we’re here. It’s so beautifully quiet.” □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

LEFT Twelve-foot ceilings and a blend of vintage accents and new furniture set the stage for Sonya’s gatherings. “A lot of the elements in my house are either really old or they’re brand-new—and that’s the way I like it,” she says. The table, styled with layers of fresh greenery and tapers, expands to 10 feet long for Christmas dinner with family. **ABOVE** Fresh greenery, pinecones, berries, and dried citrus meander down the center of the table for a natural, gathered look. “If I’m using fresh greenery, then it’s going to be a big mix of different types,” she says. A row of vintage brass candlesticks—topped with flameless tapers—adds soft, flickering light.

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OPPOSITE Sonya paired a European apron-front sink with brass fixtures and designed a wood lip underneath "to give that small little bit of detail" that ties into the home's aged feel. Linen café curtains and scallop-edge cabinet shelves lend softness. **ABOVE** The oversize island, crafted in warm oak, contrasts with the painted cabinetry and offers plenty of space for baking and casual meals. In a nod to vintage farmhouse style, Sonya designed the upper cabinets with hefty moldings that reach to the ceiling. **BELOW LEFT** Vintage items seen throughout the kitchen—transferware, a copper kettle, and brass serving pieces—add charm and function. Above the Ilve range, a rustic salvaged beam is placed mantel-style and hosts more practical collectibles nestled into greenery. **BELOW RIGHT** A cheerful vignette of gingerbread cookies, vintage transferware, and well-loved silver serves up plenty of holiday nostalgia, coziness, whimsy, and just the right amount of sugar.

"WE LOVE EVERY DETAIL. I WOULDN'T CHANGE ANYTHING."

—HOMEOWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER SONYA KINKADE

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OPPOSITE A moody collection of copper, oil paintings, pewter, and antique kitchen tools turns this hardworking pantry into a gallery-worthy space. Sonya calls it her "treasure wall" and styles it to feel gathered over time with layered tones, textures, and patina. **ABOVE** Wrapped in knotty pine paneling and large windows, the sunroom brings the outdoors in—even in winter. "We wanted it to feel like you were outside and in a little cabin," says Sonya, who leaned into a more rustic style for this space. **BELOW LEFT** Even the smallest corners get the holiday treatment. This simple sconce is dressed with greenery and velvet ribbon. **BELOW MIDDLE** Known for her holiday decorating and festive home tours, Sonya takes a quiet moment to relax with her sweet pups, Betty (on left) and Olive. Throws and layered pillows, a red-painted coffee table, and a bowl of popcorn complete the creature comforts. **BELOW RIGHT** For the sunroom's Christmas tree, Sonya used old books, pinecones, and burlap ribbon for a rustic, storybook feel perfectly suited to the space's cabinlike charm.

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“MY MOTHER WOULD SPEND WEEKS TAKING WHAT SHE HAD AND MAKING THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL FOR CHRISTMAS. I CARRY THAT ON. IT’S COMFORT FOR ME.”

—SONYA KINKADE

ABOVE Sonya swaps out her bedding each season, and Christmastime is no exception. The Indienne-style paisley coverlet was a lucky find with just the right blend of green, vintage charm, and flair. **BELOW LEFT** A grouping of vintage portraits of women—something Sonya has always been drawn to—gives quiet character to the bedroom. “I just find strength in them,” she says. “They feel so distinguished.” **BELOW MIDDLE** Greenery, framed landscapes, and a woven basket in an upstairs nook offer proof that even small landings can make a big seasonal statement. Flameless LED candles provide a safer way to enjoy flickering light. **BELOW RIGHT** A symmetrical arrangement of vintage-style silhouettes adds contrast above the bed. For the holidays, Sonya layers in a simple wreath with velvet ribbon for a touch of softness. **OPPOSITE** “I had the iron claw-foot tub before I designed the bathroom,” Sonya says. “Everything else was built around it.” A stone accent wall, greenery-draped chandelier—with pinecones that dangle like crystals—and a simple clutch of mixed greens complement the tub with natural texture and complete the serene look.

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In her open, light-filled kitchen, homeowner Wendy Lau drapes garlands to draw attention to the windows and views. During the holidays, the island becomes a prep station for homemade marshmallows, Wendy's signature treat for her hot cocoa bar.

