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Holiday
Treats

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HOME

Glow

Gift
Guide
OUR
65
IDEAS

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5 Festive & Fabulous Table Settings



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Holiday Wishes

As we put together one of my favourite issues of the year – the holiday decorating issue – news from around the world seems to give us the opposite of what we all wish for: peace on earth.

At *Style at Home*, we can imagine how some might think talking about holiday decorating is incongruous with the struggles so many face. But for me, *not* celebrating beauty, light, love, family and friends would be giving up on hope. And so now, more than ever, as the song by Johnny Mathis says, I think, “We need a little Christmas, right this very minute.” We need our homes to be beautiful, calm oases, and that’s why I’m happy to bring you this holiday decorating edition.

The feature homes in this issue exemplify the kind of holiday decor I love, and guess what? It’s a trend! Samantha Pynn talks about it in her column. Apparently, I’m not the only one who loves holiday decorations that enhance a home’s existing decor. It creates such a harmonious look. I’ve nothing against traditional red, green, or even a cacophony of colour. It’s all good. But for me, decorations in colours that work with my existing palette, which is key to this look, feels right.

Another thing I love about the designer-decked holiday homes in this issue is how bringing nature inside is paramount. Simple greenery is so prominent. Celebrating nature has always been a big part of Christmas for me – the tree is an element I’d never forgo. But the designers in this issue go a step further. They know to place little touches of fragrant greenery all through the house. The look is simple, sweet and very effective!

I want to end with a thank you to designer Tamara Robbins Griffith, who invited us into her home to show us how she and her family celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas. It’s a lovely melding of traditions that, last year, included inviting friends and family of every faith to light candles and say a blessing. What could be more beautiful? I hope that you, too, make your home a place for peace, for fun and for celebration. Let’s light the lights. From all of us here at *Style at Home*, I wish for you and yours a very happy holiday.



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t [@styleathome](https://twitter.com/styleathome) **i** instagram.com/styleathome



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Designer Michelle Berwick's home has a holiday palette that echoes her everyday decor.

COVER PHOTOGRAPHY

Mike Chajecski

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VOLUME 26 ISSUE 09

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PRINTING

Printed at Transcontinental RBW Graphics, a division of Transcontinental

Printing 2005 G.P., 2049 20th St. E., Owen Sound, ON N4K 5R2.
All reproduction requests must be made to COPIBEC (paper reproductions at 800-717-2022)

DISTRIBUTION

Distributed by Comag

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1-800-387-7244, STYLEATHOME.COM

STYLE AT HOME, Sub. Dept., P.O. Box 814, Markham Station, Markham, ON L3P 7Z6. Send address changes to the post office box address above, including the mailing label from your latest issue. Allow eight weeks for changes.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES

Canadian subscriptions: **1 year = \$34.95** (plus taxes)
U.S. subscriptions: **1 year = \$90.00** (payable in advance)
International subscriptions: **1 year = \$180.00** (payable in advance)
We occasionally use our subscriber list for marketing purposes, or share it with carefully selected companies whose products may be of interest to you. If you do not want your name to appear on this list, please notify us in writing.
Canadian Postmaster: Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Style at Home, 123 Front Street West #909, Toronto, ON, M5J 2M2. Publications Mail Agreement 41557548, PAP Registration 08282. Postage paid at Gateway in Mississauga, ON.

Digital editions are available on Molto, Zinio, Press Reader and Ebsco.

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Style at Home is published 9 times a year (except for occasional combined, expanded or premium issues) by TVA Publications Inc., 123 Front Street West #909, Toronto, ON M5J 2M2; 416-733-7600; groupe TVA. ISSN 1915-8998

For any comments, please email letters@styleathome.com
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Funded by the Government of Canada



style news

PAINT PALETTE *of the month*



Behr **BEST IN SHOW** N550-3,
Home Depot, homedepot.ca



Behr **CHILLED WINE** M310-5,
Home Depot, homedepot.ca



SERENGETI SAND
2164-40, Benjamin Moore,
benjaminmoore.ca



BeautiTone **LITTLE BLACK
NUMBER** DR60-3, Home
Hardware, homehardware.ca

WE'RE INSPIRED BY...

all that glitters, and that doesn't pertain only to gold! Silver need not mean second place, especially when paired with gold. Cool and warm, sophisticated and chic, the metallic duo looks elegant with white and black for a holiday palette that can't be beat.



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11

Silver

1 Ceramic **DOUBLE HEART**, \$35, Bouclair, bouclair.com. 2 Pinci **CANDLEHOLDER**, \$350, Kelli Shop, kelli.shop. 3 Sunrise Bedding **PILLOWCASES**, \$19, set of 2, Amazon, amazon.ca. 4 Village **CAKE MOULD**, \$50, Lee Valley, leevalley.com. 5 All-Clad **TEA KETTLE**, \$170, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca. 6 Star **ORNAMENTS**, \$15, set of 6, H&M Home, hm.com. 7 Instyle Holiday **REINDEER**, \$13, Home Hardware, homehardware.ca. 8 Present Time **TABLE LAMP**, \$181, Smallable, smallable.com. 9 **WALL ART**, \$180, Bouclair, bouclair.com. 10 Wilvera **TRAY**, \$139, Mobilia, mobilia.ca. 11 Afton **SERVING DISH**, \$140, CB2, cb2.ca.



FOREVER TREES

This Quebec-based online furniture store offers a cute (and practical!) alternative to cut Christmas trees and non-recyclable fake ones. Lilique Recycle's whimsical, one-of-a-kind wooden "trees" are hand-crafted, reusable, and made from old doors that would otherwise be scrap. Plus, they're easy to decorate and will never, ever drop their needles! They are a charming, upcycled alternative for those looking for a way to celebrate the season and the planet.

Wooden **CHRISTMAS TREES**, from \$385, Lilique Recycle, liliquecycle.com

Back in 1967, Canadians' appetites for international architecture and design got a huge boost with Montreal's Expo 67. Six years later, Maison Corbeil co-founders Collette and Raymond Corbeil opened their first shop, offering high-quality European furniture on this side of the pond. Fast-forward to today and the company has developed a reputation for, in their words, "democratizing" great design. This year, as Maison Corbeil celebrates its 50th year, they are offering their own locally made designs alongside famous European brands, online and at their 17 locations in Quebec and Ontario. Plus, they've added Must and Home Société stores to the family.

All provide modern, well-made and distinctly Canadian alternatives to cookie-cutter furnishings. As part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the company is offering special deals on many of its bestselling lines. Here are a few of our favourites.



Happy 50th!



With its minimalist structure, the Bora wooden bed stands out for its modern rusticity. Available in oak or walnut, it sits on a black metal base and features quality manufacturing by Canadian craftspeople. **BORA BED**, \$2,395.

The simple lines of the Sonoma dresser (above) enhance the natural beauty of its wood grain. This all-Canadian design is a contemporary classic. (Bedside tables are also available.) **SONOMA DRESSER**, \$2,300.

Maison Corbeil,
maisoncorbeil.com



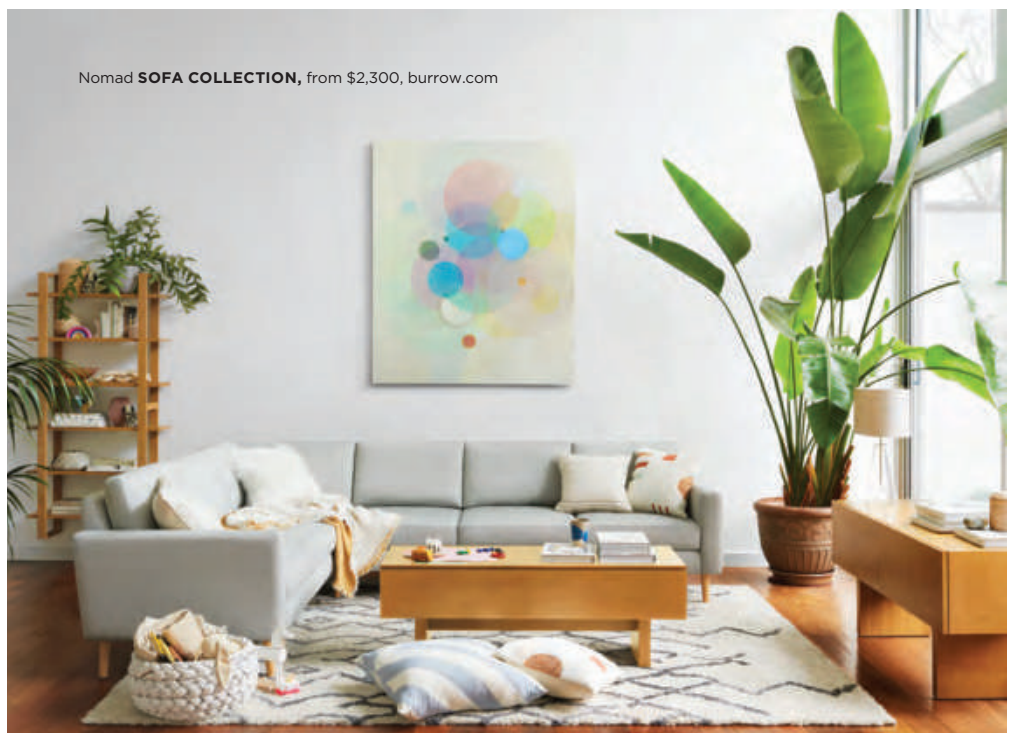
Merry Critters!

From the forest and farm come these furry festive friends to help celebrate the season!

- 1 **SLEEPING MICE**, \$12, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca.
- 2 Canvas **SQUIRREL**, \$7, Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.
- 3 **BABY OWL**, \$16, Home Hardware, homehardware.ca.
- 4 **FLYING OWL**, \$30, Véronneau, veronneau.com.
- 5 **REINDEER**, \$17, H&M Home, hm.com.
- 6 **SHEEP**, \$13, Bouclair, bouclair.com.

ALL SET FOR PETS

We love our furry friends, but pets can take a toll on furniture. Burrow, maker of modular furnishings, has devised a stylish solution that's pet, style and budget friendly. Their new Nomad collection adds an extra convenience to their selection of easily customizable pieces. Along with the usual option to choose the size, configuration and finish you like, the Nomad goes a step further: it's finished with tough, nontoxic synthetic upholstery fabric with a supertight, nonporous weave that stands up to stains, claws, spills and "accidents." Cleanup is quick and easy with a spray of distilled water and a little bleach. Now, if they could just find a way to keep Rover from hogging the couch.





Cricut JoyXtra, \$280, cricut.com

JOY TO THE WORLD OF CRAFTERS!

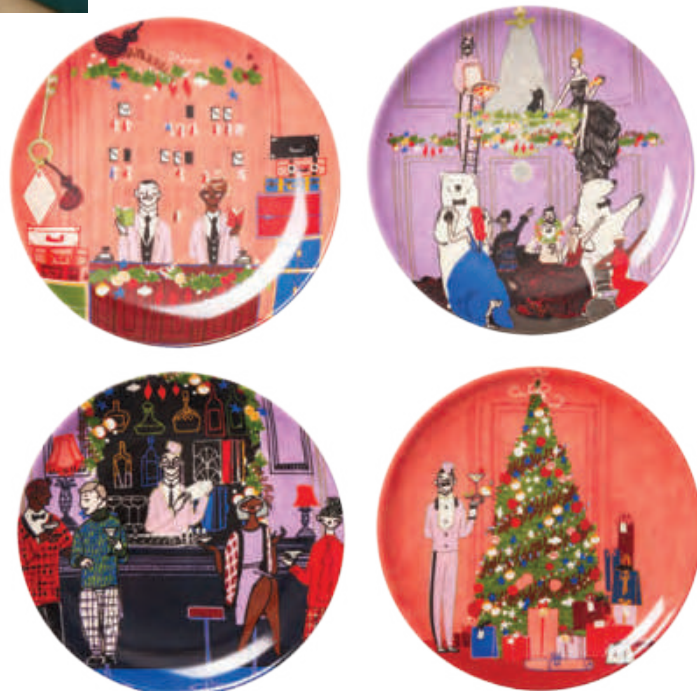
Get ready to get crafting. The Cricut JoyXtra is the newest addition to this well-known company's collection of die-cutting machines. It's small, portable and simple to set up, connecting via Bluetooth to the Cricut Design Space app. The JoyXtra is intuitive to use, making it easy to get right to work creating custom designs or using one of the thousands of projects available on the app. As well, there are many online walk-through videos. The Cricut JoyXtra is big enough to print an 8½-by-11-inch image, and you can use it to design personalized T-shirts or greeting cards, create a decal for your favourite mug, or print gift tags – your imagination is the limit.

