Cozy, Colorful Christmas Style

# COTTAGES & BUNGALOWS



## 6 Homes Dressed for the *Holidays*

Plus: The Full Reveal of Project House Tennessee

- Festive & Easy Tablescapes
- See the Christmas Tree That Won Your Votes!

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Back cover photo: Stacy Zarin Goldberg



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**PRODUCED BY KELLY McMASTER**



















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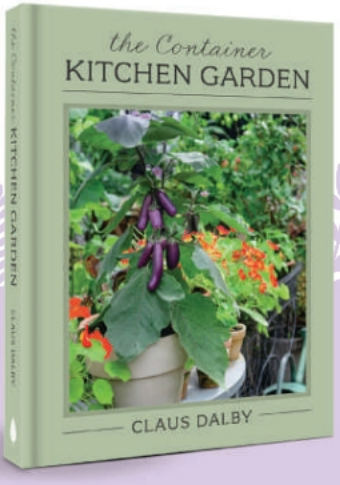


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# Home *for the Holidays*

I always love putting together our December issue because it feels a little like opening a box of Christmas decorations from the attic-you never quite know which favorite treasure will catch your eye first. This year, there's so much tucked inside this issue, that I found myself excited about nearly every turn of the page.

We're taking you inside six beautiful homes, each with its own take on holiday decorating, along with lovely tablescape ideas to inspire your gatherings. We're also delighted to introduce the winner of our 2025 Christmas Tree Contest, and I think you'll love seeing the creativity that made this tree stand out and secure the most votes in our annual contest.

This issue also marks a bittersweet milestone as our 2026 Brand Ambassador; Wendy shares her final column with us. It has been such a joy having her creativity, bold use of color and enthusiasm woven into the pages of Cottages & Bungalows throughout the year, and we're so grateful for all she has shared with us!

And after months of following along, the wait is finally over: we're revealing Project House Tennessee in its entirety! From the thoughtful architectural details to the finishing touches that make every room feel like home, we're excited to finally share the completed house with you! We sincerely appreciate the tireless work of the design/build team of Henry and Brooke Jones at Plank & Pillow and the dedication of the generous sponsors who made the build possible!

As another year comes to a close, I hope these pages encourage you to slow down, enjoy your favorite holiday traditions and create a home that feels joyful, welcoming and uniquely yours.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a beautiful holiday season!

Warmly,

Kelly McMaster

Kelly McMaster, *Editor*

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**FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, WRITE TO KELLY AT KMCMASTER@EGMEDIAMAGS.COM.**


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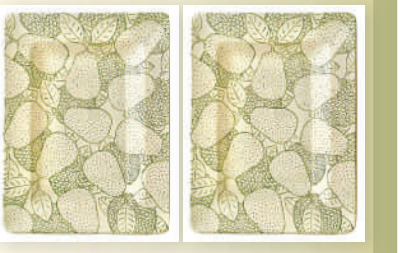

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# Adorn Your Home *with Holiday Cheer*

Check out more holiday inspiration online!

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**1. SPINNING THE CHRISTMAS COLOR WHEEL**

This English country cottage kitchen shines with a bold and bright Christmas color palette.

**2. AN OUTLANDER CHRISTMAS**

With trees in almost every room, garlands hanging from the ceilings and tons of ribbon, this unique home takes on a festive air at Christmastime, with red as the primary pop of color.

**3. SWEET AND SIMPLE SEASON**

Greenery and vintage finds add life and character to the neutral holiday décor of a cottage.

**4. CHRISTMAS COZY**

A 1940s Connecticut home gets a holiday makeover with pops of red and vintage touches.

**5. CHRISTMAS IN THE COTSWOLDS**

Come along for a walking tour of English cottages dressed in their holiday best.

Follow us online on **Facebook**, **Pinterest** and **Instagram** for inspiration daily!

# Give the *Gift* of a *Getaway*

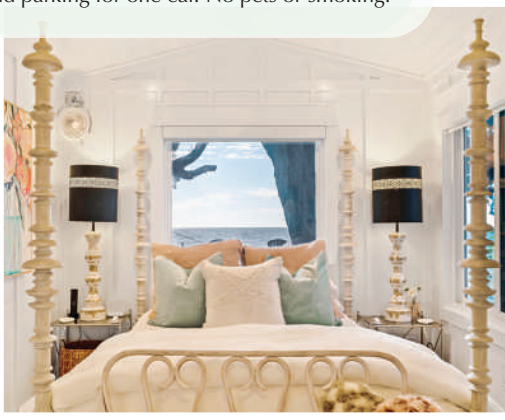




Sleeps two with one queen bedroom, one bath, direct beach access, high-speed internet, washer and dryer, dishwasher and parking for one car. No pets or smoking.







This lovingly restored beachfront cottage on Anna Maria Island makes a dreamy holiday gift or the perfect winter escape for two.

**WRITTEN BY** Kelly McMaster | **PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Anne Yarborough Photography

What do you give someone who has everything? How about white sand, Gulf sunsets and a few blissful days by the sea?

Set directly on the beach in Bradenton Beach, Florida, The Love Shack is a romantic one-bedroom cottage built in 1915 and owned by interior designer Courtney Ibach's family since 2006. Most recently restored following hurricanes Helene and Milton, it blends historic charm with stylish modern comforts. Inside, white porcelain floors and an airy palette keep the focus on the Gulf views. A chef's kitchen, dreamy bedroom tucked beneath the original roofline and spa-like bath add a touch of luxury. Outside, guests can sip coffee in the private beachfront yard, relax on the porch swing or hammock and settle into Adirondack chairs for sunset.

Whether given for Christmas, planned for Valentine's Day or booked as a warm-weather winter escape, The Love Shack is a reminder that sometimes the best gift isn't something you unwrap—it's somewhere you go.

**PLAN YOUR ESCAPE: BOOK THE LOVE SHACK THROUGH MIKE NORMAN REALTY AT MIKENORMANREALITY.COM/VACATIONRENTALS.**

# A New Tennessee Classic *is Complete*

Classic materials, striking contrast and carefully considered details give Project House Tennessee a warm, distinctive presence from the very first look.

WRITTEN BY Kelly McMaster | PHOTOGRAPHED BY Henry Jones of Plank & Pillow







The Clopay Canyon Ridge 5-Layer carriage-house garage doors make an impressive statement and reinforce the thoughtful design details found throughout the home.

TO SEE THE FULL REVEAL OF PROJECT HOUSE TENNESSEE, TURN TO PAGE 34 IN THIS ISSUE.

*Set against* the rolling landscape, Project House Tennessee makes a striking first impression with a thoughtful mix of classic architecture and modern European-inspired ease. Warm, natural Orchard stone from Masonmade Design + Supply gives the exterior a sense of permanence and character, while deep-toned siding, steeply pitched rooflines finished with Tamko Titan XT shingles in Virginia Slate, and bronze-framed Pinnacle windows from Windsor Windows add contrast and definition. An arched front entry features a custom mahogany door from Vintage Doors, stained in dark walnut and adorned with Ageless Iron hardware from Regal Brands, softening the strong lines of the façade.

Every choice made with our Project House sponsors contributes to a home that feels gracious, welcoming and distinctly Tennessee.

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 112

# A Tree Full of *Christmas Memories*

Vintage ornaments, traditional color and a touch of blush give our Christmas Tree Contest winner's beautifully layered tree its nostalgic glow.

WRITTEN BY Kelly McMaster | STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY Kassie Pounds







*For our contest winner,* Kassie Pounds, creating a beautiful tree is about much more than decorating-it's about capturing the warmth and wonder of Christmases past.

Set against the soft green walls of her 1927 Tudor bungalow, the lush tree combines deep red, green and gold with an unexpected touch of blush pink. "I really wanted to evoke the feeling of a cozy, nostalgic Christmas from years past," Kassie says. The blush is a personal addition inspired by a set of vintage pink ornaments she purchased several years ago and now brings out every Christmas.