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LET IT *SNOW*

A flurry of paper creations sparks delight for a budget-conscious homeowner who picked up her scissors—and couldn't put them down.

WRITER JODY GARLOCK

PHOTOGRAPHER JANET KWAN

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ABOVE A pine hutch displays Christmas classics, including bottle-brush trees. Wendy prefers reusable faux greenery rather than spending on fresh garlands every year.
OPPOSITE On open kitchen shelves she built herself, Wendy stages a village with ceramic and tin houses.

EVERY HOLIDAY SEASON, WENDY LAU'S LOVE OF CRAFTS AND DECORATIONS KICKS into high gear. She's up and down ladders, dangling paper snowflakes and stars from ceilings and draping garlands across doorways. As much as she tries to show restraint, a little always turns into a lot, and soon she's adorning her Toronto home with abandon. "There's a lot of cardio for me at Christmas," she says.

Her aerobics can be traced in large part to the snowflakes she snips from brown and white lunch bags. They now number in the hundreds—her creative strategy for a high-impact look. "I'm the paper-bag princess," she jokes. Earthy flourishes such as dried moss (one of her reusable alternatives for fresh greenery) and handcrafted papier-mâché mushroom ornaments supplement those statement makers.

If there's one thing Wendy knows, it's how to make the holiday special, even on a budget. "To me, Christmas is a homecoming," she says. "It's about the cozy. It's about the nostalgia. But it's also about affordability."

Her paper-bag creations were an early pandemic project after she was laid off from her job as a flight attendant. (Her Instagram account, @thekwendyhome, drew so many followers that when she was called back to work, she took a leap to become a full-time social media content creator.) The 18 totes she lugs up from the basement each year are filled with a mix of her handmade decorations, hand-me-downs from her mom, after-Christmas markdowns, and thrift store and roadside finds. She's always on the hunt for clear glass bud vases, cloches, and containers she can use to add wintry sparkle or turn into snow globes.

Three now-tattered paper garlands that spell "fa-la-la" and other phrases are sentimental favorites. Her husband, Kwan Chan, surprised Wendy with the garlands early in their marriage so she had something festive in their small basement apartment. "I smile every time I put them up," she says.

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“I always add festive touches to my kitchen. Everyone seems to end up there, and it makes cooking and baking more fun.”

–HOMEOWNER WENDY LAU

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Wendy sets a wintry table with candles, baby's breath, and glass vases. She made the arborlike stand that spans the length of the table from copper piping. "I always try to take advantage of vertical space," she says.

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When creating her seasonal wonderland in the house the couple have lived in for four years, Wendy sees herself as a store owner. “I pretend I’m decorating a shop window, but for the enjoyment of us and our guests,” she says. “I like to think of my home as an installation.”

Wendy’s clever flourishes start in the entry, where paper snowflakes accented with fairy lights blanket the staircase. “They’re impactful, but I don’t know if I was going for impact as much as just thinking, *Wow, what am I going to do with all these?*” she says. Elsewhere, snowflakes and purchased stars form arches that become magical backdrops for holiday photos of the couple and their friends. Above the dining table, more string lights shine from a canopy she fashioned by cutting and piecing together different lengths of copper pipes.

And while her overall look is artful and exuberant, it’s also clean and organized—even with hundreds of paper snowflakes. “I have to include them,” Wendy says. “These things have become a big part of my story.” □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

PAPER SNOWFLAKES

Reminiscent of a classic school project, Wendy Lau’s handcrafted snowflakes let you embrace your inner crafter.

MATERIALS

Seven same-size brown or white paper lunch bags

Scissors

Hot-glue gun

Paper clip* (optional)

STEP-BY-STEP

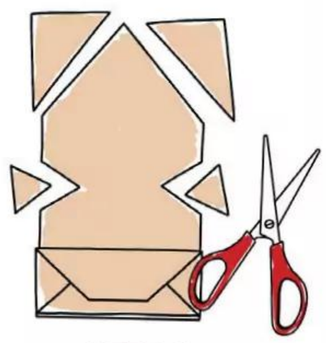
1. On a work surface, place a bag with bottom flap nearest to you. Cut the top corners of the bag into a triangular or curved shape, meeting at the top center; don’t cut the flap area. For cutouts, cut additional shapes along the sides of the bag (the closer to the flap, the closer the design will be to the center of the snowflake). Repeat with the remaining six bags, using the first bag as a template so all the bags are cut in the same way.