Arctic Friends **SALAD PLATES**, \$55, set of 4, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca



Snack Time

Guests will love these fun and festive canapé-size plates.



Vincent Moustache **APPETIZER PLATES**, \$40, set of 4, Indigo, indigo.ca



FAIRY TALES DO COME TRUE



Take a nostalgic trip to Disney's magical kingdom, with Sanderson's reintroduction of archival fabrics and wallpaper patterns inspired by beloved classic children's tales. All your favourite Disney characters – from Bambi and Peter Pan to Winnie the Pooh and Alice in Wonderland – are here, in soft, understated patterns with a pretty English country accent. Many feature unique, hand-printed designs. Absolutely enchanting!

Disney Home x Sanderson **FABRICS** (\$200 per yard), **WALLPAPER** (\$300 per roll) and **MURALS** (from \$375), Sanderson Design Group, sandersondesigngroup.com

Welcome Home

Indulge your holiday houseguests with these comforts of home.

1



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1 Hotel Dulcia four-season twin down **DUVET**, \$400, Dolce Bianca, dolcebianca.ca. 2 Barr-Co. **BATH SOAK**, \$36, Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. 3 Gingerbread Village embroidered **HAND TOWELS**, \$40, set of 2, Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca.



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Merry & MAGICAL

Deck your halls, walls, tables and more, and stay on budget with stylish, on-trend festive decor from Giant Tiger.



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7

1 Debbie Travis Metal **REINDEER**, 15", \$20.
 2 Tealight or holiday **LANTERN**, \$29 each, batteries and tealights sold separately. 3 Debbie Travis Beaded **WREATH**, 15", \$14. 4 Debbie Travis Light-up **TREE**, 5½" x 23", \$20. 5 Pre-lit **ARTIFICIAL PINE TREE**, 3½', \$30. 6 **SCENTED CANDLE**, 14 oz., \$10. 7 Plaid or Jacquard Sherpa **THROW**, 50" x 60", \$20 each. 8 Debbie Travis Glass **LED CANDLES**, set of 3, \$18, batteries sold separately.
 Giant Tiger, GiantTiger.com



8

Snow White Christmas Cake

Our Almond, Coconut and Raspberry Layer Cake is a decadent and festive finale for any holiday gathering.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOODIVINE | FOOD STYLING NATALY SIMARD



INGREDIENTS

MAKES 16 TO 20 SERVINGS

Almond Cakes

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup ground almonds
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 4 eggs, at room temperature
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 tsp almond extract
- ½ cup 2% milk
- ½ cup 2% plain yogurt

Raspberry Filling

- 250 g fresh or frozen raspberries (about 2 cups)
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 tsp cornstarch

Coconut Buttercream

- 2½ cups granulated sugar
- 1¼ cups liquid egg whites
- 3 cups unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- ½ cup coconut cream
- ½ tsp coconut extract (optional)
- 2 (to 3) cups unsweetened coconut flakes

Coconut Snowballs

(recipe below) (optional)

tip

Coconut cream is prepared the same way as coconut milk but with less water, so it has a thicker texture.

DIRECTIONS

Almond Cakes

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease three 8-inch round cake pans and line bottoms with parchment paper; set aside. In bowl, combine flour, ground almonds, baking powder and salt; set aside. In large bowl, using electric mixer on medium speed, beat eggs with sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Beat in oil and almond extract. On low speed, beat in reserved dry ingredients in 3 additions, alternating with milk and yogurt, just until batter is smooth. Scrape batter into prepared pans; smooth tops.

Bake until cake tester inserted in centres of cakes comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Cool in pans on wire racks for 10 minutes. Unmould cakes directly onto wire racks; let cool completely. (Make-ahead: Can be stored in airtight container at room temperature for up to 24 hours or frozen for up to 1 month.)

Raspberry Filling

Meanwhile, in saucepan, stir together raspberries, sugar and lemon juice. Bring mixture to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. In small bowl, stir cornstarch with 1 tbsp water. Add to saucepan; return mixture to boil and cook, stirring often, until filling has thickened, about 2 minutes. Transfer mixture to bowl; let cool. Chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Coconut Buttercream

In metal bowl, whisk sugar with egg whites. Set bowl over saucepan of simmering (not boiling) water; whisk until sugar has dissolved and mixture is smooth, or candy thermometer reads 140°F, about 5 minutes. Pour mixture into bowl of stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment (or use large bowl and handheld electric mixer). Whip on medium-high speed until mixture has completely cooled and stiff peaks form, about 10 minutes (if mixture only forms soft peaks after 12 minutes, stop beating – you'll just get a little less frosting).

Fit stand mixer with flat beater. Beat butter into mixture, 1 cube at a time, until creamy and smooth (it will start out crumbly). Beat in coconut cream, and coconut extract, if using. (Make-ahead: Can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. Remove from fridge at least 30 minutes before using; beat lightly and continue with recipe.)

Assembly

Using serrated knife, trim tops of cakes to level, if necessary. Spread 1 tsp of the icing in centre of cake plate; top with 1 cake layer, cut side up. Spread half of the Raspberry Filling over cut side, leaving ¼-inch border around edge. Using a metal spatula, evenly cover second cake's cut side with 1 cup of the Coconut Buttercream; invert onto first cake, so buttercream and Raspberry Filling are touching. Spread remaining Raspberry Filling over second cake's exposed top, leaving ¼-inch border around edge. Using metal spatula, evenly cover third cake's cut side with another 1 cup of the Coconut Buttercream; invert onto second cake layer, so buttercream and Raspberry Filling are touching.

Spread remaining Coconut Buttercream overtop, smoothing side and top. Gently press coconut flakes all over icing. Garnish with Coconut Snowballs, if using. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving. (Make-ahead: Can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

Coconut Snowballs

MAKES 11 SNOWBALLS

In food processor, pulse 1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut, ⅓ cup ground almonds and ¼ cup maple syrup until mixture forms a paste. Using hands, shape mixture by tablespoonful into balls. Place ¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut on plate.

Roll balls in shredded coconut, coating well. (Make-ahead: Can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 1 week.)

The Coupe Glass

Arren Williams celebrates the comeback of the classic champagne coupe.



Classic

Lismore Essence Champagne Saucers, \$285, set of 2, Waterford, waterford.com

Champagne – that most sparkling of French exports – sparks intrigue. No doubt, the lore around the beloved bubbly is fascinating. Have you heard the story that champagne was actually invented in England? To that we say, *Mais non!* Or maybe you've heard that the voluptuous bowl-shaped champagne coupe was modelled after the breasts of Marie Antoinette? *Ooh là là!* Risqué origin stories aside, it's a fact that the coupe, or champagne saucer, was depicted in *The Oyster Dinner* – a 1735 bacchanalian painting by French court artist Jean-François de Troy – thus cementing it as the de rigueur glassware of the 18th-century upper class.

Since then, innumerable corks have popped, but to get a perfect celebratory clink between glasses, crystal is required. For that, Waterford, appearing on the scene in 1783, not long after de Troy's painting debuted, is the go-to. Their classic Lismore pattern has been catching the light since the 1950s, when coupe glasses were in their heyday in kicky Hollywood hits starring Rock Hudson and Doris Day. Ever since, Waterford has periodically refreshed their classic for modern tastes. Lismore Essence is the latest: pared back, with just the right amount of cut crystal to make every occasion a little more sparkly.

Yes, we know oenophiles will say that champagne bubbles lose their pop quicker in a coupe, but there's something more fun about the shape. Crystal or otherwise, the coupe is a modern bar essential, and a fave of mixologists for anything with fizz and for the fanciest of cocktails. Plus, you can't make a champagne tower out of flute glasses! Speaking of fun, we love Maison Balzac's playfully pink Pomponette coupes, adorned with tiny amber glass bubbles. More contemporary is Ferm Living's Danish-designed Ripple – the ribbed smoke grey coupe manages to feel both vintage and modern at the same time. We can only raise our glasses and say "Cheers!" to the coupe!



Looking for a special gift? Waterford will custom-engage their crystal for you in a choice of fonts.

"POP" & CIRCUMSTANCE

Cool

Ferm Living's Ripple Champagne Saucer in Smoke Grey, \$75, set of 2, Old Faithful Shop, oldfaithfulshop.com



Fun

Pomponette Champagne Coupe in Pink/Amber, US\$139, set of 2, Maison Balzac, maisonbalzac.com

BIGGER BETTER FASTER *THAN EVER*

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Nationwide unlimited plans.

Growing **5G** network.

Still affordable.



Celebrate the Season



Bring the holidays to the heart of your home with pretty, festive accents.

STYLING JULIE LAPOINTE | PHOTOGRAPHY BRUNO PETROZZA

Opposite **CAKE STAND**, \$30, Linen Chest, linenchest.com. Champagne **FLUTES**, \$30, set of 4; Christmas **PLATE**, \$6; HomeSense, homesense.ca. Ceramic **BUTTER DISH**, \$45, VdeV, vdevmaison.com. **CREAMER**, \$14; Bear **SALT AND PEPPER SHAKER SET**, \$35; Simons, simons.ca. **COOKIE JAR**, Casa Luca, \$25, casaluca.com. **GLASS**, \$15 H&M Home, hm.com. **TABLECLOTH**, \$65, Rose Buddha, myrosebuddha.com. Wood bead **GARLAND**, \$20, Bouclair, bouclair.com.

This Page Fir-tree-shaped sectioned **TRAY** with bamboo board, \$25; Ugly Christmas Sweater **APPETIZER PLATE**, \$45, set of 4; **DESSERT PLATE**, \$40, set of 4; Linen Chest, linenchest.com. **COOKIE CUTTERS**, \$13, set of 6, Home Hardware, homehardware.ca. Christmas ball **PLACE CARD HOLDERS**, \$10 each, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.com. Snowflake shortbread **PAN**, \$40, Lee Valley, leevalley.com. **MUG**, \$20, set of 2, Bouclair, bouclair.com. Marble **SERVING BOARD**, \$32, Zone, zonemaison.com. Leaf **TONGS**, \$29; **CAKE SERVER**, \$44; individual glass **BUTTER DISH**, \$9; VdeV, vdevmaison.com. Santa's Workshop **PLATE**, \$6, HomeSense, homesense.ca. Sectioned stoneware **PLATE**, \$27, Casa Luca, casaluca.com.



high OR low?





One of these very merry rooms will keep your bank account jolly. The other will cost a lot more than five golden rings. Which is which?

PRODUCER JULIE LAPOINTE
PHOTOGRAPHY TANGO



HIGH \$16,670

\$2,272

1 ARTIFICIAL TREE, with lights and ornaments, Veronneau, veronneau.com

\$395

2 Oaxacan VASE, Obakki, obakki.com

\$449

3 Madera CONSOLE TABLE, Urban Barn, urbanbarn.com

\$160

4 CUSHION, EQ3, eq3.com

\$80

5 Shawn THROW, Rose Bonbon, rosebonbon.ca

\$10,100

6 Jenny Anthracite Mary SOFA, Montauk Sofa, montauksofa.com

\$212

7 Fallon LANTERN, Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca

\$130

8 Rattan TREE COLLAR, Veronneau, veronneau.com

\$899

9 COFFEE TABLE, EQ3, eq3.com

\$1,973

10 Hammonton RUG, 5' x 7', Renwil, renwil.com

PAINT, Crisp Romaine 686, Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.ca. On coffee table: large black **HOUSE** (decorated with a wreath), **WHITE AND BLACK TREES**, Rona, rona.ca; small black **HOUSE**, Bouclair, bouclair.com; **GOLD TREE**, Indigo, indigo.ca. On console: **STOCKING**, Rona, rona.ca; **STOCKING HOLDER**, HomeSense, homesense.ca; white **HOLIDAY VILLAGE**, Michaels, michaels.ca; **STRING LIGHTS**, Bouclair, bouclair.com; **STARS**, Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca.