Those treasured vintage finds make up much of the tree's collection. Some are scuffed or even slightly rusty, imperfections she believes only add to their charm. A romantic at heart, she often wonders about the families who owned them before her. "I believe they could probably tell some of the sweetest stories if they could talk," she says.

To achieve the tree's abundant, layered look, she begins with plenty of lights—tucking some deep into the branches for extra glow, then fills larger gaps with pieces of faux snow blanket. Ornaments come next, followed by coordinating ribbons in different fabrics, widths and patterns, including rich velvet and plaid.

The finished tree feels perfectly at home in the family's cozy living room, where a fire crackles in the fireplace and Bing Crosby plays on the Victrola. On Christmas Eve, the family gathers around the tree to hear Kassie's husband read the Christmas Story and then exchange gifts, presents are opened one at a time while everyone watches. Stockings are always saved for Christmas morning.

Her best decorating advice is also perhaps the simplest:




forget about what you think you should do and create a home that feels like you. "If you do what you love, it will be beautiful," she says. Over the years, her twins have told her how much they love the way their home feels at Christmastime—and that, she says, is the real reward. "I'm not just giving them decorations," she says. "I'm giving them love and core memories of one of the greatest times of the year."

**TO SEE MORE OF KASSIE'S HOME FOLLOW @VICTORYCOTTAGETX ON INSTAGRAM.**

# Back to *Carlton Landing*

We're reuniting with Scissortail Homes and designer Rachel Shingleton of Pencil Shavings for a brand-new Project House in Oklahoma.

**WRITTEN BY** Kelly McMaster | **PHOTOGRAPHY BY** Mel Willis

*We're heading back* to Carlton Landing, Oklahoma, for our next Project House, and this one feels a little like a reunion.

In 2020, we partnered with JJ and Lindsey Morris of Scissortail Homes and designer Rachel Shingleton of Pencil Shavings on a Carlton Landing home filled with cheerful color, natural materials, warm wood tones and relaxed cottage style, as shown here.









JJ and Lindsey Morris of Scissortail Homes with Rachel Shingleton of Pencil Shavings.



Now, we're teaming up again for a brand-new home to be built in 2026–2027.

Over the coming months, we'll share the process as the house takes shape, from construction and architectural details to the finishes, furnishings and personality Rachel brings to the interiors. We loved what this creative team dreamed up the first time around, and we can't wait to see what comes next.

We're equally delighted that four generous sponsors have already joined us; B&W Tile, Hoodsly, Pella Windows and Doors of Oklahoma, and Regal Brands. Without their exceptional products and expert guidance, our project house would be incomplete.

Stay tuned for more from Project House Oklahoma!

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[BRAND AMBASSADOR]

# THE GROWN-UP *Gingerbread House Party*

A childhood classic gets a graham-cracker glow-up and becomes the sweetest annual tradition for the women in my life.

WRITTEN, STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY Wendy Conklin







## *Hello, Cottage Friends!*

A few years ago, I stumbled across the holiday party Courtney Whitmore of Pizzazzerie throws for her young daughters every December—darling little gingerbread houses, candy spread everywhere, all the sparkle you'd want for a kids' party. I remember thinking: why should the little ones have all the fun? Since 2021, I've hosted my own grown-up version for my friends and their adult daughters, and it has become one of my favorite traditions of the whole year.

(A quick confession before we go any further: I call these "gingerbread houses," but they're really built from graham crackers. Faster, sturdier, and just as charming once they're covered in icing and candy—so I hope you'll forgive the fib.)

Each house starts as a simple cardboard box, about 4x4x4 inches, taped together to form the base. For the roof, I cut a 6x12-inch piece of cardboard and fold it into a peak, then cut a small triangle to fill the open gable end. Everything gets hot glued into place before a single graham cracker goes on. From there, I cover the walls of the house and the gable with graham crackers, hot glued directly to the cardboard, until no bare spots remain—the roof itself stays bare cardboard, ready for icing.

Once the houses are built, the real fun begins: royal icing. I mix up a batch and use it as the glue that holds everything together, starting with the houses turned upside down in bowls so I can pipe a clean line around the base while it stays steady. Once that sets, I flip them right-side up and pipe icing along the remaining seams



**SET FOR THE SWEETEST NIGHT**
Before guests arrive, every place setting gets its own house, and the table is dressed for the occasion—right down to bows and ornaments dripping from the chandelier overhead.





and edges, letting everything dry before the finishing touch: a ribbon bow, hot glued right to the peak of the roof. Fair warning: one batch is just the beginning. Between assembling the houses and then decorating them on party day, you'll go through icing faster than you'd think—so plan on mixing it up several times over.

On the day of the party, I set the table with a house at every place setting and turn the rest of the table into a candy bar—jars and cups filled with shredded wheat squares, gumdrops, red hots, crushed peppermint, grated coconut, Airheads, licorice, and anything else that catches my eye at the store. I keep scissors on hand for cutting candy down to size, along with plenty of piping bags filled with icing so everyone has their own glue to work with.

What I love most is watching the decorating get more clever every single year—someone always finds a new way to use a gumdrop or turn a piece of licorice into something unexpected. While we build, we talk about how the year went and what we're dreaming up for the one ahead. It's a few hours where we all get to be kids again, and every year I leave already looking forward to the next one.

**BE SURE TO FOLLOW WENDY ON INSTAGRAM @CHAIRWHIMSY FOR JOYFUL DIYS, COLOR-FILLED DESIGN TIPS, AND A DAILY DOSE OF CREATIVITY.**



### WHAT YOU'LL NEED

**For the house:**

- One 4x4x4-inch cardboard box per house
- Extra cardboard (for the roof and gable piece)
- Ruler and scissors or a box cutter
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Graham crackers (about one sleeve per house)

For the royal icing (this batch gets you started but plan to mix it multiple times to build the houses and then again for decorating on party day):

- 1 cup liquid egg whites
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 10 cups powdered sugar
- Piping bags and tips
- Assorted bowls (to hold the houses steady while icing sets)
- Ribbon, for the bow on top

### WHAT YOU'LL DO

1. Tape the cardboard box closed to form the base of the house. Cut a 6x12-inch piece of cardboard, score it down the center, and fold it into a peak to form the roof. Cut a small triangle of cardboard to fill in the open gable end, then hot glue the roof and gable piece to the base.

2. Working one section at a time, hot glue graham crackers over the walls of the house and the gable piece until the cardboard is completely covered. The roof itself stays bare—it gets covered in icing instead. Don't worry about small gaps or broken crackers here—the icing will hide them completely.
3. Beat the egg whites and cream of tartar together, then add the powdered sugar and mix until stiff peaks form, about 3 to 4 minutes. Fill piping bags fitted with a tip about three-quarters full. This one batch won't be your last, you'll need several more to assemble all the houses, plus another round for decorating on party day.
4. Turn each house upside down into a bowl for stability and pipe icing around the bottom edges. Let dry completely.
5. Turn the houses right-side up and pipe icing along the remaining seams and edges. Let dry again.
6. Hot glue a ribbon bow to the peak of the roof for a finishing touch.

**1. BUILDING THE BONES**
Every house starts as a plain cardboard box with a peaked roof, hot glued together before a single graham cracker goes on. It's a simple frame, but it's what makes the finished house sturdy enough to survive a table full of decorators.

**2. ICING IS THE GLUE**
Once the frame is built, graham crackers get hot glued over every wall and the gable until the cardboard disappears completely. Piping royal icing around the base first, while the house rests upside down in a bowl, keeps everything steady while it dries.

**3 & 4. THE CANDY BAR**
Shredded wheat squares, gumdrops, red hots, crushed peppermint, coconut, and licorice all get divided into jars and cups so everyone can reach what they need without leaving their seat.

**5. DESIGNING IN PROGRESS**
A steady hand and a bag of icing turn a plain roofline into something festive. Half the fun is watching everyone's technique—and their patience—improve as the night goes on.