2. Using the hot-glue gun, add glue to one bag in the shape of an upside down T (see blue lines).

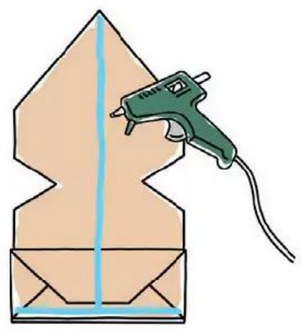
3. Place a bag, flap side up, on top of glued bag so flaps align; press together firmly. Repeat gluing (except last bag) and pressing until bags are in a stack.

4. Bring the tips of the top and bottom bag together, unfurling the stack to form a snowflake. Hot-glue or clip the two ends together.

***TIP** Wendy uses paper clips so she can unclip and fold snowflakes flat for easy storage.



STEP 1



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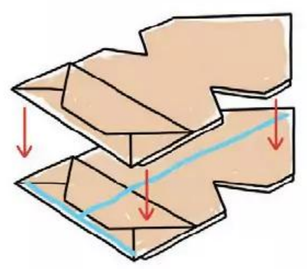
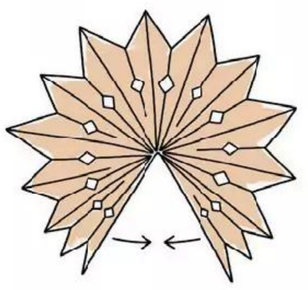


STEP 3



STEP 4

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Wendy spreads her joyous Christmas spirit through her house with brown and white paper-bag snowflakes (mixed with purchased stars). She forms arches by hanging them with fishing line and self-adhesive ceiling hooks or wiring them onto stair railings.

1

2

3

4

ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE

Wendy Lau infuses her home with exuberant holiday spirit with these simple decorating ideas.

1. GET CRAFTY

Easy-to-make papier-mâché mushroom ornaments and pom-pom garlands brighten the tree. (Find the how-to for projects at *thekwendyhome.com.*)

2. RETHINK GREENERY

The only fresh greens Wendy uses are a few evergreen sprigs she clips from her yard for accents, such as in her banister snowflake display. Dried moss is used elsewhere—as table runners and tree skirts and in displays.

3. EMBRACE FILLER FLOWERS

Wendy's holiday floral of choice is baby's breath. Typically a bouquet filler, it goes solo in bud vases. "It has that snowflake effect," she says, "and it dries well so it has longevity."

4. SHOW SOME HUMOR

Guests know to look for surprises in Wendy's displays. A mouse named Gus dressed as a chef is one of them. "It's fun building tiny inside jokes," she says. "It's playful and nonsensical."

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wreath REMIX

EXTEND YOUR SEASON'S GREETINGS WITH A FLORAL DESIGNER'S ORIGINAL TAKES ON CLASSIC AND CREATIVE WREATHS THAT LAST FOR MONTHS (AT LEAST!).

PHOTOGRAPHER
MALIN BJÖRKHOLM

<< FRAGRANT AND FESTIVE

Often overlooked in favor of needly evergreens, silver green eucalyptus is one of Swedish floral designer Malin Björkholm's favorite wreath-making materials. The leaves "retain their color when dried, and they smell lovely," she says. She used two types of eucalyptus—the cinerea variety and a seeded type called populus—to give this wreath dimension. Clusters of sprigs are wired in an alternating pattern onto a metal ring wrapped with florists tape (to keep sprigs from slipping).

BREAKING THE MOLD >>

Seasonal surprises abound in Björkholm's book, *A Year of Flower Wreaths*. For this asymmetrical wreath, she wired greenery onto a metal hoop—one made especially for wreaths—in different directions to give it a full look. Bunches of pink pepperberries provide dashes of color.