LOW \$3,325

\$1,663

1 ARTIFICIAL TREE, with lights and ornaments, Veronneau, veronneau.com

\$49

2 Lotte VASE, Urban Barn, urbanbarn.com

\$88

3 Safdie & Co. CONSOLE TABLE, Rona, rona.ca

\$15

4 Debbie Travis CUSHION, Giant Tiger, gianttiger.com

\$22

5 Debbie Travis THROW, Giant Tiger, gianttiger.com

\$799

6 Soft SOFA, Structube, structube.com

\$29

7 LANTERN, Giant Tiger, gianttiger.com

\$60

8 Canvas TREE COLLAR, Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca

\$169

9 Frötorp COFFEE TABLE, IKEA, ikea.ca

\$431

10 Jonathan Adler Venom Emerald RUG, 5' x 7', Ruggable, ruggable.com

Tree Trend

We are loving the rise of the sleek tree collar as an alternative to traditional skirts. Like a skirt, a collar hides an unsightly utilitarian tree stand, but it looks more tailored and refined and eliminates the tripping hazard that some skirts create. With so many styles available, it's easy to find a material and colour that enhances your holiday decor.

1 Conway metal and cord **TREE COLLAR**, \$199, CB2, cb2.ca. 2 Bash gold **TREE COLLAR**, \$140, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca. 3 Wood **TREE COLLAR**, \$190, Véronneau, veronneau.com.



Light Fantastic

“Oh, Christmas tree! You are so very hard to light.” Is that how the carol goes? Want to sing a new tune? Lighten your holiday tasks by opting for a pre-lit artificial tree. No more tangled strings of lights – ever! Get right to the fun decorating with balls, garlands and other ornaments. For the sake of the environment, invest in a quality tree that will last for years and can be given to the next gen.

Holiday Living's Hayden artificial **TREE**, 7½', \$579, Rona, rona.ca



A tree bedecked with warm white LED lights (800 of them!) will cast a glow on your holidays.



CUSHY LIFE

'Tis the season to be cozy! Add a layer of plush creature comfort to your sofa or favourite reading chair with a soft faux fur cushion.

⇓ **HIGH**



\$120

Faux fur **CUSHION**, 23" x 23", Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca

\$43

Faux fur **CUSHION**, 20" x 20", Bouclair, bouclair.com



\$32

Everly Quinn faux fur **PILLOW COVER**, 20" x 20", Wayfair, wayfair.ca

\$25

Canvas faux fur **CUSHION**, 18" x 18", Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca



\$17

Stenberg faux fur **CUSHION**, 18" x 18", Jysk, jysk.ca

⇓ **LOW**

Elevate YOUR SPACE

DESIGN SI & OUI
PHOTOGRAPHY VANESSA GALLE

Designer Lindsay Agnew shares how to decorate for the holidays in a style that marries modern and timeless.



“Treat your wrapping paper like a fabric story. Here, the plum, burgundy, pink and red patterned papers were the framework for accessorizing.”



PRODUCED BY SAMANTHA PYNN AND KATHLEEN DORE



CONSOLE, Si & Oui. BUILT-INS, Distinctive By Design. FIREPLACE STONE, Ciot. WINDOWS, Epal North America. DRAPERY, Fine Interiors. SOFA, Decor-Rest. CHAIR, Crate and Barrel. COFFEE TABLES, Sunpan. RUG, Elite. WRAPPING PAPER, The Paper Place. GIFT BOXES and BAGS, Creative Bag.

Clean minimal lines and textures with a timeless quality were the twin asks of the owners of this Toronto living room. Designer Lindsay Agnew of Si & Oui complied with a full rebuild that gave the room modern architectural features and strong focal points. Elements like the new fireplace and custom shelves fulfill the mandate for modern, while pedigree fabrics like raw, unbleached linen at the windows and a wool rug underfoot add a timeless quality. The homeowners were so happy with the new space, they invited Si & Oui back to dress the room for the holidays. Here's how Lindsay imbued the room with holiday style.

FOR SOURCES, SEE OUR WORKBOOK



INSIDER ADVICE

- Garlands, wreaths, tree and tinsel can overwhelm a room. "Our advice is to choose pieces that complement your existing decor," says Lindsay. She repeated the burgundy and plum tones from the sofa cushions throughout the space. "The result is a fresh take on a classic palette."
- Don't overcrowd shelves. Choose large-scale accessories that are big enough to make a statement but subtle in tone so they don't create visual busyness. In this case, one full shelf of accessories was removed to make room for small gifts, pine boughs and a vintage sleigh.
- Make it personal with new ways to display heirlooms and treasured collections. "The [painted] terracotta bowl holds some of this family's most valued ornaments, and the gifts are for their friends and family," says Lindsay.
- During the holidays, as with the rest of the year, layered lighting is essential. Says Lindsay, "The gas fireplace, candles and the twinkle of string lights all add texture and depth to this living room."
- Opt for no-fuss decorations. To make the room feel festive without a large tree, Lindsay arranged a few branches in a modern smoked-glass vase.
- Create big impact with small touches. "We added hints of greenery throughout with branches, spruce boughs, fresh flowers and a tiny live tree, which all come together to pack a big punch," says Lindsay.
- Do it yourself. "We worked with the homeowner to add faux greens and natural pine to the top of wooden wreaths," says Lindsay. "The wreaths are peppered throughout the house for a seasonal accent that is all theirs."



A table set with care and flair will make your holiday meal extra memorable.

PRODUCER ISABELLE FILION | PHOTOGRAPHY BRUNO PETROZZA

Set for the *Holidays*

WOODLAND MAGIC

A painterly woodland scene on the china led the way in creating this magical forest themed table. A garland of gold and green magnolia leaves adorned with gold and frosty blue balls brings texture, while candles add height and mood. A tall pre-lit tree, wall-mounted lit garland, white wreath and holiday cushion make the room festive. Meanwhile, Jack waits patiently for holiday treats.



Tree **PLATES**, \$25, 12-piece set, Walmart, walmart.ca. **NAPKINS**, \$17 each; black **BOWL**, \$21; antique-gold **BOWL**, \$34; Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. Sällskaplig **CHAMPAGNE COUPE**, \$25, set of 4; Tillaggd **FLATWARE**, \$70, 20-piece set; Ombanad **PLACEMATS**, \$10 each, IKEA, ikea.ca. Magnolia **GARLAND**, \$179, West Elm, westelm.ca. White **TREES**, \$20, set of 2; snowflake **CUSHION**, \$37; Michaels, michaels.ca. **CANDLEHOLDERS**, \$7 (small), \$10 (large); **WREATH**, \$40; **CHRISTMAS BALLS**, \$20, set of 9; **THROW**, \$40; **LANTERN**, \$18; pre-lit **GARLAND** (mounted on the wall), \$40; green **CUSHION**, \$50; HomeSense, homesense.ca. **CANDLES**, \$14, set of 2, Amazon, amazon.ca. **TABLECLOTH**, \$50, Simons, simons.ca. Pre-lit **TREE** (on bench), \$149, Botanix, botanix.ca.

RED & GREEN

We'll always love red and green. This year, try updating your table with softer shades of green for an on-trend look. Merry, berry-red accents transform everyday white china for your festive feast. Gold flatware elevates the look and picks up on the burnished gold details of the leafy wreath charger and napkin ring. A berry Christmas ball adds texture, colour and form atop the flat surface.

TABLECLOTH, 52" x 70", \$15, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca. **CHRISTMAS BALL**, \$13, Michaels, michaels.ca. Wreath **CHARGER**, \$34; **NAPKIN RING**, \$42, set of 4; **NAPKIN**, \$57, set of 4; Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. Tillagd **FLATWARE**, \$80, 20-piece set; Upplaga **PLATES**, \$6 (small), \$8 (large); IKEA, ikea.ca. Red **PLATE**, \$13; red **GLASS**, \$20, set of 4; HomeSense, homesense.ca.



SWEETLY CHIC

Your guests will be transported to a winter wonderland when they sit down at this table that's both fashionable and unpretentious. The nostalgic winter cityscape sets the mood, and the flocked pinecone-bedecked garland and fluffy white faux fur on the table brings a magical, yet stylish, snowglobe effect. We admit, it may not be practical to drape a table with white faux fur; instead, if you love the look, add throws or faux sheepskins to your benches or chairs.

Christmas Village **PLATE**, \$5, Walmart, walmart.ca. Sallskaplig **GLASS**, \$25, set of 4; Ajustera stainless-steel **FLATWARE**, \$30, 20-piece set; IKEA, ikea.ca. Cream-coloured **PLATE**, \$17; Flake **ORNAMENT**, \$6; fabric **TREE**, \$40; Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca. Rattan **CHARGER**, \$42, Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. **GARLAND**, \$70, Michaels, michaels.ca. White faux fur **THROW**, \$30, HomeSense, homesense.ca.

SNOW COUNTRY

This table setting would be ideal for a cottage or country-home holiday. Just a few details (flocked pine branches, red berries, a reindeer napkin and a velvet runner) make it festive. The china, placemat and flatware could otherwise be used every day of the year, making this a very fuss-free and economical – but no less celebratory – holiday table.

Velvet **RUNNER**, \$18; reindeer **NAPKIN**, \$8; Simons, simons.ca. Faux flocked **BRANCH**, \$7, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca. White **PLATE**, \$15; grey **PLATES**, \$6 (small), \$13 (large); **COCKTAIL GLASS**, \$15, set of 4; HomeSense, homesense.ca. Tillagd black **FLATWARE**, \$70, 20-piece set, IKEA, ikea.ca.



WHIMSICAL WISHES

The young and young at heart will love this table setting that's guaranteed to bring smiles to all. Cheerful red and white stripes pick up on the red band on the plates, and the flocked wreath adds contrasting texture and an outdoorsy feel (appropriate for the frosty folks adorning the china). This table is set for making happy holiday memories.

Red and white **RUNNER**, \$98; **FLATWARE**, \$71, 5-piece place setting; **PLATES**, \$99 (large, set of 4); \$84 (small, set of 4); wreath **CHARGER**, \$28; blue **NAPKIN**, \$17; green **NAPKIN**, \$17; Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. Glass **TREE**, \$27, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca. **CANDLE**, \$10, IKEA, ikea.ca.

We chose one stylish element and created two different rooms just by switching up the decor. Which do you prefer? Hint: There's no wrong answer. It's your choice!

ROOM RIVALS

PRODUCER ISABELLE FILION
PHOTOGRAPHY TANGO



Merry Mixer

Hello, holiday entertainers! Here's a room for you: the stocked bar cart, dramatic black wall and modern chair mark the space as grownup. Yet details like the star-shaped cushion, a trio of trees, and a gold gnome tending the bar keep it seasonal and not stuffy.

Sunki **LOUNGE CHAIR**, \$699, Mobilia, mobilia.ca. **VASE**, \$20; **THROW**, \$35; **COCKTAIL MIXER**, \$20; **GNOME FIGURE**, \$20; potted **TOPIARY TREE**, \$80; **MIRROR**, \$90; **GARLAND**, \$40; medium **TREE** (far left), \$25; red **GLASS**, \$20, set of 4; red **TREE** (on bar cart), \$10, set of 16; HomeSense, homesense.ca. **CARAFE**, \$15, Zara, zarahome.com. Buffalo plaid **PILLOW COVER**, \$25, set of 2. **RUG**, 5' x 7', \$56, Amazon, amazon.ca. Velvet Star **CUSHION**, \$45; paper **TREE**, \$20; Indigo, indigo.ca. Artificial amaryllis **STEMS**, \$20, Michaels, michaels.ca. Wood **TREE**, \$227, Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. Aromatisk gold **TRAY**, \$25, IKEA, ikea.ca. Canvas Gold **BALL**, \$13 for 25, Canadian Tire, canadiantire.ca. **WALL PAINT**, Onyx 2133-10, Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.ca.



In both rooms:
 Perrier **BAR CART**, \$799, EQ3, eq3.com

Festive Refresh

Red and green is traditional, but we replaced the usual bright kelly green with a saturated yet subdued shade. Ivory-coloured accents and a wreath adorned with red balls pair with the festive decor on the bar cart for a holiday scene that merrily marries old and new.