**6. NO TWO ALIKE**
By the end of the night, every house looks completely different- proof that a candy bar, a few piping bags, and a little imagination go a long way.



















Thank you for letting me share my home, my heart, and my hot glue gun with all of you this past year. It has been the sweetest job I've ever had.

With so much love,

*Wendy*





# The Gingerbread House

Visit a century-old home with an exterior design that seems inspired by the traditional holiday treat and an interior designed for a big, festive family Christmas.

**WRITTEN BY** Meryl Schoenbaum
**PHOTOGRAPHED AND STYLED BY** Sunday Hendrickson

*Imagine being* passionate about decorating and entertaining for Christmas and during your search for a new home finding one known as "The Gingerbread House." Louise O'Brien Schridde and Daniel Schridde didn't have to imagine it; they lived it!

Louise shares the story of that serendipitous day. "We bought the house before even walking through it," she says. "Daniel was out of town, and my realtor told me about a Spanish house he wanted to show me that was next to a rundown gingerbread house. I said, 'Tell me about the gingerbread house.' He said it's not for sale, but the owners, who were 85 and 86, were painting the inside to get it ready to put on the market. We drove by it and I immediately fell in love with it. It was a complete fixer-upper! My realtor said, 'Let's just make an offer.' I sent the paperwork to Daniel for his signature, and they agreed to our offer!"

The home's exterior looks like a vintage Christmas card. The front gate framed by a rose arbor has a wreath decorated with Louise's ribbons. The front door has a garland and wreath with more ribbons by Louise. "Just walking by the Schridde home tempts you to start humming Christmas carols!" stylist/photographer Sunday Hendrickson says.




"Rooms with tall ceilings can lose their coziness, so I added comfort and warmth to the living room with a big knit throw and a large comfy toile pillow," Sunday explains. The sofa was the first piece of furniture Daniel and Louise bought together.




"This hallway wall displays Louise's first cross-stitch sampler that she made in 2005," Daniel says. "Since then she has become an avid cross-stitcher."



Louise and Daniel built the staircase themselves, inspired by a staircase in a Maine B&B dating back to the 1600s. It features small drawers for storage in the step risers.

The Gingerbread House is a California bungalow built in 1923. "It was the first house built in this Burbank, California, neighborhood surrounded by bean fields. The daughter of the original owners sold us the house her father built," Daniel says. "They raised six kids in the house, so there were lots of small rooms. Because of this, one of our first projects was to tear down a wall. Louise wanted the sitting area in the kitchen to feel bigger, so we bought a sledgehammer and went to town."

Louise points out some of the modifications she and Daniel made. "We added on a primary bedroom and bath and enlarged the kitchen," she says. "The main house has four bedrooms, three bathrooms and a guest house. We raised our two sons, Max and Miles, here." The couple lives there with their dogs, Belle and Tilly, "but during Christmas we have a full house," Daniel says.

## TREASURED TRADITIONS

Louise and Daniel's vast amount of Christmas decorations and ornaments leaves no doubt about which holiday excites them the most to deck their halls, walls and everything else. "Christmas is our favorite season to decorate. All our attics are filled with holiday decoration boxes — so much so that it takes us close to a month to decorate!" Louise says. "We love the tradition of opening our boxes and taking out all our Santa Clauses. We have over 200 of them! We have been collecting them since our first Christmas together in 1987. In our family, we have a tradition of our sons coming home to help open the Christmas boxes with us. We celebrate the experience of unwrapping every treasure. Then the joy of placing each tidbit is open to a friendly family debate, although most of our Santas are placed in their own special locations year after year. Another of our favorite traditions is hanging out in the kitchen, cooking dinner and listening to my dad's favorite Christmas music (Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra) with all the pretty bows glowing in the candlelight."

Even though there are lots of boxes to unpack, Louise says transitioning the gingerbread house from its everyday décor to Christmas is not a difficult process. "It is not challenging in any way at all. Our everyday décor lends itself to our holiday décor," she says. "A lot of our holiday décor is accenting our existing décor.















# LOUISE'S SUGAR COOKIES

I would love to share my sugar cookie recipe. It's an oldie but goodie. Every year, the boys and all their cousins can't wait for me to bring them out on Christmas Eve. In fact, a few years ago the cousins and their girlfriends started to help me bake them. Now that has become a family tradition.

**Ingredients:**

- 4 cups sifted flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 sticks butter
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract or 2 teaspoons of fresh lemon juice and zest from two lemons

**Recipe:**

In a large bowl mix flour, salt and baking powder and set aside. Use an electric mixer to cream butter and sugar until fluffy, then beat in eggs. Add flour mixture to this and mix at low speed until combined, stir in vanilla or the lemon option. Then wrap dough in plastic and chill for 30 minutes. Roll the dough out to ¼ - ⅛ inch, your preference. Then use your favorite cookie cutters to cut the dough. Bake at 325 degrees for 8-10 minutes on a cookie sheet.

**Frosting:**

- Mix in electric mixer:
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 stick butter
- 2 tablespoons milk (use more if necessary).
- Food dye to create decorations is optional.






*(above, left)* A bookcase in the dining room displays a sentimental keepsake. "This is our most prized possession, Stella the circus performer, made from hand-carved wood," Daniel says. "It was the first piece of artwork we bought together." *(above, right)* "Nearly everything in the dining room was gifted by my mother, Jutta, who had an extensive antique collection," Daniel says. "The grandfather clock was originally in my family home's entryway when I was growing up. The antique 'Campaign tray' side table displays antique brass candlesticks from my mom. The mug was made by my great-grandfather who was a metalsmith."

Ribbons and bows are a huge part of our decorating. We add them to our topiaries, candlesticks—just about everything! Basic changes include a lush, fragrant live Christmas tree, wreaths on all the windows and doors, and garlands draped around doors, windows and banisters. And most importantly, we usually host the entire family for a sit-down dinner on Christmas Eve. The family count is 25 and growing. A super-long table is the centerpiece; we love sitting together as a family."

## PREPARATION IS KEY

Daniel discusses some of the annual prep work entailed in creating their Christmas décor. "We are collectors; memorabilia and the joy of finding it flows in our veins. So as our collections grow, our holiday décor evolves, layering upon what came before, the traditions," he says. "Louise loves visiting the Los Angeles Flower Mart (two huge warehouses full of flowers in every variety and color imaginable) in the weeks leading up to the holidays where we find all our topiaries, garlands and wreaths for the seasonal décor. And on the days just before Christmas, we go there again to get all our fresh flowers and poinsettias. Fresh flowers are an integral part of our Christmas Eve dinner theme."

Most of the Schriddes' Christmas decorations are vintage. "As you can see in the photos, we are vintage, vintage, vintage," Daniel says. "We have lights everywhere: on the picket fence, in the trees, draped from the roof eaves, encircling our wreaths on every door and window, and the garlands on our porch banisters—all in vintage, warm-white colors. And Louise's ribbons and bows accent the wreaths and the garlands. We design our rooms with a very nontraditional color palette. It's more about the visceral feel than the color."



## A NOBLE TREE

Louise and Daniel enjoy having a real tree at home for the holiday. "We always get a fresh-cut Noble Christmas tree. The spacing between the branches makes it possible to better place our favorite ornaments," Louise says. "We place it between the living room and the kitchen. This way, we can see it from most of the house. Daniel's mother gifted us the beautiful red and green tapestry skirt that we use every year. She made it as a little girl growing up in Germany. We use mini warm-white lights to accentuate all our unique Christmas ornaments that we have been given or purchased over the years."

Trimming the tree is another opportunity to let their vintage style shine. "Our Christmas tree style is eclectic leaning more toward vintage," Louise says. "Daniel's mother years ago gave us all her old hand-blown ornaments and over the years we have purchased more beautiful vintage glass ornaments from local boutiques. The tree is another place where I love to put my ribbons."