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SILVER BELLE >>

Björkholm recommends a spruce wreath formed on a straw base as a starting project for those who haven't made wreaths before. The straw base allows you to pull the wire through properly when attaching the plants. Spruce is an easy material to work with and fills out the wreath well. In this version of a classic wreath, she added silvery details such as the tangly white stems of cushion bush and seeded eucalyptus leaves.

HOW TO MAKE IT

MATERIALS

Florists wire

Straw base

Clippers

Wire cutters

FLOWERS/FOLIAGE

Spruce

Eucalyptus

Cushion bush

Seeded eucalyptus

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Attach the florists wire to the straw base by wrapping it around the base (see No. 5 for spacing) and twisting the end.

2. Use clippers to cut spruce into suitable-size pieces; if you turn the spruce over and cut from the back, it will make the cut surface less visible.

3. Start adding spruce to the outside of the wreath, securing in place by tucking it under the wrapped wire. Use longer spruce branches on the outside of the wreath and shorter ones toward the center. Continue with spruce on the top of the straw base and on the inside the same way. The base should be covered completely with spruce, and the back of the base should be left bare.

4. Place bunches of eucalyptus on top of the spruce and tie them together with the florists wire to secure in place. Continue placing eucalyptus and cushion bush (or any other delicate branch painted silver or white) the same way around the whole wreath, dotting some sprigs of seeded eucalyptus here and there. Place the plants over the stems of the previous bunches to hide them.

5. Turn the wreath over and finish by cutting the wire with wire cutters and twisting it onto the previous section of wire to tie it off.

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'ROUND THE TABLE ^^

No need to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. By hot-gluing spruce cones onto a straw base, you have an Advent wreath you can reuse each year—all you have to do is wire on a bit of fresh greenery. For a centerpiece, push narrow candleholders between the cones (you can buy candleholders on stakes, which makes this easy).

LOOSE AND LOVELY >>

Björkholm loves to make wreaths with various green tones and textures. For this one, she mixed many different materials—seeded eucalyptus, holly, larch, spruce, and pine—cut into small pieces and wired together in groups. Starting with a metal ring wrapped with green florists tape, secure clusters of branches to the ring with wire. Place each cluster so the stems of the previous bunch are hidden. Add larch branches where they fit and let them sprawl out from the wreath shape. □

RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.

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WREATHS FOR ALL SEASONS

Floral designer, photographer, and Instagram star Malin Björkholm features 40 creative projects for every season, including the wintry designs on these pages, in her book, *A Year of Flower Wreaths*. $30; *rizzoliusa.com*

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RESOURCES

CONTACT THESE DESIGN PROFESSIONALS FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR SERVICES OR PRODUCTS.

A COLLECTED CHRISTMAS

PAGES 6–13

Homeowner, stylist, and photographer: *Dawn Contreras, Instagram @earlydawn22.*
Designer: *Joseph Contreras, contreras.joseph@att.net.*
Antiques dealer: *Vignettes Decor, Ocean Beach, California, Instagram @vignettesdecor;* vignettesdecor.com.

MERRY MAKING IN THE MIDWEST

PAGES 14–25

Flocked tree, basket-weave tree collar, colorful glass ornaments: *Balsam Hill;* balsamhill.com.
Chicken- and dog-pattern gift wrap, bags: *Lana's Shop;* lanasshop.com.
Woolen fabrics (on sitting room ottoman and Adirondack chairs and in mudroom cubbies): *Wearable Blankets by NorSari;* norsari.com.

EVERGREEN STYLE

PAGES 26–35

Interior designer and homeowner: *Brittany Goodman, The Goodman House, thegoodmanhouseig@gmail.com, Instagram @thegoodmanhouse;* thegoodmanhouseva.com.
Living room faux holiday tree: *Balsam Hill;* balsamhill.com.

BRANCHING OUT

PAGES 36–45

Faux trees and garland, select ornaments: *Balsam Hill;* balsamhill.com.
Holiday decor collector/dealer: *Bruce Elsass, Collinsville Antiques Co., 283 Main St., New Hartford, CT 06057, Instagram @collinsvilleantiques;* collinsvilleantiques.com.

DREAMY WHITE CHRISTMAS

PAGES 46–57

Homeowner: *Christine Murphy, Instagram @lavenderflowerstudio.*

COMFORT & JOY

PAGES 58–67

Homeowner: *Katherine Louise DeGroot, Instagram @katherinelouisedegroot;* katherinedegroot.com.