BENCH, \$350; **RUG**, 4' x 6', \$90; Bouclair, bouclair.com. **CUSHION**, 18" x 18", \$30; **WREATH**, \$100; **THROW**, \$40; **REINDEER**, \$25; green **TREES**, \$25, set of 3; wood **TREE**, \$10; HomeSense, homesense.ca. Berry **BALL**, \$13; faux **CANDY CANES**, \$26, set of 20; Michaels, michaels.ca. Gold **TREE**, \$56; artificial **FLOWERS** (on bench), \$45; Pottery Barn, potterybarn.ca. Red **BOWL**, \$10, set of 3, Walmart, walmart.ca. White **TREE**, \$40, Boutique Kozy, boutiquekozy.ca. Stocking-shaped **CUP**, \$17, Indigo, indigo.ca. **WALL PAINT**, Cushing Green HC-125, Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.ca.

Natural elements and colours inspired by decadent desserts (think: caramel, vanilla and chocolate) set the stage for sweet celebrations in this designer's home.

TEXT CHRISTY WRIGHT | PHOTOGRAPHY MIKE CHAJECKI



SWEET & CHIC

W

hile Michelle Berwick's family celebrates Christmas Eve with savory homemade potato, bacon and blue cheese pizzas, the entire holiday season takes on a more confectionary tone. "My main floor has a creamy dessert colour scheme that inspires my festive decor," says the designer, who shares the home in Sharon, Ont., with husband Gary and daughter Mia (11), son Brody (9) and Boxer puppy Piper. "Sticking to one palette and adding greenery is simple, yet chic and easy," she says. "Layer in some ornaments and that's all you need for festive fun."

TOUCH OF BLUSH

A twinkly chandelier and pair of flocked wreaths tied together with velvet ribbon factor in a holiday warmth that doesn't compete with the renovated exterior. "I wanted to keep the festive decor simple so as not to take away from the new stonework and chunky peaked roof we recently added," Michelle says. The blush pine chair and soft pink door channel the confection vibe. Inside, the staircase is loosened up with faux eucalyptus garlands, caramel-hued ribbons and sparkly lights.

DESIGN, Michelle Berwick Design. **OUTDOOR CHANDELIER,** Wayfair. **PINE CHAIR,** Miller Island. **WREATHS,** MBD Shop. **GARLAND,** Canadian Tire.

CIRCLES & STARS

In the kitchen, Michelle layers in practical embellishments by adorning the island's stools with individual wreaths for an instant festive feel. "They don't interfere with sitting at all, since it's just a thin ribbon between your back and the stool," she says. Star ornaments and more faux garlands bring holiday charm to open cupboard space where even the toaster is styled to be merry and bright. Shelves get the same sprinkling of stars and some simple ornament displays that add a dash of sparkle.

KITCHEN CABINETRY, Hartley Built. **COUNTER STOOLS,** Urban Barn. **PENDANT LIGHTS,** Nuevo. **APPLIANCES,** Caplan's Appliances.







LIGHT SHOW

"The table is set simply and finished with faux greens and cone candles in varying heights and dessert-colour tones," Michelle says. "I love how these sculptural beauties can take your table from frumpy to fabulous instantly." On Christmas Eve, she augments the faux greenery with a bit of the real thing to add some fresh colour and a holiday scent.

FAUX GREENERY, CANDLES, MBD Shop. **PLATES**, CB2.

DINNER PLANS

Michelle custom-designed the dining area's table and banquette, both in creamy shades of latte. The pendant light is adorned with greens and more caramel velvet ribbon. "Ribbon is your best holiday friend," says Michelle. "Tie it on light fixtures, menus, the banister, wherever you like, for instant cheer."

PENDANT LIGHT, Elte Mkt. **DINING CHAIRS**, Nuevo. **ARTWORK**, On the Wall Framing.

THE TREE IS TOPS

"I chose a flocked faux tree that gives the vibe of hiking through a forest on a snowy day," Michelle says. "It's magical." The tree is trimmed with a mix of handmade ornaments and new caramel-coloured ones that Michelle painted with white flecks. "I wanted them to look like the fur on our sweet fawn stuffed toy." She scattered these bulbs on the dining table, too, for neat continuity that feels cozy and warm.

Toy **FAWN**, Mastermind Toys. **ARMCHAIR**, Urban Barn. **TABLE**, Niche Decor.



Hues for the Holidays!

Samantha Pynn shows how to decorate for the most colourful time of the year.



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...or is it? For many of us, the holidays conjure up images of candy canes and Santa. Others prefer a more minimal look. Here, I look at ways to make your holiday decor magical – no matter your style – by focusing on festive palettes.

The New Subtle Palette

A less Christmasy palette that melds with your existing decor is now an established trend. Retailers have responded with holiday decorations in every palette. So, even if your home is creamy-dreamy with top notes of lavender and plum – like this room by designers Erin Feasby and Cindy Bleeks – you can dress it in holiday style without making big changes to your existing decor. Erin and Cindy love the look so much, they have

created ready-made kits that come complete with minimalist ceramic houses, candles and mini trees, so you can be holiday stylish in a snap. If you're into subtle Christmas style, then forget swapping in seasonal pillows and throws or rolling out a new rug. Instead, work with what you have and use your accessories and art as a jumping-off point for holiday accents. Invest in low-key metallic basics, and ornaments or decorations in colours analogous to your home's palette or in similar tones. And bring in branches and simple greenery for next-level holiday style.

DESIGN, Feasby & Bleeks, feasbyandbleeks.com. Mantel in a Box (**PILLAR CANDLES, CANDLEHOLDERS, TREES, HOUSES**), Feasby & Bleeks Home, feasbyandbleekshome.com. **LIGHTING**, Prima Lighting, primalighting.ca. **FURNISHINGS**, Cocoon, cocoonfurnishings.ca. **PILLOWS, DRAPERY**, Blinds, Drapes & Bedding, blindsdrapesbedding.ca.



BIRDS, FAUX BRANCHES, Feasby & Bleeks Home, feasbyandbleekshome.com

Classic Christmas Colours

This look – think pinecones, handmade ornaments, nutcrackers, and classic red, white and green – will always be on trend. You can put a twist on it by incorporating decorations in tones of your home's current palette, but a traditional tree is key. If you're in a small space, opt for a mini tree in a pot or basket; place on a tabletop to make it a focal point. Festoon the mantel and stair railings with pine and eucalyptus swags embellished with ornaments, berries and flowers. Go for abundance: I like big groupings of winter flowers like amaryllis and poinsettia, as well as collections of candles, and bowls of nuts and holiday sweets.



Tree of Treasures Palette

Most of us have ornaments we've inherited or purchased over many years, and for many of us, nostalgia trumps tight palettes! So, I suggest (designer friends, hold on to your Santa hats!) that we forget the two Christmas tree approach (designers often recommend a small "kids" tree and a perfectly decorated large one) and put old, new and kid-crafted decorations on full display. My trick to blending everything harmoniously is to keep the backdrop consistent. Start with a base of all-white lights or multiples of the same ornament, then sprinkle in those perfectly imperfect treasures. The holidays are all about tradition, nostalgia and, let's face it, a little bit of wackiness, so have yourself a happy holiday!



1 Labra **CEILING LIGHT**, \$1,695, Elte, elte.com

2 Wooden bird Christmas tree **CLIP ORNAMENTS**, \$9 each, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca

3 Gold Nutcracker **ORNAMENT**, \$9, Bouclair, bouclair.com

4 Pre-lit LED pine and eucalyptus **WREATH**, 28" d., \$209, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca

5 Gouchee Home's Mejest **CUSHION** in Lilac, \$28, Walmart, walmart.ca

6 Baker 14" x 20" lumbar **PILLOW COVER** in Burlap, \$60, Tonic Living, tonicliving.ca

UNIFY HOLIDAY DECOR

- Group like items together. Try a large bowl of ornaments from the same era or a collection of elves or figurines on the mantel.
- Use ribbon wrapped around your tree, gifts, wreaths and garlands to unify your colour scheme.
- Hang pretty paper snowflakes in windows and on your tree – this is a great project for kids!
- Adorn your windows, doorways and mantel with the same garland greenery.

DOUBLE

the Fun

This Toronto family celebrates both Hanukkah and Christmas with a festive mix of twinkling lights, candles and pretty pastel accents.

TEXT IRIS BENAROIA
PHOTOGRAPHY ASHLEY CAPP



W

hen the Griffith kids – Amelia, 8, and Noah, 12 – go to sleep in December, visions of sugarplums dance in their heads. But not only the Christmas kind. They also dream of *sufganiyot*, those plummy, pillowy doughnuts devoured at Hanukkah. “We celebrate Chrismukkah,” says Tamara Robbins Griffith, partner and principal designer at Kerr + Field Interiors, who grew up ringing in Hanukkah while her husband, Edward Griffith, trimmed a tree. Now their century-old blended-holiday home in Toronto’s Leslieville comes to life with twinkling lights, a pastel palette and natural decor. Here’s how Tamara decked the halls this year for a merry Chrismukkah!

STYLING, ANDREA MCCRINDLE



MERRY MANTEL

Fireplace mantels aren't just for hanging stockings. To get into the festive spirit, designer Tamara Robbins Griffith arranges assorted pastel ornaments along her mantel for a dynamic display. "The baubles are tied together with a ribbon and there are twinkle lights dispersed in between," she says, noting that the vignette is especially pretty at night. A white felt garland reinforces her penchant for using natural materials.

DESIGN, Tamara Robbins Griffith, Kerr + Field Interiors. **ORNAMENTS, VASES, MIRROR**, HomeSense. Brass **CANDLESTICKS**, Oly Studio.

THAT'S A WRAP

Peppy presents act as charming decor on a shelf (because celebrating two holidays means double the gifts!). This setup prevents a tripping hazard under the tree, says Tamara. The packages sport giftwrap and kraft paper and are sealed with velvet ribbon and twine. "I like the high-low mix," says the designer. "And I like to reuse pretty boxes, like the striped chocolate box by Charbonnel et Walker."

Pink and pale turquoise **GIFTWRAP**, HomeSense.

WINDOW DRESSING

"I always put a fresh wreath on the outside front door, but it's kind of nice not having pine needles fall on your sofa," laughs Tamara, hence the felted-wool snowflake wreath pinned up over the window. Framed between striped silk drapery, it hits an elegantly festive note. Says Tamara, "It's nice to have some things you can reuse every year."

WREATH, TABLE LAMP, BLUE CUSHIONS, MONGOLIAN LAMB CUSHION, HomeSense. Custom **YELLOW-AND-WHITE CUSHIONS**, Christopher Farr Cloth. **SOFA**, Barrymore Furniture. **RESIN TRAY**, Studio Sturdy. **RUG**, Elte. **COFFEE TABLE BASE**, Style Garage. Custom **MARBLE TOP** (for coffee table), Marble Trend.





THE SWEET LIFE

"We try to lean into the traditions of each holiday," says Tamara. She gets the kids to help make freshly baked gingerbread for Christmas and sugar cookies shaped like dreidels and Stars of David for Hanukkah. But sometimes during the busy holidays, a plate of pretty store-bought cookies also lands on the table - and there's nothing wrong with that!

COOKIES, Whole Foods Market.

FOR SOURCES, SEE OUR WORKBOOK

GLITTERING SPECTACLE

"I have to let go of my design control and let the kids have fun with it," Tamara says of her approach to dressing the Christmas tree. "They can play around because I've provided things in the palette that I like: aqua, vanilla, pink and gold." For cozy texture, the joyful and casually bedecked tree also features a faux fur skirt at its base. "This tree is a fake one that looks really good, but my husband does like the nostalgia of a fresh tree," says Tamara.

CHRISTMAS TREE, Canadian Tire.
TREE SKIRT, HomeSense.

CELEBRATE LIGHT

Hanukkah is the festival of lights and really gets blazing at Tamara's house. "We have four menorahs. The little one was my late grandfather's menorah - it's over 100 years old," says Tamara. "We light them all." Last year, family and friends of every faith lit the candles and said a blessing. The flickering menorahs strike a meaningful moment on the sideboard, while the large-scale artwork brings subtle beauty.

ARTWORK, HomeSense. **BLACK MENORAH**, West Elm. **SILVER MENORAH** (far right), Crate and Barrel. **BRANCH MENORAH**, Michael Aram.