The Schriddes' have special keepsakes that will always have a permanent place in their Christmas décor. "I love our Debbie Thibault Santa Claus collection that sits on the kitchen windowsill," Louise says. "Daniel loves the first Santa ornament we bought together in 1987." Other sentimental decorations create a sense of nostalgia for Daniel as well. "Beautiful hand-blown glass ornaments that my mother and I used to decorate our tree with were one of our first heirloom hand-me-downs," he recalls. "Years later, my mother gifted us her collection of antique angels that she displayed during the holidays. Now they grace one of our doorways during our celebrations."

*(above, left)* The dining room table is used year round, but for Christmas it triples in size to accommodate 25 people. The chairs and table were gifted to the couple by Louise's best friend, Jonell, whose mother had recently passed.
*(top, left)* Louise's linen cabinet was made from old doors and thrifted at the Pasadena Rose Bowl Flea Market.






*(above, left)* The dining room displays antique 1800s Meissen china in the Blue Onion pattern. A thrifted quilted angel hangs on the cabinet with fabric from the 1800s. *(above, right)* The kitchen features a repurposed wooden piece. "The builder was the local mailman and this was the shelving unit where he would sort the mail," Daniel explains. The couple uses it to display their collection of antique salt and pepper shakers. "The textile on front, handmade by my mother, had been draped on the inside of her hope chest. It says, 'my treasures lay within,' which referred to the treasures in her hope chest," Daniel says. *(opposite)* The homeowners are avid cooks, so they like seeing the Christmas tree in the living room from the kitchen. They handmade all the cabinets and wood countertops themselves. On the island is a basin with a red ribbon where Louise floats candles and flowers in water for the holidays.

## HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

Guests are greeted with a warm welcome in the entryway. "We go from traditional green garlands and wreaths with red ribbons around the front door's exterior to a brighter glittery entryway," Louise says. "All the ornaments and decorations are silver and twinkling. Mini light strands illuminate and add to the sparkle."

The living room is one of the main gathering spaces when guests arrive. "During the holidays, we have three places where friends and family tend to gather: the kitchen, dining room and living room," Louise says. "They all serve a particular purpose. The living room is for gift giving and receiving, and it is where the Christmas tree is displayed. What makes this room very special is an old O'Brien (my maiden name) family tradition: the visit of Santa, who comes to leave gifts for all the kids under the tree. Every year someone different dresses as Santa. After dinner, the younger cousins are taken to a bedroom to await the big arrival. Santa is tracked by parents on a Santa tracking app and as he gets closer the little ones are allowed to come out and hide from Santa behind the chairs and couches and then Santa arrives with his or her goodies."

The dining room is an impressive space that accommodates the full house at Christmas. "The centerpiece to our largest room is the 25-foot-long dining table," Daniel says. "There are wreaths on windows, garlands around the doors and on the banister and lots of bows and ribbons. Small candle chandeliers are hung above the long table. Antique candelabras run down the center of the table on fabric runners in a variety of colors. Old German flea market silverware found in Bremen and Berlin bracket each plate. Antique pewter and ceramic salt and pepper shakers are sprinkled throughout the table. Flower Mart topiaries small enough to see over add warmth to the tablescape. Louise makes fabric napkins every year from her collection of fabric remnants and banners declaring the holiday are draped from overhead beams."





The Christmas tree is the star of the living room. The couple handmade the TV cabinet. In the foreground is a steamer trunk Daniel's mother used traveling from Germany to the states as a young woman.







# ELEVATED CHRISTMAS STYLE

Sunday Hendrickson has styled and photographed Louise and Daniel's home for many book and magazine features over the years and they called upon her this Christmas to ensure their home would look warm, festive and photo-shoot ready.

"She does an amazing job of creating beautiful vignettes for the photo shoots with items and memorabilia she finds lying around our house," Louise says. "She's so talented and has an amazing vision! It is uncanny to see how she pulls things together, especially for the still-life images. Our general room design and décor usually stay the same; she just spruces up the ambience, like a painter on a canvas. It's all in the details!"

Sunday says their mutual respect and trust in her styling expertise make for a delightful experience and successful outcome. "They counted on me to respect their style, which reflects both Daniel's German heritage and Louise's Irish one," she says. "I picked up their warm family spirit by adding candlelight and highlighting items handed down through their family generations. I'd describe the styling as traditional, inviting, festive, vintage and family friendly — everything but modern. That's the charm of it."

Her creativity and experience came in handy when faced with a styling challenge. "The main challenge was creating a space to set up the dining table for their many family members and other guests," Sunday recalls. "Lots of furniture had to be rearranged!"

To see more of Sunday's styling and photography projects, visit her website at sundayhendrickson.com and follow her on Facebook at sunday hendrickson and on Instagram at sundayohsunday.

*(top, left)* The dining room's candelabra was a gift from Louise's mother, Mary. The Santa at left is darning his socks on the day after Christmas. (below). Louise's head collection is displayed. She puts her topiaries inside them for a touch of whimsy. In front is a collection of Russian nesting dolls.




The antique wrought-iron bed was one of the first purchases for the homeowners. They found it in Bodega Bay, where the movie "The Birds" was filmed. They transported it on the roof of their car. At the foot of the bed is another hope chest from Daniel's mom. *(opposite, bottom right)* The front door is a Dutch door that came from their best friend's grandmother's house.

The kitchen is truly the heart of the home at Christmas. "The overall house theme spills over into the kitchen, but there are two spaces dedicated to specific collectibles," Daniel points out. "The kitchen sink window ledge is dedicated to our Debbie Thibault Santa collection of beautiful, hand-crafted papier mache Santa dolls that are numbered, limited edition pieces. The second collection is displayed on an antique pie rack. Every shelf features a vignette of Santas, snowmen and mini trees. Every year we host a big Christmas party with friends. The party theme is 'bring your favorite appetizer and favorite drink to share,' so naturally the kitchen is the center of attention at this party."

For all these reasons and more, The Gingerbread House is the perfect setting for the Schridde family's Christmas celebrations. "Daniel loves getting the Christmas boxes down from the attic. We bring them down to the kitchen, place them on the island and open one box at a time," Louise says. "We get so excited unwrapping each individual ornament. It is like we become children all over again!"











Expertly installed by Smith Roofing & Exterior Services, the varied rooflines play a big role in defining the home's custom character.



# *Timeless by Design:* THE FULL REVEAL

The goal of Project House Tennessee was to create a home that felt as though it had always belonged on its Kingsport property, with classic charm and all the comforts of modern family life.

**WRITTEN BY** Kelly McMaster
**DESIGNED, STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Henry and Brooke Jones of Plank & Pillow



*For our partners,* Henry and Brooke Jones of Plank & Pillow, Project House Tennessee was an opportunity to create a home that feels natural on its Kingsport property, blending classic charm with the comforts of modern family life.

"We wanted it to have character and charm, but still feel fresh, comfortable and functional for the way our family lives today," they say. "We didn't want it to feel overly trendy or like a brand-new house that was trying too hard."







*(above)* The roof plays a big role in defining the home's cottage character. Its steep pitches (15/12 and 6/12) and varied rooflines create a sense of charm and age, while TAMKO's Virginia Slate color and the shingles' texture add another layer of depth that ties the stone, siding, and other exterior materials together.

*(left)* The home's side entry echoes the front with a mahogany door from Vintage Doors and an Ageless Iron entry set from Regal Brands.

*(right)* The home's stonework was carefully selected and placed to achieve the irregular character of an older home. Individual stone placement, an over-grouted mortar treatment and thoughtful wrapping around architectural elements all contribute to a natural, timeworn look that feels as though it has always been there.



The 8-foot custom mahogany door in a dark walnut finish with top half glass from Vintage Doors reinforces the old-cottage character. The Ageless Iron entry set from Regal Brands adds an understated sense of age and permanence.

Castillian Premier Boardwalk flooring from Mullican Flooring, laid in 9.5-inch planks, flows throughout the home, lending warmth and old-world character. Its pale finish beautifully balances the black window openings, allowing them to stand out as intentional accents without making the space feel heavy.