NATURE SINGS

PAGES 68–79

Interior designer and homeowner: *Sonya Kinkade Design, Instagram @kinkadedesign and @purdypineviewacres;* sonyakinkadedesign.ca.
General contractor: *D.E. Kinkade Konstruction Ltd.;* dekinkadekonstructionltd.com.

LET IT SNOW

PAGES 80–87

Homeowner: *Wendy Lau, Instagram @thekwendyhome.*

WREATH REMIX

PAGES 88–93

Author, floral designer, photographer: *Malin Björkholm, Instagram @malin.björkholm.*

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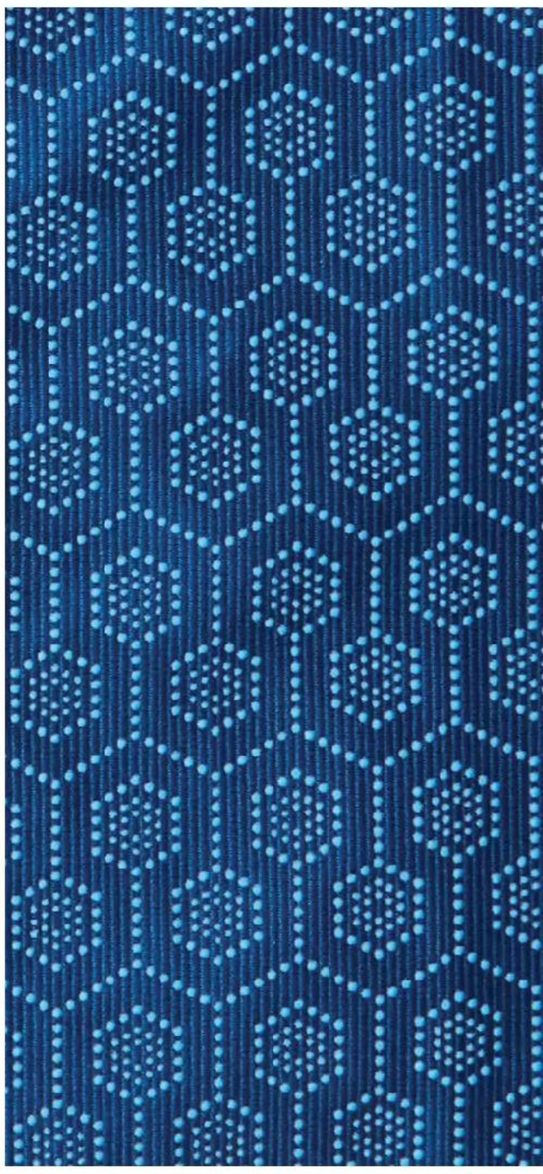

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LUCKY DOGS

In honor of all the perfectly posed pups in this issue, we dug into the archives to come up with a special treat you can bake at home to share with your own best friend—and all the good dogs on your gift list.

PHOTOGRAPHER CHAD HOLDER PRODUCER KELLY RYAN KEGANS

SPICED PUMPKIN DOG TREATS

HANDS ON 30 minutes
TOTAL TIME 1 hour 15 minutes

- 1 cup natural apple juice*
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1¼ cups rolled oats
- ⅓ cup wheat germ
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large saucepan combine apple juice, pumpkin, honey, and oil; cook and stir until mixture simmers. Remove from heat. Stir in oats and wheat germ; cool slightly. Stir in whole wheat flour and cinnamon. Stir in all-purpose flour. Divide dough in half.
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough at a time into a 10-inch square. Use a cookie cutter to cut dough into desired shapes. Place squares close together on prepared cookie sheets.
4. Bake on separate oven racks 45 minutes, turning sheets and swapping on racks halfway through baking. Turn off oven; let dry in oven overnight.
5. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week.
MAKES 50 TREATS.

***Note** Be certain the apple juice used has no artificial sweeteners, such as xylitol, as they can be toxic to dogs. With any new treats, start with a small amount to ensure your pet doesn't have sensitivities to the ingredients.

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* Tufts University longitudinal study of Positive Youth Development, 2021

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