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Naughty or nice, everyone on your list is easy to shop for thanks to our curated collection of holiday prezzies.

Gift GUIDE



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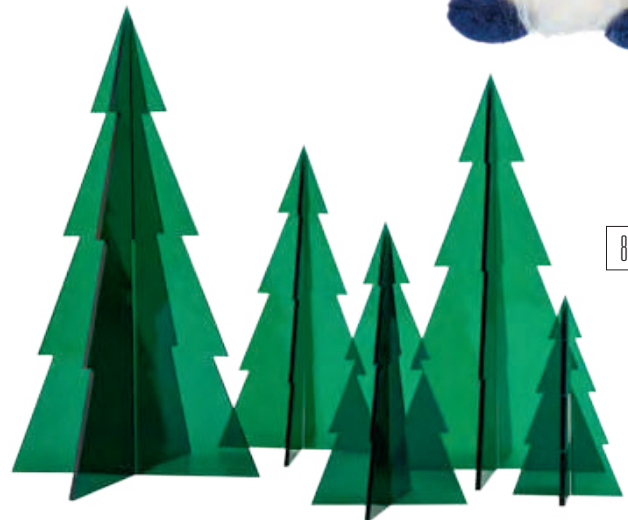
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FESTIVE FINDS

1 MacKenzie-Childs' Dash-Away Donna **REINDEER**, \$230, Amara. 2 Village **ADVENT CALENDAR**, \$80, Indigo. 3 **NAPKINS**, \$5, pack of 20, Bouclair. 4 Glass **ORNAMENT**, \$10, Bouclair. 5 Light-up **GNOME**, \$15, set of 2, Rona. 6 Pranav Tree **CUSHION**, \$40, Bouclair. 7 Ice Skating **PILLOW COVER**, \$49, West Elm. 8 PicaWorks **TREES**, \$68, set of 5, Etsy.

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YOUNG AT HEART

14



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16



9 MrSmith Studio's Osvaldo **CLOCK**, \$187, Calligaris Toronto. 10 Hästhage **BOXES**, \$15, set of 3, IKEA. 11 Progetti's Crooked **WALL CLOCK**, \$850, Bergo Designs. 12 Ridley's Casino Night **GAMES**, \$60, Nüspace. 13 Swell **HOOK**, US\$69, Heller Furniture. 14 Recess **PICKLEBALL PADDLE**, \$86, Anthropologie. 15 Crosley's Cruiser Plus **TURNTABLE**, \$125, Indigo. 16 Jonathan Adler's Gilded I-Scream **VASE**, \$143, Amara.

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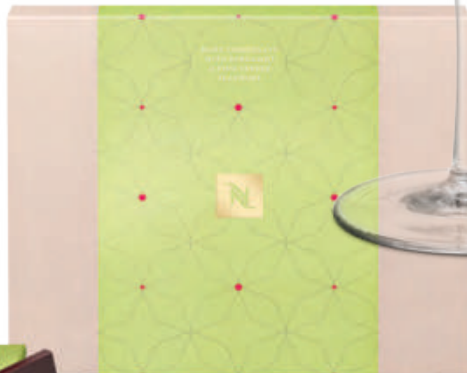
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SAY THANK YOU



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17 Birchwood Orchard **CANDLE**, \$28, Bath & Body Works. 18 Ubaldest Zesté **GIN**, \$47, Ubaldest Distillerie. 19 La Lune de Vénus **BATH BOMB**, \$14, Selv Rituel. 20 **GOURMET SPREADS**, \$40, collection of 6, Allo Simone. 21 Style and Shine **TRAVEL SET**, \$44, Orbe. 22 Tangent's Tulip **LIQUID SOAP**, \$42, Provide. 23 Dark Chocolate with Bergamot & Pink Pepper **BOX OF CHOCOLATES**, \$14; Barista Festive **COCKTAIL GLASS**, \$50, set of 2; Nespresso. 24 Scented **CANDLES**, \$17 each, Dans un Jardin.



FOR THE CHEF

25 Home Cook **APRON**, \$60, Our Place. **26** Serena **FRUIT BOWL**, \$195, Obakki. **27** Mario Luca Giusti **PITCHER**, \$125, Amara. **28** Aromatisk **HAND TOWEL**, \$8, IKEA. **29** Alessi **PEPPER MILL**, \$195, Bergo Designs. **30** Christmas **COCOTTE**, \$475, Le Creuset. **31** OVEN **MITTS**, \$60, set of 2, Our Place. **32** Saikai's Crow **BOTTLE OPENER**, \$65, Provide. **33** Lyngby Rhombe porcelain **TEACUP AND SAUCER**, \$55, Rosendahl Design Group.



34



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36



37

GIVE COMFORT



38



39



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42



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34 Chamarré **THROW**, \$540, Ligne Roset. **35** Konzuk's Orbis concrete **CANDLE**, \$128, Provide. **36** Nordland mohair **THROW**, \$150, Casalife. **37** Bella **PILLOW**, 22" x 22", \$69, Tonic Living. **38** Mulberry silk **PILLOWCASE**, \$130, Dolce Bianca. **39** Taks faux fur **RUG**, 2' x 3', \$40, Jysk. **40** Waffle **TOWELS**, \$39 (hand), \$69 (bath), Parachute. **41** Rainforest Totem Reed **DIFFUSER**, \$278, Amara. **42** Terry **BATHROBE**, \$90, Silk & Snow.

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FOR THE ART LOVER



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43 Draco VASE, \$79, Urban Barn. 44 Alessi's Twergi CENTREPIECE BOWL, \$440, Bergo Designs. 45 Jonathan Adler's Love TRINKET TRAY, \$118, Bergo Designs. 46 Kay Bojesen SONGBIRD, \$165, Rosendahl Design Group. 47 Sam Baron Design's Tubini VASE, \$415, Calligaris Toronto. 48 Sarai WALL ART, by Ksenia Sizaya, \$498, Renwil. 49 Florero VESSEL, \$95, Obakki. 50 T VASE, \$260, Ligne Roset. 51 &Tradition's Flowerpot VP3 TABLE LAMP in Red Brown, \$390, Kelli Shop.

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FOR THE STYLE LOVER



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52 LapaStudios' Paper **LAMP SHADE** (DIY assembly required; materials and pattern supplied), \$15, Etsy. 53 Wood **PLANT HOLDER**, \$18, Simons. 54 Glass **VASE**, \$35, Bouclair. 55 Mercer41's Dunbabin **WALL CLOCK**, \$194, Wayfair. 56 Georg Jensen's Cobra **CANDLESTICKS**, \$299, set of 3, Bergo Designs. 57 **TABLE LAMP**, \$40, Bouclair. 58 Kava **CANDLEHOLDER**, \$75, set of 3 designs, CB2. 59 Elsie **CUSHION**, 20" x 20", \$69, Mobilia.



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PRINT MEMORIES



61



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60 Professional **FRAMED PRINTS** (with wood frame, acrylic glass and cardboard mat), from \$142.39; **61** Personalized **GREETING CARDS**, from \$1.45 for 5" x 7" portrait; **62** **TEDDY BEAR WITH CUSTOM T-SHIRT**, from \$26.99; Blacks, blacks.ca.

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The Season of MAKE-BELIEVE



OUTSIDE & IN

The door is always open at designer Sarah St. Amand's classic 1950s home in Brantford, Ont. At Christmas, guests enter her merry-and-bright abode beneath a garland of fresh greenery.

"It's a classic," says Sarah (shown above). Indoors, the look is traditional, but – secret revealed – that banister garland isn't real. Says Sarah: "My tip? Tie it with wide satin ribbon bows. It drapes so beautifully."

DESIGN, Sarah St. Amand Interior Design. **DOORMAT**, Annie Selke. **ENTRYWAY CARPET**, Bloomsburg Carpet.



Designer Sarah St. Amand isn't shy about combining faux greenery with the real thing to create holiday magic. **TEXT** BETHANY LYTTLE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** TAE PHOTOGRAPHY



GOLDEN LIGHT

"It's like fallen snow inside a winter forest," says Sarah of the living room's flocked artificial Christmas tree. The timeless mantel display features two faux garlands twisted together for a fuller look. Paper accordion trees make for a wintry window-scape. On the coffee table, Sarah filled a glass vase with faux snow, then nestled a battery-operated pillar candle inside for a soft glow. The dining room houses another only-looks-real Christmas tree and a golden bar cart set with snowy forests under cloches.

SECTIONAL, Gresham House. **CHAIRS, RUG**, Sarah St. Amand Interior Design. **COFFEE TABLE**, RH. **DINING TABLE**, RH. **CHANDELIER**, Hudson Valley Lighting Group. **TREE**, Rona. **BAR CART**, HomeSense.



Ask Us

You've got design questions. We've got the answers. Designer and *Style at Home* contributor Karl Lohnes solves your decorating challenges.



Maple **FLOORING** in Montpellier, from \$11 per sq. ft., Dubeau, dubeaufloors.com



BeautiTone **PAINT**, Hope TR24-8-1, Home Hardware, homehardware.ca

BeautiTone **PAINT**, Spirited TR24-9-1, Home Hardware, homehardware.ca

Q1 I live in a split-level house. The stairs, railings, floors, door trims and doors are all yellowed oak, which I no longer like. Sanding and staining all the wood is incredibly costly. I am considering Montpellier coloured wood flooring from Dubeau. Any suggestions for the other wood finishes? *Shiraz K., via email*

S@H Your home has a lot of wood, which is no longer in style, so making a change will update its look and add value. My suggestion is to paint the trims, interior doors and railings – it will be less costly than replacing everything and you won't waste the perfectly good existing elements. The Montpellier flooring from Dubeau has grey undertones but also has a warmth, which is why I suggest going warmer rather than cooler for your paint colours. Try Hope TR24-8-1 from BeautiTone for trims, and their Spirited TR24-9-1 on the walls. Bottom line: Keep it fresh, light and neutral.

Q2 We are planning to renovate our powder room and have purchased a vessel sink. Should the counter height be the same as with an undermount sink? *Cathy, via email*

S@H Sometimes good design is all about the math. Don't panic. I've done it for you.

Most vessel sinks add four to six inches to the height of the vanity. The top of your vessel sink should not exceed 36 inches in height from the floor when installed. So, in this case, the countertop height should not exceed 30 to 32 inches. These measurements are important to preplan, especially if you are incorporating a wall-mounted faucet, as plumbing will go in before the vanity is installed.

Sarah Floor Mount 36-inch **VANITY**, \$3,230, Virta, virta.ca





Q3 I have an alcove/nook at the back of my small living room that I would like to decorate and better connect it to the room, rather than have it sectioned off by itself. Any ideas? *Sandy R., via email*

via email

S@H Incorporating a small open space into a larger one takes a little bit of design trickery. This is especially true in smaller spaces or in condos that might have a tiny, open “bonus den.” These tips will help you to incorporate and blend the two spaces together.

1/ Paint both spaces the same colour (painting them different colours will only serve to visually separate the spaces).

2/ Choose size-appropriate furnishings for the alcove. Perhaps it's only a reading chair and lamp or a desk or games table. The alcove furnishings shouldn't crowd the space, and they should mimic the furniture style chosen for the living area.

3/ Use mirrors to visually lead you from one space to another. Forge a connection by hanging a large mirror (or a group of mirrors) on the alcove wall to reflect both the decor and the elements of the larger space.

4/ Ensure flooring, such as hardwood or wall-to-wall carpeting, runs from one space to the other. I like to leave smaller spaces free of area rugs to create less visual clutter.

Q4 I moved into a condo with nine-foot ceilings and would like to purchase an artificial tree with lights. How tall should it be and how many lights should it have? *Angie, Calgary, via email*

S@H If you love the look of a big, grand tree, then choose one that matches your ceiling height. But do note, most trees aren't exactly the height the box specifies. In your case, if a nine-foot tree seems daunting, opt for a 7½-foot tree, which is just over two-thirds the height of your room. It will be big enough so it doesn't look small in the room, but it will also leave breathing room between the treetop and the ceiling and allow space for a tree topper. As for lights and decorations, consider the math. Generally, it's 100 lights per vertical foot of the tree. For ornaments, it's a minimum of 20 per vertical foot. Follow my rule of putting the largest ornaments on the bottom and the smallest on top, which will create good scale and proportion. These ratios apply to trees where the entire circumference of the tree will be decorated. If the tree is in a corner, for instance, you can assume you will decorate only three-quarters of the tree, so adjust the numbers accordingly. And don't forget the bottom of the tree! Artificial trees tend to have ugly metal bases. Make sure to cover that with a tree skirt, faux fur throw, large basket or decorative tree collar.