The living room centers on a custom cast-stone fireplace with a stepped molded surround and ivory firebrick laid vertically inside a ventless firebox, both installed by Henry. He also designed and built the surrounding built-ins. Overhead, painted beams blend quietly into the living-room ceiling, while the adjoining dining room shifts to natural white oak boards and beams for added warmth and contrast.

## A VISION OF VIEWS

That sense of belonging begins with the setting. Nestled within the Tennessee landscape, the property offers sweeping mountain views that became one of the most important influences on the home's design. It is also a personal location for the couple: Brooke grew up in Kingsport, making the opportunity to build a home there particularly meaningful. "Kingsport has always been home for her, so being able to build a home here and create something for our family made the project even more special," Henry says. "We loved the idea of building in a place that already had so much meaning to us while creating a home that really celebrates the Tennessee mountain setting."



*(left)* The floor plan was designed to maximize mountain views and natural light while preserving the feeling of distinct rooms. The kitchen, living and dining spaces remain connected, allowing the mountain views and natural light to carry throughout the main level, but generous framed openings-rather than fully removed walls-give each space architectural definition.

*(below)* Henry of Plank & Pillow designed and built the four open locker bays to fit an 11-foot wall, giving each about 33 inches of usable width—enough for coats, bags and shoes without feeling cramped. Open cubbies keep the hallway feeling spacious while showcasing the brass hooks, and vertical paneling adds both durability and architectural character. A red oak bench stained in dark walnut ties the built-in to the home's exterior wood door.







A wide arched opening at the dining area preserves light and sightlines while giving the room architectural definition. It also frames the mountain view like a work of art, with the white oak ceiling beyond helping distinguish the adjoining space without closing it off.

Rather than reserving the view for a single dramatic space, the couple designed the house so that the mountains could be appreciated throughout the home. Windows, sightlines and room placement were carefully considered, including a spacious second-floor office where Henry and Brooke, who both work from home, can take in the scenery throughout the day.

## DESIGNED FOR DAILY LIFE

The layout was equally driven by the rhythms of everyday life. A main-floor primary bedroom, generous laundry room and ample storage were high on the wish list, as was an open kitchen and living area where family and friends could easily gather. "We love having family and friends over, so creating an open-concept layout that felt connected and worked well for gatherings was a big priority," they say. "For us, it was really about creating a home that was beautiful but also worked for everyday life."

That philosophy guided the aesthetic choices as well. Inspired by older cottages and traditional homes, Henry and Brooke gravitated toward natural materials, warm whites, wood, stone and classic finishes rather than anything overly of-the-moment.

## COMFORT FIRST

On the exterior, stone helps ground the house in its setting and gives the new construction a more established presence. Inside, millwork, thoughtfully placed windows, lighting, hardware and distinctive architectural openings add the layers of character the couple envisioned from the start. "We wanted the design to feel like it belonged in Tennessee rather than simply being a pretty house that could have been built anywhere," they explain.

Just as important was making sure those beautiful details never came at the expense of comfort. Rooms were planned around how the family would actually live in them, from daily routines to larger gatherings, and finishes were selected with real life in mind.

"We love beautiful design, but we also want our home to feel like a home," the couple says. "We didn't want anything to feel too precious or like a showroom. For us, the best homes are the ones that look beautiful but still make you want to sit down, relax and stay awhile."

## ADJUSTING ALONG THE WAY

As with nearly every build, some decisions evolved once plans became three-dimensional. Henry and Brooke remained closely involved throughout construction, giving them the flexibility to reconsider details as spaces began taking shape. "There are always things that change once you start building, and seeing everything in person definitely changes your perspective," they say. "Some of those changes ended up making the house feel much more natural and cohesive."







*(top)* The scullery with custom cabinets by Brass + Ivory Cabinetry handles coffee and food prep, pantry storage, serving pieces and small appliances. A prep sink sits beneath the window, with a ZLINE microwave drawer built in below the counter. Glass-front uppers display frequently used serving pieces and bowls, while drawers provide easy-access storage and solid doors conceal small appliances.







ZLINE appliances were used throughout the kitchen and scullery, including a 48-inch stainless-steel Paramount Dual Fuel DuoPro range, a 36-inch panel-ready built-in refrigerator, a 24-inch panel-ready Tallac dishwasher, a 46-inch wall-mount range hood insert and a 24-inch microwave drawer. The refrigerator and dishwasher were fitted with Brass + Ivory Cabinetry fronts so they blend seamlessly into the surrounding millwork.

Brass + Ivory Cabinetry created the cabinetry for the kitchen, scullery and laundry, carrying the same simple inset recessed-panel profile throughout for a cohesive look. Reeded detailing adds texture to the perimeter drawers, scullery drawer bank and especially the 10-foot island, where it helps the large piece read more like furniture. Glass-front cabinets were reserved for display-worthy, frequently used pieces, while hidden features such as pantry-door shelving maximize storage. Hand-applied reeding, custom island legs and reeded backs in the living room built-ins further highlight the craftsmanship, while the inset construction gives the home a timeless, elevated finish. Grandeur brass knobs from Regal Brands unify the cabinetry, while complementary metal finishes are layered elsewhere throughout the home. Classic shapes and warm, aged finishes were chosen to give the spaces a timeless, traditional feel with character—without becoming overly ornate or formal.



The 48-inch-wide-by-50-inch-high Hoodsly Box range hood was semi-customized to accommodate a ZLINE 721-46 wall-mount insert, with its depth extended to 21 inches and its width matched to the range below. A custom Venetian plaster finish tinted in the same shade as the wall paint, gives the hood a more architectural, built-in presence. The hood's construction was designed to accommodate the insert while allowing the entire piece to be installed securely to the wall.







*(above)* Grandeur hardware from Regal Brands in Vintage Brass complements the cabinetry and add character in the primary bathroom.

The process also brought its share of challenges. With construction schedules, materials, finishes and countless small decisions all happening simultaneously, managing the sheer number of choices could sometimes feel overwhelming.

"Building a home is exciting, but there are definitely moments when you question a decision or wonder if everything is going to come together the way you pictured it," they say. "Thankfully, once everything started coming together, those stressful moments became much easier to forget."





Black-framed Pinnacle windows from Windsor Windows frame the home office's incredible view, with a 2x3 grille pattern carried throughout much of the home.



The view was the starting point for the primary bathroom layout. The freestanding tub was centered beneath the expansive windows to take full advantage of the scenery, while the shower was positioned alongside them so the outdoors could be enjoyed from both spaces. The goal was to create a room that felt open and connected to its surroundings while remaining functional and inviting.

## FAVORITE MOMENTS

One of Brooke's favorite spaces is the kitchen, where a carefully positioned window transforms an everyday task into a reminder of why they fell in love with the property in the first place. "One of my favorite things is standing at the sink and looking out at the Tennessee mountains while washing dishes," she says. "It's such a simple thing, but it's one of those details that makes you appreciate the property every day."

The adjacent dining area delivers another memorable connection to the landscape. A framed arched opening perfectly captures the mountain view beyond, creating what the couple describes as an almost artwork-like moment. "When you're sitting in the dining area, the mountains are framed perfectly by the arch, so it almost looks like a picture hanging on the wall," they say. "We knew we wanted to create a special moment there, but seeing it finished was even better than we imagined."

Still, it is the collection of smaller architectural details that Henry and Brooke are especially proud of. Rather than relying on a single dramatic feature, the home's personality comes from the way stone, millwork, windows, lighting, hardware and openings work together. "It's easy to focus on the big decisions when you're building, but it's the smaller details that really give a home personality," they say. "There was a lot of thought behind how all of those details work together."

That same intentionality extends to the feeling Henry and Brooke hope Project House Tennessee gives everyone who visits. Beautiful as it may be, they want the house to be experienced, not simply admired. "We want people to feel comfortable and welcomed," they say. "We want people to come in, sit down, relax and feel like they can stay awhile."



*(below)* Designed with function in mind, the laundry room features a long countertop that provides plenty of dedicated folding space without relying on the tops of the machines. Open bays below hold pull-out baskets for easy sorting, white oak cabinetry by Brass + Ivory Cabinetry allows for ample storage. Black matte penny tile underfoot adds a durable, graphic finish.







Clopay's 9-by-8-foot Canyon Ridge 5-Layer carriage house doors, were finished in Black Fox using Clopay's Color Blast system. A single row of rectangular lites tops each door, while the carriage-style detailing complements the home's cottage architecture and gives the garage a more intentional, integrated presence.








Ultimately, that may be the best measure of the project's success. "What we love most is that the finished house feels like us," Henry and Brooke say. "Project House Tennessee was never just about building a pretty house. It was about creating a home that feels timeless, comfortable and connected to a place that means a lot to us."

And with Tennessee's mountains just beyond the windows and generations of memories still ahead, it is a home that feels exactly where it belongs.

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**PRODUCED BY** Kelly McMaster | **IMAGES COURTESY OF** our Project House sponsors







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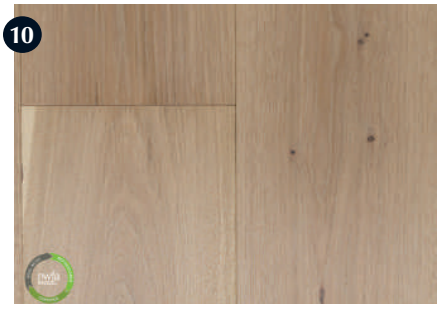


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# Woodland *Wonder*

Brass deer, a soft palette and candlelight give an enchanting twist to this home's holiday decor.

**WRITTEN BY** Jolene Nolte
**PHOTOGRAPHY BY** J.L. Jordan Photography
**STYLING BY** Bethany Adams



"This room is the perfect example of how a few simple elements (greenery, candles, ribbons) can come together to create a showstopper," Bethany says. The tree in a gorgeous pot from Blue Ocean Traders and a lush mantel with persimmons bring an elegant touch. This room also has a large brass deer that ties in with the room's other metallic accents.





"Our large tree is always about the children," Bethany says. She and her two daughters love to decorate the tree with ornaments they have collected in their travels. They fill out the tree with tinsel, colorful ribbon and colored lights—"they're just more fun than plain white lights," Bethany says.



The stairway with its rich wood paneling is already stunning. A vintage brass deer weaves in the woodland theme while the garland with satin ribbon and the lanterns with candles create a holiday statement.



Candlelight and greenery create holiday magic yet again on this mantel with gorgeous handcarved details.

*Decorating for the holidays is* about tradition, ritual, coziness, nostalgia and creating a beautiful backdrop for celebrating with loved ones. For interior designer Bethany Adams of Bethany Adams Interiors, decorating her 1897 Italianate home in Old Louisville, Kentucky for the holidays is all about creating a peaceful ambience that complements her unique home and the family that lives within it.

## TIMELESS AND FRESH

Bethany's home has eight fireplaces. When she approaches holiday decorating, she begins with those eight mantels. The mantels, Bethany says, "are the natural place to showcase beautiful greenery and holiday decor." She loves to use greenery and candles, timeless elements which ground the holiday decor in tradition.

At the same time, Bethany's decor is not at all cookie cutter. The first place you see this is in the color scheme. Red and green may be the classic Christmas combination, but when your year-round decor does not combine well with those colors, what are you to do? Bethany describes her solution: "Instead of forcing a holiday color palette on my spaces, I lean into holiday decor in the existing scheme. Variations you could try include pink and light green, fuchsia and chartreuse."

Other unique touches include vintage plastic 3D holiday postcards in pastel colors lining the walls above the mantel. In the library, Bethany and her daughters had fun creating a Christmas tree made of green books of varying sizes with a chunky paperweight as the topper.

Bethany has also collected vintage brass deer to use in her holiday decor for a woodland theme. The brass' shine adds some glitz and glamor while the woodlandl theme and ample greenery provides a sense of nature's serenity. Bethany's holiday home is rooted in tradition but suffused with personal touches and a sense of "all is calm, all is bright."





"I'VE SPENT YEARS COLLECTING VINTAGE BRASS DEER TO USE IN MY HOLIDAY DECOR. DEER AND FOREST THEMES—LIKE THE WOODLAND MUSHROOMS ON MY DINING TABLE—***FEEL SO PEACEFUL TO ME AND THAT IS WHAT WE ALL WISH FOR DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON: PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TO MEN***."





*(opposite)* The dining room embraces minimalist restraint with warm wood furniture, tailored Roman shades, and sculptural lighting that keeps the space sophisticated but relaxed.

*(above)* Decorative mushrooms of varying heights in the tablescape fit the woodland theme but offer a fresh take on holiday decor.





## BETHANY'S HOLIDAY DECORATING TIPS

- **Use fresh greenery.** Not only is it beautiful, but its fragrance is delightful and associated with happy memories. "The smell of balsam pine boughs brings me back to my childhood," Bethany says.

- **Incorporate candlesticks.** Candlelight can be enchanting as well as timeless. "It's fun to imagine Christmases from a hundred years ago taking place and the rooms being decorated in some version of greenery and candlelight," Bethany says.

- **Layer in satin ribbon.** Bethany explains, "It's another simple decoration that can have so much impact." You can use ribbon anywhere, and it is also fairly simple to store once the holidays have past.

Since the dining room has a pink and teal color scheme year-round, Bethany leaned into the room's existing color scheme with soft pink candles and lush greenery. Vintage brass deer set the tone for the room's holiday decor and echo the metallic shine of the lighting fixtures while the mushrooms on the tablescape add a touch of whimsy and woodland charm.



A sitting vintage brass deer signals this is a place to relax, and just a bough of fresh greenery is all this bedroom needs for holiday decor.












*(top, left)* Bethany and her daughters had fun hunting for books from their library to make a Christmas tree. A chunky metallic paperweight provides the perfect tree topper.

*(top, right)* A bathroom doesn't need to be decked out for the holiday, but a simple evergreen bough in a brass vase ties in the space with the rest of the home and brings just a touch of festive charm to the space.

*(above)* Bethany pulled the pastel color scheme from the room's existing decor. Vintage plastic 3D holiday postcards echo the color palette and add unique charm to the space.



# Cozy Colors with a Dash of Sparkle

Daisy Cottage shines at Christmas.

**WRITTEN BY** Meryl Schoenbaum
**STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Kim McCole










*(opposite)* "This is the sitting room, where guests gather as a conversation spot with a cocktail or coffee," Kim says. It features an armoire that she turned into a bar cabinet. (above left) The Christmas tree with a view of the sitting room. (above right and right) The center hall's antique table has a vignette including a stack of garden books, vintage ornaments inside a cloche and a thrifted Jesus statuette.



Daisy Cottage is charming and colorful all year round, but it blooms even brighter during Christmas. The person responsible for its warm holiday glow is homeowner Kim McCole.

"Christmastime is my favorite season for its meaning and all that it represents, and for the moments shared with family and friends amongst the sparkle and joys of the season," Kim says. "I always feel very nostalgic when I begin decorating for Christmas, especially when doing the tree. Our children's childhood ornaments are hung every year, and they are my favorite. I've been collecting vintage Shiny Brites for the last several years and they, along with the handmade and beloved pet ones, go together with ease."

Daisy Cottage is an antique gem: a Craftsman bungalow built in Lakeland, Florida, in 1922. Kim and her family have lived there since October 2005. It has three bedrooms, three baths and a studio apartment.














Christmas red is the unifying holiday color throughout the rooms of Daisy Cottage. Festive elements include a teddy bear elevated for Christmas by holding a wreath; red drinking glasses; red faux poinsettias and vintage ornaments. (opposite, top left) A Christmas faux tree in entry room with clay pots behind it. (opposite, top right). The kitchen's yellow table looking into the family room, where a coral wall brightens the space.