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DECEMBER 2023



STOPPING BY THE WOODS

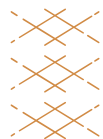
A country as big as Canada means we have wildly different weather during the holidays. Freshly fallen snow isn't a given everywhere, yet amid the hustle and bustle of the season, snow or no snow, nature offers us free gifts if we slow down enough to see them. Conservation areas, city parks and country getaways offer respite from the festive frenzy. So take a break, bundle up, and press pause on the hectic to bring a little more joy to your world.



HOLIDAY DECOR, STYLING, Sarah Walker, The Curated House. Custom **COUNTER-TOPS** and **FURNITURE**, Penner Brothers. **BARN DOORS**, Home Depot. **STOOLS**, Structure. Footed **BOWLS**, **CANDLESTICKS**, **STEMWARE**, Crate and Barrel. **BASKETS**, IKEA. **CANDLES**, Honey Candles. **CONSTRUCTION**, (cottage and other buildings), Denco Sheds; Tailored Carpentry Solutions.

MUSKOKA MAGIC

TEXT CHRISTY WRIGHT
PHOTOGRAPHY PATRICK BILLER



Candlelight, all-day fires and fragrant greenery are just some of the ways this new-build channels all-is-calm holiday warmth.

Karyn Gordon balances many professional roles: CEO, leadership and relationship expert, author, public speaker, TV personality. But at the Muskoka, Ont., home she shares with husband Brent Penner and their 16-year-old twins, Baron and Chase, her favourite roles are hot chocolate maker and board game player. “Our place is so magical in the winter,” says Karyn, who designed the 2,400-square-foot abode, while Brent, Baron and Chase pitched in by building its custom furniture.

When it came to layering in holiday cheer, Karyn called her designer friend Sarah Walker. “The Muskoka setting had everything to do with the styling direction,” Sarah says. “I wanted to bring the outdoors in and honour the beauty of nature that surrounds the property.” Her use of beeswax candles, organic textures and evergreens gets the look and promotes unwinding. Cue the softly falling snow and bring on the steaming hot chocolate!

Natural Bounty

On the kitchen island, designer Sarah Walker used a mix of materials for the serving pieces. “I included marble, ceramic and wood accessories, along with organic shapes and textures that play perfectly with evergreen boughs cut from the property,” she says. “I wanted the ritual of lighting the beeswax candles to speak to the awe-inspiring simplicity of the setting.” The custom countertop is rough-cut, extra-thick lumber sourced and jointed together by Brent Penner. Wicker baskets add warmth to the black-and-white scheme.







Tall Order

The living area boasts 24-foot-high ceilings yet doubles down on cozy vibes thanks to soft furnishings, a wood stove, and showstopper wood storage and display. “When I was designing the space, I told my husband I wanted the logs to go right to the ceiling,” Karyn says. “He thought I was kidding! It’s the wow-factor element everyone talks about when they first walk in - it’s beautiful and functional.” The wood, sourced from old trees from the nine-acre property, serves as display (in the upper cubbies) and as fuel storage (in the lower cubbies), and has an organic presence amid the orderly lines of the shiplap-clad walls. Its natural textures are picked up in the jute rug. Pendant lights offer drama, but their open design keeps them from dominating.



Green Energy

Wreaths from a local nursery embellish the wood storage and are complemented by garlands the family made from cuttings from the property. Two unadorned trees feel fresh. “They were also foraged from the property,” says Sarah. “I told Karyn I wanted a ‘Charlie Brown goes to Norway’ vibe, and Brent found the perfect pair of trees to fill the space under the stairs. They create a delightful Christmas moment, last well beyond the holidays, and their fragrance is intoxicating!” Comfy sofas flank the coffee table, which Karyn designed. Says Karyn: “It’s solid wood bolted together and supported by funky pipe fittings. My husband and our boys, the Penner Brothers, made it.”

SOFAS, CUSHIONS, RUG, IKEA. COFFEE TABLE, Penner Brothers. **PENDANT LIGHTS,** Wayfair. **WREATHS,** Port Carling Garden Centre. **WHITE VASE,** Crate and Barrel. **ALABASTER VOTIVE CANDLE,** House of Royals.



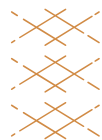
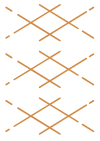


Table Talk

The dining area is anchored by a solid wood table that Brent and the twins made. It seats 12 and Karyn contrasted it with white metal chairs. She says, "I love the combination of wood and metal on top of the natural jute rug, and the chairs are stackable and easy to clean." Sarah layered in a tactile linen runner as a soft contrast to the hard materials and dotted it with bowls of greenery and more beeswax candles for a festive, modern farmhouse feel.

PENDANT LIGHTS, Wayfair. **CHAIRS**, Structube. **RUG**, IKEA. **DISHES, CUTLERY, STEAMWARE, RUNNER**, Crate and Barrel. **CANDLES**, Honey Candles.





Pared Down & Peaceful

In the primary bedroom, Karyn designed a built-in bed using shiplap for continuity and simplicity. “I love simple, modern farmhouse style with a little flair,” she says. A single bulb suspended from the ceiling channels the pared-back look, while the pendant light adds some oomph. A stool, like the ones at the kitchen island, acts as a bedside table, and a wicker chair packs a warm punch in the pale colour scheme. Sarah added in soft wool throws and a vase that holds a single green bow for a sprinkle of seasonal cheer.

CURTAINS (in bedroom and bathroom), **HANGING LIGHT, CHAIR, IKEA. STOOL, Structube. THROW, Alpaka. BEDDING, Linen Reform.**



Soak in the Beauty

“I love this tub – it’s so romantic and I can look out at the trees and the lake while I soak,” says Karyn. The wooden bath tray is recycled wood from the property dressed up with a sweet little vase and green bough. The rough-hewn stool fits in perfectly with the aesthetic and has special meaning. “My dad found some old, recycled telephone poles that we cut and painted to use as stools and end tables inside and out.”

PENDANT LIGHT, Wayfair. TOWEL, Linen Reform. VASE, Crate and Barrel. Blackberry BRANCHES, Fiori Floral Design. TOILETRIES, Sangre de Fruta. VOTIVE, House of Royals.

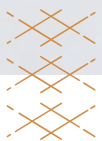




Winter Wonderland

A charming shed provides closed storage for tools and expansive open storage for easily accessible firewood. “We love having outdoor fires with s’mores and hot chocolate throughout the year,” says Karyn (shown here). The orderly abundance of logs references the display in the living room and offers a warm focal point in the snowy landscape. “We spend most winter afternoons outdoors, either snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or ice skating, so it’s magical to come back to a fire in the snow.”

CONSTRUCTION, Denco Sheds; Tailored Carpentry Solutions.



Family Style

Baron, Karyn, Brent and Chase (left to right) in front of their newly built home. “When we bought the nine-acre waterfront property, it had a little log cabin on it,” Karyn says. “We loved it but needed more space for our growing family, so we took it down and donated it to Muskoka Woods camp before building our dream home.” The new abode can accommodate up to 14 people. “We’ve named it Shiloh, which means ‘sanctuary’ and ‘a place of peace.’”





Gather Round

Brent built a stone surround for the firepit from flagstones found on the property, and Karyn encircled the welcoming feature with colourful Muskoka chairs. “Red is our ‘wow’ colour and we sprinkled it throughout the property,” she says. Red plaid blankets are cozy complements, while string lights and an outdoor bar feel festive (the tray on top of the bar is antique and used for gathering apples). A covered porch stores toboggans and snowshoes and offers a dry place to sit on snowy days. “It’s so relaxing sitting here because we enjoy such privacy on our property.”

BAR CART, HomeSense. **FIREPIT**, Home Depot. **BLANKETS**, HillTop Interiors.

With its serene white envelope threaded through with chestnut browns and tawny neutrals, Julie Gagné and Kevin Hill's living room epitomizes the modern farmhouse look they love. Designer Manon Thibault, who refreshed the home, was invited back to decorate it for the holidays. Twinkly lights, fragrant evergreen boughs and a tightly edited collection of baubles help ring in the season stylishly.

DESIGN, Manon Thibault Design.
SOFA, Ethan Allen. **ARMCHAIR**,
COFFEE TABLE, Pottery Barn.
CHRISTMAS GREENERY,
 Les Belles-Soeurs.



Make the Season Bright

TEXT KATIE HAYDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY DREW HADLEY
STYLING JULIE DESLAURIERS

A busy family settles in for a lighter, brighter holiday in their freshly updated home in Quebec's Eastern Townships.



To underpin the new, restrained aesthetic, the 3,500-square-foot home's main level was refloored in wide-plank oak, and its walls were washed in a snowy white hue. The oak floors blend well with the existing hardwood on the stairs. For the holidays, Manon dug into Julie's big collection of Christmas decorations, pulling out just the subtlest white, wooden and glass baubles, including this pretty flocked tree, to create an enchanting winter wonderland look.

Round **TABLE**, Pottery Barn.
PAINT, Chantilly Lace OC-65, Benjamin Moore.

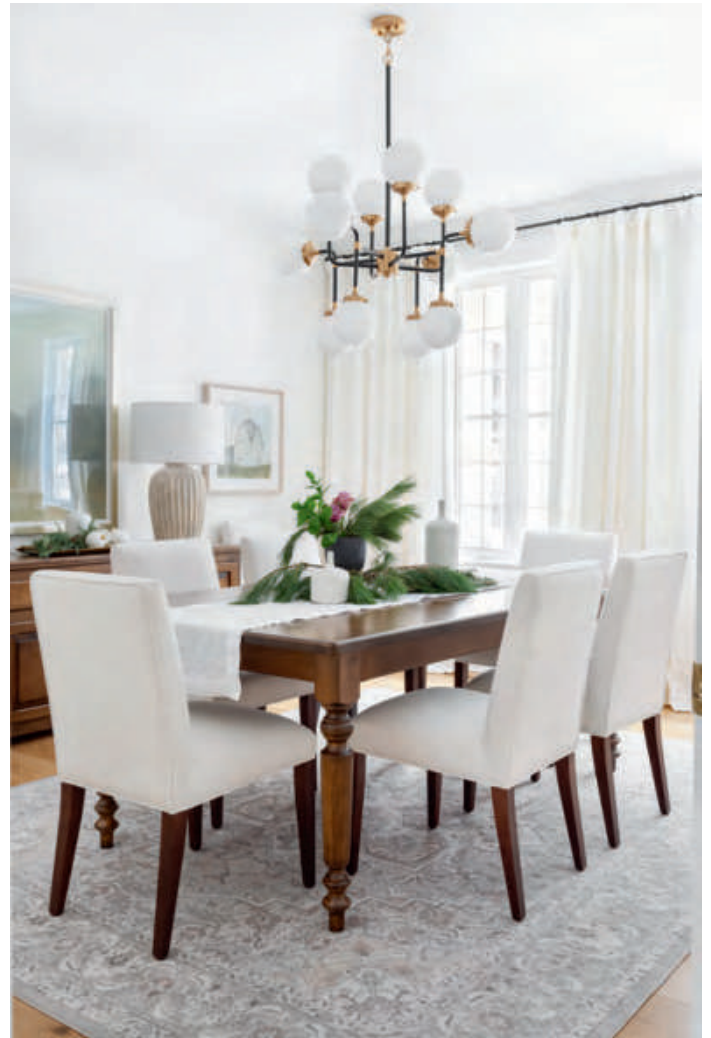


In 2001, Julie Gagné and Kevin Hill built their dream home in Hemmingford, Que. The home was colourful and busy – tailor-made for life with two young daughters. In 2018, they hired designer Manon Thibault to update the girls' bedrooms, then called on her again in 2020 to open up the kitchen to the living room. "The house is filled with family on weekends, and Julie needed a space big enough for everyone to gather," Manon says. The plan to remove one wall snowballed, and soon Manon was redoing the entire main level to accommodate the family's active social life. But the new aesthetic Julie now wanted was just the opposite of busy: she loves the serene modern farmhouse look. Manon delivered with airy white spaces layered with down-to-earth pieces in sturdy cotton, natural wood and rustic wicker. It's the perfect backdrop for a quiet life *à deux* when the girls are away at school. But it's most enchanting at Christmas, when it's dressed in ethereal white decorations, set aglow with twinkly lights, and brimming with friends and family all gathered together in the welcoming new heart of the home.