Daisy Cottage's neighborhood is as charming as you would expect given its name. "Our home is located a few blocks from the lake, which is home to Lakeland's beautiful swans and near downtown," Kim explains. "I love our location and the ability to walk to nearby restaurants, the library and the museum. We live in an eclectic, historic neighborhood with sidewalks, trees and lots of charm."

It isn't difficult to transition Daisy Cottage from its everyday to holiday décor, Kim says. "I really love what we already have in place in Daisy Cottage, so it is easier and more fun for me to add touches of Christmas into the mix wherever I can instead of removing things and completely redoing it," she explains. "For example, I tuck ornaments here and there, hang little wreaths on existing hooks and make room on tabletops for little collections. The colors that I already have in the home are wonderful at Christmastime!"

## SOURCING & STYLING

Kim sets her sights on vintage finds to add charm and warmth to her home for the holiday season. "I have greatly pared down our Christmas décor over the years, but I do enjoy finding vintage Christmas treasures when out thrifting or antiquing during the year," she says. "Filling glass bowls with Shiny Brites is something I love to do. I place them around the house for sparkle. Christmas pillows add a festive touch and even the teddy bears get to come out and play."

Daisy Cottage is a delightful blend of classic and contemporary Christmas decorations. "I definitely mix old and new, high and low," Kim says. "Blending is really easy as I am merely just adding little bits of Christmas in, here and there."

Kim also blended her home's Christmas 2026 color palette to make it her own. "I pretty much decorate with the traditional red and green holiday colors, but there is always pink, yellow and coral too," she says. "Daisy is already layered in these hues, so adding Christmas décor is kind of like the frosting on the cake."


BIRDS
BIRDS






# SUGAR COOKIES

**Kim enjoys making these sugar cookies using a recipe from her neighbor, Erin.**

**Serving size:** This makes enough for a double batch.



**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 egg
- 2½ cups flour
- Pinch of salt

**Instructions:**

Cream softened butter, sugar, and vanilla. Beat in egg with mixer. Add flour slowly and mix well. Chill for 2 hours. Roll out dough on parchment paper. Cut out shapes with favorite Christmas cookie cutter and bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until edges just start to brown. Cool on rack and frost.

**Frosting:**

- 1 cup butter, softened
- Approximately 3 lbs. powdered sugar
- Milk
- Vanilla
- Almond extract

Mix together butter and sugar. Slowly add milk until the consistency is right. Add vanilla to taste. Add almond extract to taste.





*(above, left)* The kitchen looking into the family room. Above the draperies is a headboard with faux garland. (below) The entry room includes an old dresser that was painted in a vintage pink, a vintage thrifted stocking and floral draperies Kim found on Facebook Marketplace. (opposite) The sitting room's green wall fits the Christmas ambience. Vintage floral and fruit paintings brighten the walls. The flooring is the original 1922 oak floors.



When asked about her favorite Christmas decorations, Kim replied, "There isn't one special keepsake, but each one that was our children's and the ones honoring our pets are always most loved.

## CHRISTMAS AT DAISY COTTAGE

Kim gives us a guided tour of her holiday home. When guests arrive at the front door, they are greeted with a Christmas wreath and doormat, poinsettias on the porch table and twinkle lights on the porch dresser. Outdoor linens include tablecloths for the tables and pillows for the porch swing.

Holiday visitors receive a warm welcome in the entry room with a Christmas tree; candlesticks with red ribbons tied on them; a glass cloche that holds vintage blue and white angels; a pink dresser with vintage needlepoint stockings hanging on knobs; a secretary desk in Christmas green with red poinsettias on top; a vintage hand crocheted tree skirt and a round floral tablecloth, both eBay finds.




MODERN LIVING
GRANDIFLORA
CLAIRE BINGHAM
Living with ROSES
FROM THE EDITORS OF VICTORIA
KIT KEMP
DESIGN THREAD



The entry room is anchored with a round table and round tablecloth, both from eBay. Kim painted the secretary desk bright green and topped it with faux poinsettias. Yellow draperies frame the dining room. Décor books and a shell box are displayed on the table. A leopard-print area rug adds another pattern and texture to the room.

The dining room is decorated with festive touches to set the tone for holiday feasts, such as Christmas dishes, poinsettias in vintage urns, a red plaid tablecloth and red candlesticks. "The tablescape includes red glasses from a thrift shop; gold Shiny Brites for table sparkle; red berry napkin rings for candlestick flair and vintage napkin rings donned with a gold bow," Kim says.

The heart of the home was spiced up with Christmas décor. Kim draped faux garland around the kitchen doorway; propped up a vintage Santa on a table and displayed a stack of thrifted vintage Christmas dishes and a Santa cup from a local shop.

Kim decked out the sitting room for the holiday. "The sitting room's green walls are the perfect backdrop at Christmastime," she says. "A rooster gets a red ribbon for the holidays; a Christmas pillow with 'joy' on the front gives a touch of holiday coziness to the floral sofa; a vintage pedestal dish holds ornaments and two red thrifted glasses are added to mix."

Collected Santas congregate in the family room. "I added my Santa collection to the yellow family room table," Kim says.

The holiday spirit continues into the primary bedroom, where the décor takes on a whimsical note. "A vintage teddy bear holds a wreath on a red dresser," Kim says. "More vintage ornaments are placed on a dresser dish."



*(above)* When Kim spotted this cabinet it was a "dingy brown," so she painted it green. The dining room chandelier was a Facebook Marketplace find; Kim paid only $25 for it. (opposite, top right) In the upstairs guest room, a red plaid pillow adds a touch of Christmas. (opposite, bottom right) Floral bedding becomes Christmas cozy with a red plaid pillow. (opposite, top left) The primary bedroom welcomes a teddy bear made festive with a wreath.

That same festive spirit carries into the guest room, where overnight visitors are welcomed with holiday cheer. "A tartan pillow gives the guest room bed a festive touch," Kim says. "Christmas red is celebrated with roses."

Even a hall and a hall bathroom received festive touches. "A little center hall displays glass cloches filled with vintage ornaments and a vintage Jesus figurine," Kim points out. "In the hall bath, I hung white twinkle lights around the mirror and greenery was embellished with flowers and ornaments."

## TREE LINES

Kim explained what having a Christmas tree trimmed with nostalgic ornaments means to her. "The Christmas tree is more of an eclectic, collected style," she says. "I enjoy seeing it from the entry room, dining room and sitting room vantage points. I miss it so much when the season is over," she says. "While we always had real Christmas trees before, we have used artificial ones the last few years. We found a great faux one and we add our own white lights to it."

Kim considers her approach to styling her Christmas décor each year. "I always want our home to feel warm and welcoming, and I keep that in mind when decorating for Christmas," she says. "I love mixing colors and patterns with sparkle and texture; anything that evokes coziness and all things 'home.' I would describe my holiday décor as colorful Christmas cozy with a dash of sparkle."

**TO SEE MORE OF DAISY COTTAGE, VISIT KIM'S INSTAGRAM PAGE @DEARDAISYCOTTAGE.**








be our guest


HOME AGAIN
FARMER



# Put a Bow on It

Our 2026 Brand Ambassador, Wendy, takes a playful approach to Christmas ribbon, combining bold patterns and varied scale for a look that's festive and full of fun.

PRODUCED BY Kelly McMaster | PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY WENDY CONKLIN



*For Wendy,* ribbon is much more than the finishing touch on a Christmas tree. Stripes, ginghams, solids and satins become another decorating material altogether-adding pattern, movement, texture and plenty of personality throughout her holiday home. We chatted with our 2026 Brand Ambassador about her favorite ribbon tricks, how she creates those wonderfully full bows and why sometimes the best decorating rule is simply to trust your eye.