ABOVE & BELOW When the bay window in the kitchen didn't work for a banquette, Manon turned it into a sweet reading nook with two armchairs and a tray table. "It's our favourite new detail," says Julie. "We sit here all the time. It's a little gathering place." Black accents, like the vase and chair legs, give the mostly white space some needed contrast and edge.

CHAIRS, Boutique Cassine. **TABLE**, Wayfair.



ABOVE The dining room is reserved for formal events like Christmas and Easter dinners. Kevin and Julie, who run a transport company, had already invested in quality pieces here, so Manon simply tweaked the look to bring it up to date. She added an edgy light fixture, removed the top half of the hutch for an airier feel, and paired the dark traditional table with contemporary chairs clad in white to lighten the look. The elegant rug is actually machine washable.

CHAIRS, JC Perreault. **CHANDELIER**, Déco Luminaire. **ART**, Boutique Cassine.



“It’s a modern farmhouse style, simple and friendly, with airy spaces and lots of white to let light travel.” – Manon Thibault

BELOW The place settings suit the breakfast area to a T. The inky plates riff on the sideboard colour, and the little pine, dried orange and cinnamon stick posies are sweet and rustic. The nubby woven sea-grass placemats echo the wicker and wood elements in other parts of the house and help to temper finer pieces like the white table linens, delicate wineglasses and gold cutlery that might read as formal in another space.

RIGHT Beyond its serving and display capabilities, the stately custom sideboard in the breakfast area provides masses of space for Julie to store tablewares and seasonal decorations. “She’s so organized!” Manon says. “She has drawers for everything – all her linens, placemats, cutlery, vases. I don’t know how many candles there are in those drawers!” One tall section houses the broom closet, and the other hides away the water cooler and bottle (brilliant!).

SIDEBOARD, Ébénisterie AGR. **SIDEBOARD PAINT**, Cheating Heart 1617, Benjamin Moore.



BELOW Kevin and Julie's main ask for the renovation was opening up the kitchen to the living room. Where the wall was taken out, decorative oak beams were installed to visually delineate the rooms. The opened-up space means that the breakfast table, which was custom-made by a local artisan, can be extended (into the living room area, if needed) to seat up to 12 guests.

TABLE, Une Touche de Bois. **CHAIRS**, Woodstock & Cie. **CHANDELIER**, Déco Luminaire.

RIGHT The kitchen is the heart of the home and it's where the family gathers when daughters Lauren and Avery are home from school on weekends and holidays. Both the pale wood trestle table and the white-painted Windsor chairs help establish the new modern farmhouse aesthetic. For Christmas, the sideboard and shelves were layered with fragrant fresh greenery, candles and huge bouquets of dried hydrangeas from Manon's garden.

WALL PAINT, Chantilly Lace OC-65, Benjamin Moore.





LEFT With the cabinetry, counters and backsplash being so understated, even small decorative details have impact. Simple oak trim and brackets on the range hood play up the farmhouse look and echo the beams in the adjacent breakfast area. At Christmas, holiday magic comes by way of vases full of fresh pine and cedar. Manon even trimmed the pendant lights (below) with fragrant nosegays.

PENDANT LIGHTS, Déco Luminaire.

“Unlike older country decor, where the tones were darker, the modern farmhouse look suggests a more refined, bright and peaceful atmosphere.” – Manon Thibault



The original kitchen was well designed, so Manon was mainly tasked with updating aesthetics here. Dated cabinets were replaced with new ones with Shaker-style lacquered-MDF doors. Functionally, the big goal was upsizing the island. "The previous one didn't have space for stools, and Julie wanted her girls and guests to be able to gather around," Manon says. Luckily, there was space for a larger island and four wide wooden stools.

STOOLS, Overstock. **CABINETRY PAINT**, Simply White OC-117, Benjamin Moore.





ABOVE Manon went suitably low-key with the holiday decorations so they would align with the restrained decor. On the coffee table, simple candles in frosted-glass containers and bowls full of chunky pinecones herald the holidays. In the living room, she transformed an old hutch of Julie and Kevin's into the entertainment centre (below right) by removing the upper half and refinishing the base with ivory paint.

COFFEE TABLE, Pottery Barn.

BELOW All-white rooms fall flat without a few black elements to play up contrast. Here, Manon also balanced the understated palette with loads of textural woven pieces in colours reminiscent of toasted marshmallows. These accents – from wicker and water hyacinth baskets (below right) to rattan trays (above) to jute and sisal rugs (opposite page) – dovetail with the home's new pale wood elements. As a bonus, they also warm up the tranquil spaces immensely.



ABOVE Manon transformed Julie's flocked faux Christmas tree by swapping out the usual red and green balls for huge pinecones, garlands of wooden beads, and glass balls filled with a variety of dried flowers. "These are so beautiful," Manon says. "They're all handmade by a local flower farm, Les Belles-Soeurs, here in the Eastern Townships. When you get up close to the tree, you see that every ornament is different. Julie loves flowers, and she adores those little details."

ORNAMENTS, Les Belles-Soeurs.

“Manon helped me understand that less is more. The ornaments are now more natural. And with a winter theme with lots of fir trees, I can leave a large part of the decorations in place until March.” – Julie Gagné



The old fireplace felt thoroughly dated. “It just had gyprock [drywall] around it, with mouldings and a lot of brass – very ‘90s,” Manon says. To bring it into the 21st century, she installed a more streamlined and efficient gas insert, a simple mantel and an element requested by Julie – a painted-brick chimney breast that drives home the farmhouse vibe. Manon found the little lighted tree that’s beside the fireplace in Julie’s amazing collection of Christmas decorations. The California shutters, here and throughout, are original to the house, which Julie and Kevin built in 2001. **POUF**, Article. **RUG**, Wayfair.



ABOVE Daughter Lauren's chic, cozy bedroom was transformed during the first phase of the 2018 redesign. Then 17, Lauren was ready for a more sophisticated look, so Manon brought in fashion-forward Midcentury Modern-style wood pieces, and softened the look with pillowy bedding and a plush rug inspired by Andalusian tilework in Spain. Judicious brass accents throughout dress things up. Time flies, but the look has endured: Lauren and Avery (now 22 and 24) go to university in Montreal, but come home most weekends and holidays to cozy comfort in the country.

BED, BEDDING, NIGHTSTAND, RUG, LAMP, West Elm.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM & TOP RIGHT Using a dresser as a side table is always a smart storage idea. In Lauren's bedroom, Manon gave this one more presence by topping it with an abstract artwork that injects a splash of colour. Painting the drawer fronts white makes the piece feel lighter, and this dark-light contrast is echoed in the shelving at the foot of the bed (opposite, top right), where some cubbies are filled with woven storage baskets.

TABLE LAMP, West Elm.

BELOW The bay window is the focal point of the guest room, and Manon nestled the bed into the bay to play up this feature. "You don't necessarily need a high headboard like this, but you do need a nice window treatment," she explains. "In fact, the window treatment can be your headboard." Textural accents like the wicker chest and jute rug liven up the palette, and simple greenery carries the Christmas spirit upstairs.

BED, NIGHTSTAND, Pottery Barn Kids. **BEDDING,** Zara Home. **TABLE LAMP, MIRROR,** Wayfair. **FLOOR LAMP, CHEST,** Winners.



“Bay windows are tricky for window treatments because it can be quite expensive. But they’re worth it because this is a focal point. This is where you need to invest money.” – Manon Thibault

“I wanted the vanity to look like a piece of furniture, but provide practical storage, too.” – Manon Thibault



LEFT While it's a departure from the white walls in the adjacent rooms, the olive branch wallpaper in the main-floor powder room still reiterates Manon's organic, natural design theme. (It's a peel-and-stick paper by Magnolia Home.) Manon worried that too much pattern might overwhelm here, so she chose a paper with a delicate motif and installed wainscoting below to temper its effect. The vanity's oak base riffs on the new oak flooring and the wood beams in the adjoining rooms, and grey subway tile looks fresh set in a herringbone pattern. Blooms nestled in pine clippings add a shot of seasonal colour.

WALLPAPER, C&M Textiles. **VANITY, COUNTER**, Ébénisterie AGR. **MIRROR, FAUCET**, Wayfair. **SCONCES**, Déco Luminaire.

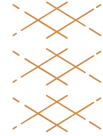
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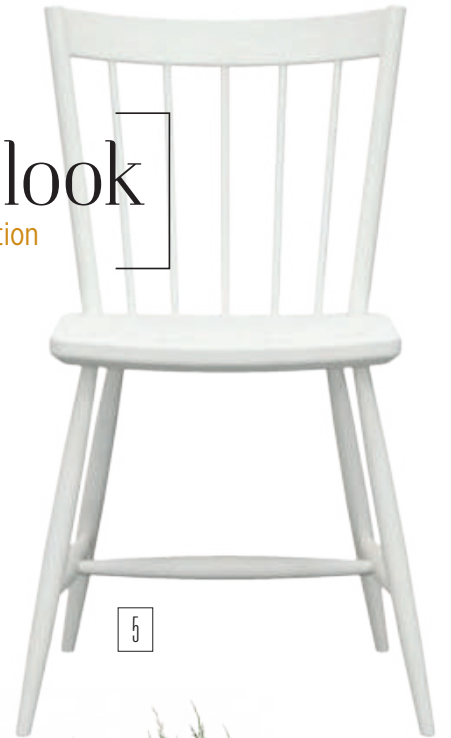
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get the look
decor inspiration



5



3



4



6



8



7

1 RUG, 7' x 10', \$299, Zara Home, zarahome.com. 2 Langley Street's Lehn VASE, \$129, Wayfair, wayfair.ca. 3 Dunrobin CUSHION, \$69, Tonic Living, tonicliving.com. 4 Matteo Lighting's Particles PENDANT LIGHT, \$916, Déco Luminaire, decoluminaire.ca. 5 Cherrywood CHAIR, \$440, Woodstock & Cie, woodstockcie.com. 6 BASKETS, \$55 (large), \$35 (small), H&M Home, hm.com. 7 Red Barrel Studio's Adariaha SOFA, \$3,400, Wayfair, wayfair.ca. 8 Cypress WREATH, \$199, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca.

Simply Seasonal



Designer Stephanie Brown's take on holiday decorating? Keep it simple and keep it local.

TEXT BETHANY LYTTLE
PHOTOGRAPHY TRACEY AYTON



W

hen the owners of this Vancouver residence asked designer Stephanie Brown to dress their home for the holidays, her immediate answer was yes! "I'd designed the home, so I was already familiar with their sensibilities, style, and the fact that their blended family has six adult kids who visit often!" says Stephanie. "I wanted to give the rooms a holiday look that would support the style of the home, which is fresh and pure." For this, she relied on Neve Floral, who sourced holly, ferns, cedars and spruce from Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. "Classic greenery exudes winter and says Christmas without being literal about it. And since the holiday mood is everywhere this time of year, even simple additions are enough," says Stephanie. "A mere branch here and a bobble there are all it takes to instantly set the look of your home apart and announce that this is truly the most joyous of the seasons."

THESE PAGES Sheepskin-clad chairs and a firepit invite lingering. Indoors, designer Stephanie Brown bears gifts as she passes a vintage mirror adorned with a simple spruce bough. Twin wreaths on the front doors and casual holly branches are all it takes to declare that the holidays are here.

DESIGN, HOLIDAY DECOR, Stephanie Brown Inc. **CHAIRS,** Provide. **FIREPIT,** Home Depot. **MIRROR,** Gild & Co. **WREATHS, ARRANGEMENTS,** Neve Floral. **OUTDOOR LANTERN,** Visual Comfort.

BELOW “Long before the house had been renovated, the homeowner started dreaming of a natural cedar garland sweeping its way down the front banister, so that was a must!” says Stephanie. “The big basket at the bottom of the stairs and the bench with its sheepskin aren’t Christmasy, but we added them for warmth and coziness.”

BENCH, CB2. **BASKET**, Provide. **GARLAND**, Neve Floral.



ABOVE An asymmetrical garland, made with local spruce, spans the modern black granite mantel. “Since the homeowners love candles, we added that towering trio of hammered brass candlesticks,” says Stephanie. A bountiful display of cedar, spruce and grasses beautifies and scents the living room. The room’s grand-scale oak coffee table cozies up to a wine-coloured ottoman.

GARLAND, ARRANGEMENT, Neve Floral. **COFFEE TABLE**, Lock and Mortice. **VASE**, Provide. **CANDLESTICKS**, The Cross Decor & Design. **GLASS ORNAMENT**, Good Beast. Cole Morgan **ARTWORK** (over fireplace), Gallery Jones. **PICTURE LIGHT**, RH.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM “One big tree in the corner would have worked, but we thought, hey, with branches this light and airy, we can fit two!” says Stephanie. “Details like the burgundy velvet throw pillows add to the home’s wine-coloured holiday colour scheme and complement the burgundy, rose and teal tones in the year-round rug.”

SOFA, King Living. **THROW PILLOWS**, Stephanie Brown Inc. **RUG**, Jan Kath.

RIGHT & FAR RIGHT “We pretied up the trees with sparsely placed ornaments in black, champagne and white. “We carried that same palette through to the gift wrapping, using natural and black kraft papers tied with velvet ribbons in both burgundy and champagne,” says Stephanie.



“Nobody was going to sell trees this wispy and Charlie Brown! So, I begged my brother, who owns land, to spare a few spindly trees for us!”



“To bring a natural touch for the holidays, we ran a meandering spruce garland down the table’s full length, then added a row of one-of-a-kind candles.”





LEFT “The homeowners wanted a table that would seat all six of their grown children, along with their partners and friends. And they wanted supercomfortable chairs so everyone could sit and talk for hours,” says Stephanie. The seatings’ deep wine-coloured leather relates to the bold look of the show-stopper chandelier.

DINING TABLE, Lock and Mortice. Custom **CEILING LIGHT**, Roll & Hill. **DINING CHAIRS**, Inform. **ARTWORK**, Zoe Pawlak. **GARLAND**, Neve Floral.

ABOVE & RIGHT “The ridged glassware is dressy yet casual and we paired it with hand-made ceramic dishware so that the feeling at the table would be elevated but relaxed,” says the designer. “To bring a little holiday bling, we used gold flatware, which also echoes the gold accents throughout.”

GLASSWARE, FLATWARE, The Cross Decor & Design. **NAPKINS**, Provide. **DISHWARE**, Janaki Larsen. Grove **CANDLESTICKS**, Barter Design. Spruce **GARLAND** (on table), Neve Floral.



“When holiday decorating in the kitchen, don’t disrupt the room’s functionality. A grand swag of cedar garland is a way to dress the windows, but leave the counters clear.”



ABOVE & LEFT “Fresh holiday greenery looks lovely anywhere, but in a bright white kitchen like this, it really elevates the look,” says Stephanie. “And a big vase of greens can easily be moved aside for meal prep or when family and friends are gathered around.”

WINDOW GARLAND, FLORAL ARRANGEMENT, ALL GREENERY, Neve Floral. **PENDANT LIGHTS,** Visual Comfort. **SCONCES,** Hudson Valley Lighting Group.

THESE PAGES “Who doesn’t love a cranberry cocktail at Christmas?” says Stephanie, who laughs as she admits that the ruby red drinks and fresh sprigs of rosemary were intentionally selected to fit in with the greenery-and-burgundy holiday decor. Fancy glassware adds a little sparkle.

GLASSWARE, PITCHER, The Cross Decor & Design. **VASE,** Provide.





LEFT “We wanted to bring some warmth into the all-white bathroom, so we went with oak for the extra-long vanity,” says Stephanie. She also opted for unlacquered brass for the vanity hardware and plumbing fixtures. “Over time, it will develop a rich patina,” says Stephanie.

Custom **VANITY DESIGN**, Stephanie Brown Inc. **HARDWARE**, Rejuvenation. **PLUMBING FIXTURES**, Waterworks. **FLORAL ARRANGEMENT, HOLLY**, Neve Floral. **VASE**, Provide. **WALL SCONCES**, Visual Comfort.

OPPOSITE Stephanie updated the timeless look of marble floors with modern wainscoting. “The tiles are wavy and dimensional with a glaze that shimmers in the sunlight,” says Stephanie. To keep things crisp, a marble rail graces the wainscoting, then traces the outline of the oak door. All December long, a simple display of willow branches and holly tops the stool by the soaker tub.

TUB, Victoria & Albert. **STOOL**, Barter Design. **FLOOR TILE**, Ann Sacks. **WALL TILE**, Centura. Curly willow and holly **FLORAL ARRANGEMENT**, Neve Floral.

RIGHT “I love the layers of white, punctuated by the black and gold accents,” says Stephanie of the primary bedroom. A white rug, white grasscloth wallpaper and light-toned furniture keep the small room feeling spacious. “Styling bedrooms for the holidays can either be forgotten or overdone, so we take a subtle approach,” says Stephanie. Checked pillowcases, a cozy throw and greenery are all that’s needed.

BED, Lawson-Fenning. **CHAIR**, Once a Tree Furniture. **LAMPS**, Inform Interiors. **NIGHT TABLES**, Faithful Roots. Custom **CUSHIONS**, Stephanie Brown Inc.



“When making bouquets, don’t forget to save a few sprigs to create a seasonal moment on your vanity or by the tub.”



Festive Favourites

RECIPES & PHOTOGRAPHY KARLYNN JOHNSTON



NUTTY CARAMEL POPCORN

A Very Prairie Christmas Bakebook is bursting with old-fashioned recipes for a sweetly nostalgic holiday. Author Karlynn Johnston presents traditional favourites, family recipes and Ukrainian specialties sure to become your holiday traditions of tomorrow. This collection from her new book is a sweet way to start your festive baking season.

NUTTY CARAMEL POPCORN

MAKES 16 CUPS

- 12 cups popped popcorn, unpopped kernels removed
- 2 cups toasted whole almonds
- 2 cups toasted pecans, halved
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 cup salted butter
- ½ cup dark corn syrup
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 250°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet (also known as a jelly roll pan) with parchment paper.

Place the popcorn, almonds and pecans in an exceptionally large heatproof bowl.

In a medium saucepan, bring the brown sugar, butter and corn syrup to a rolling boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to the soft-crack stage (270°F to 290°F on an instant-read thermometer) without stirring.

Remove from the heat and stir in the baking soda and vanilla.

Pour the caramel mixture over the popcorn and nuts, and stir until completely coated.

Scoop out onto the baking sheet, arranging in an even layer.

Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Let cool completely, then break apart into your desired size of clusters.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.



CANDY CANE BLONDIES

CANDY CANE BLONDIES

MAKES 2 DOZEN BARS

- 2¼ cups flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¾ cup butter
- 1½ cups firmly packed brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp mint extract
- ¾ cup finely chopped peppermint-flavoured candy canes
- ½ cup chopped white chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 13-x-9-inch baking pan.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In a stand mixer with the paddle attachment or in a large bowl using a handheld mixer, beat

the butter and brown sugar on medium speed until creamy and light in colour. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix in the vanilla and mint extract until combined.

With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the flour mixture, mixing until fully incorporated. Using a wooden spoon, stir in the candy canes and chocolate chips until evenly distributed.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and, with buttered hands, pat into an even layer.

Bake until golden brown on top and a tester inserted in the centre comes out nearly clean, 25 to 30 minutes. (You want to slightly under-bake these or they will dry out; they are easily overbaked.) Let cool completely in the pan, then slice into 24 bars.

Store in an airtight container in layers, with parchment or waxed paper between each layer, in the fridge for up to 5 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

ENGLISH TOFFEE

MAKES 40-45 PIECES

- 2⅔ cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups salted butter
- ½ cup water
- 2 tbsp light corn syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 cups milk chocolate chips
- 2 cups toasted chopped or slivered almonds

Line a 20-x-14-inch rimmed baking sheet, or 2 smaller rimmed baking sheets, with parchment paper.

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, water and corn syrup. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, to the hard-crack stage (295°F to 300°F on an instant-read thermometer).

Remove from the heat and quickly stir in the vanilla.

Spread the mixture on the prepared baking sheet(s) in an even layer of about ¼-inch thickness. While the toffee is still hot, sprinkle the chocolate chips ovetop in an even layer. Once the chips have melted (they turn shiny when ready), use a spatula to spread out the chocolate evenly.

Sprinkle with the almonds and press lightly into an even layer on the chocolate to ensure they stick. Refrigerate until set, about 20 to 25 minutes.

Using your hands, break the toffee into pieces.

Store in an airtight container in layers, with parchment or waxed paper between each layer, at room temperature for up to 5 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

MAKES 15 PIECES

- ½ cup whipping cream or heavy cream
 - 8 oz semisweet baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
 - 1 tsp extract of choice (such as mint, vanilla or orange)
- Unsweetened cocoa powder, finely chopped nuts, finely shredded sweetened coconut, or sprinkles, for coating

In a small saucepan over medium heat, heat the cream, stirring, until hot but not boiling.

Remove from the heat and stir in the chocolate. Let stand until the chocolate softens, then stir until well combined. Stir in the extract. Let cool, then refrigerate until cold, about 2 hours.

Line a large baking sheet with parchment or waxed paper.

Form a tablespoonful of the chocolate mixture into a ball and place on prepared baking sheet. Try to handle it as little and as lightly as possible or it will start to melt! Repeat with the remaining chocolate mixture. Refrigerate the chocolate balls for 30 minutes.

Pour the desired coating onto a plate. Quickly reshape any balls as needed, then roll the balls in the coating and return to the baking sheet. Refrigerate for another 30 minutes.

Store in an airtight container in layers, with parchment or waxed paper between each layer, in the fridge for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 3 months.



ENGLISH TOFFEE



Find more old-fashioned holiday recipes in *A Very Prairie Christmas Bakebook* by Karlynn Johnston, Penguin Random House Canada, \$37.50.

“If you want to go wild, try orange extract to mimic those chocolate oranges found in many stockings come Christmas morning!”

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

SOURCE GUIDE

Where to find the products featured on our pages.

A

Allo Simone
allosimone.com

Alpaka
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Amara
amara.com

Ann Sacks
annsacks.com

Annie Selke
annieselke.com

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F

Faithful Roots
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fiorifloral.com

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Gallery Jones
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gildandco.com

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kingliving.ca

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Lock and Mortice
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Once a Tree Furniture
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Port Carling Garden Centre
portcarlinggardencentre.com

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Rosendahl Design Group
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Simons
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Sunpan
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T
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The Curated House
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Tonic Living
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U
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1



2



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8



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1 Faux mini red berry, 14" d., \$45, Crate and Barrel, crateandbarrel.ca. 2 Gold metal, 16" d., \$32, H&M Home, hm.com. 3 IH Casa Decor, 18½" d., \$48, Rona, rona.ca. 4 Lohasbee, 22" d., \$57, Amazon, amazon.ca. 5 TrueNorthWreaths' eucalyptus, 22" d., \$197, Etsy, etsy.com. 6 Artificial *Euphorbia marginata*, 22" d., \$100, Véronneau, veronneau.com. 7 Bow greenery, 20" d., \$43 Bouclair, bouclair.com. 8 The Holiday Aisle, 24" d., \$132, Wayfair, wayfair.ca.



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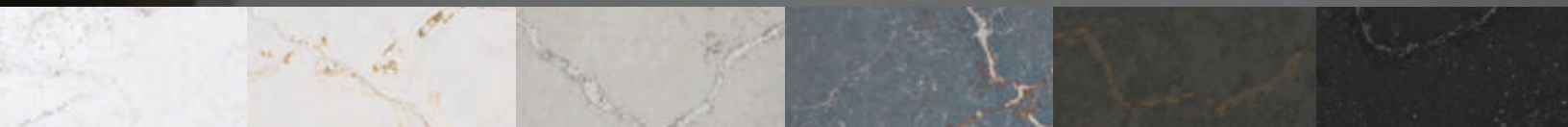
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