***CB:*** *Ribbon plays such a major role in your Christmas decorating. When did it become one of your signature elements?*

**Wendy:** It really clicked for me this past Christmas. I realized ribbon isn't just a finishing touch—it's fabric. It can carry pattern, texture and scale the exact same way a bolt of fabric can. Once I saw it that way, I couldn't unsee it. A garland becomes a canvas. A chandelier becomes a place to layer stripes against gingham against a solid. It gave me a whole new material to design with, and I've been a little obsessed ever since.

***CB:*** *Do you select your ribbon first and build the holiday palette around it, or does the ribbon come later? And how many different patterns and widths do you typically use in one room or on one tree?*

**Wendy:** The palette always comes first for me. I decide on my colors for the season, and ribbon is one of the last things I bring in-it's what pulls everything together once the rest of the story is already there. On any given tree or in one room, I'll usually work with three to five different patterns and widths. That's enough to get some real mixing-like a stripe against a gingham against a solid-without it turning into visual noise.



***CB:*** *What's your secret for mixing stripes, gingham, florals and solid-colored ribbons without making the display feel too busy?*

**Wendy:** My real trick is varying the scale, not just the pattern. A wide stripe next to a tiny gingham next to a solid—when the sizes are different, your eye has somewhere to land instead of everything competing at once. That's what keeps it feeling layered instead of chaotic. As for color, I don't follow a strict formula. I don't sit down and repeat the same two or three colors in every ribbon, I just go by feel. If it looks right together, it is right together. Trusting your eye matters more than any rule.

***CB:*** *What types of ribbon hold their shape best for the large bows and loops seen throughout your home?*

**Wendy:** I almost always reach for wired ribbon if I can get it. That's what lets a bow hold its shape and keep that full, sculptural look instead of going flat. But color and pattern make the first choice for me every time; if those are right, the ribbon earns its place.

For big statement pieces—trees, wreaths and mantels—I usually use ribbon somewhere in the 1½- to 4-inch range, so the bows have real presence. For smaller accents like chair ties or ornament loops, I scale down to about ⅝ to 1½ inches, so the ribbon doesn't overwhelm the piece.

***CB:*** *How do you place ribbon on a Christmas tree?*

**Wendy:** Ribbon always goes on first for me. I start at the top of the tree and work my way down, embellishing as I go, and then the ornaments go on last. At the very end, I go back through and fill any gaps with a little more ribbon wherever the tree needs it.

***CB:*** *Do you attach ribbon directly to the branches, or do you create bows and ribbon bundles beforehand?*

**Wendy:** A mix of both. I make my three-loop bows and layered bundles separately first so I can get the shape and pattern mix exactly right before they ever touch the tree.

But I also weave loose ribbon straight onto the branches as I go, especially at the start when I'm building that base layer of color before the ornaments go on. The premade bows give me the big, dramatic moments, and the loose ribbon fills in the movement in between.

***CB:*** *What common mistakes do people make when adding ribbon to a tree?*

**Wendy:** The biggest one is treating every ribbon the same width and scale. When everything is the same size, patterns start competing instead of layering. Varying the scale is what keeps a tree from feeling busy.

The other mistake is playing it too safe with color and pattern, then trying to add ribbon at the very end as an afterthought. Ribbon needs to be part of the plan from the start, not a last-minute accessory tucked in around finished ornaments.

***CB:*** *Approximately how much ribbon does it take to achieve a really full look on an average-size Christmas tree?*

**Wendy:** Honestly, I don't have an exact number, but it's more than most people expect! We went through several spools to get that full, layered look on my tree. My advice is to buy more than you think you'll need. Ribbon is one of those things where you can always use the extra for bows, packages or next year, but running out mid-tree is what stops people from getting that lush, full effect.

***CB:*** *How do you make those full tree toppers and oversized bows?*

**Wendy:** I use a three-loop technique that a friend showed me. It's fast, forgiving and doesn't require any fancy tying skill. I make three loops in my hand, secure the center with floral wire, leave enough extra ribbon for tails, then fluff and bend each loop until it feels right. Wired ribbon makes this easy because it holds whatever shape you give it.

For really full toppers and oversized bows, I layer two or three of these three-loop bows together—mixing checks with solids, stripes with velvet, bold color with pale color, oversized ribbon with skinny ribbon. Then I wire them together into one piece before attaching it to the tree, wreath or chandelier. That layering is where the volume and drama really come from.











***CB:*** *You repeat ribbon on the chandelier, mantel, front-door wreath and packages. How do you decide which patterns to carry from one area to another?*

**Wendy:** It's really a combination of color and practicality. Every area shares the same color story, so even if the exact pattern shifts, it still reads as one connected house rather than a collection of separate vignettes. And honestly, a lot of the repetition happens naturally. I'll have ribbon left over from making bows for one spot, and instead of letting it sit unused, it becomes the starting point for the next area. So the patterns travel through the house the same way the leftovers do!

***CB:*** *What's the easiest way to extend a tree's ribbon palette into the rest of the room?*

**Wendy:** Save your scraps. Whatever ribbon you use on the tree, don't toss the leftover pieces. Tie them onto stocking hangers, tuck them into a mantel garland, wire a small bow onto a doorknob or lamp, or use them to finish a wrapped gift under the tree.

You don't need to buy new ribbon for every surface. The tree already set your color story, so carrying those same pieces—or the same colors in a different pattern—into two or three other spots is enough to make the whole room feel intentional without making it feel like you decorated by committee.

***CB:*** *You also decorate your chandelier with ribbon and ornaments. How do you do that safely?*

**Wendy:** It depends on your chandelier's structure. On my dining room chandelier, I have a bar underneath, so I drape the ribbon over that for support. My kitchen chandelier doesn't, so there I drape the ribbon over the arms instead. Either way, the ribbon is doing the work of holding the ornaments—not the bulbs or any delicate parts—so nothing is putting strain on the wiring or fixtures themselves.

I cut long strips of satin ribbon and tie an ornament to each end, so it drapes evenly over the bar or arm, then gently pull one side to stagger the ornaments at different heights. I keep everything high enough that it never obstructs anyone's view or reach at the table. Once the ornaments are hung, I add small gingham bows above each one, then finish with a couple of oversized wired bows at the top for that full, festive look.

***CB:*** *Do you reuse and reshape your ribbons each year?*

**Wendy:** I do. Wired ribbon is forgiving that way—even after a bow has been up for weeks, you can fluff and reshape it right back into form.

To store it, I flatten the bows down and stack them. That keeps them from taking up too much space and protects the shape well enough that when I pull them out the next season, a little fluffing brings them right back to life.

***CB:*** *What are your favorite sources for colorful or unusual ribbon?*

**Wendy:** My go-to sources are Crafttex, Ribbon Bazaar and Ribbon Factory. They're where I find the patterns and colors that don't feel like everyone else's Christmas—the stripes, ginghams and unexpected combinations that give my decorating its signature look.

***CB:*** *What advice would you give someone who loves this colorful, ribbon-filled Christmas look but worries it might feel overwhelming?*

**Wendy:** Start with your palette, not your fear. Once you've settled on a color story you love, trust it. Every ribbon you choose from that world can work together, even when the patterns are different. And remember, ribbon is forgiving. If a bow doesn't look right, reshape it, restyle it or move it somewhere else on the tree. Nothing is permanent. The "overwhelming" feeling usually comes from overthinking it before you start, not from the ribbon itself. Once you commit to your colors and just start layering, it comes together faster than you'd expect.

Wendy's adventurous approach reminds us that there's no need for a complicated formula: choose a palette you love, mix up the patterns and scale, reuse what you have and, most of all, trust your eye. And if there's a little ribbon left over? Even better. With Wendy's playful ideas as inspiration, there's always one more spot just waiting for a bow.

**TO SEE MORE OF WENDY'S HOLIDAY HOME, TURN TO PAGE 16 IN THIS ISSUE.**


down to earth

# Charm & Cheer

This custom Virginia home continues to evolve and expand, especially with holiday traditions.

**WRITTEN BY** Sherry Moeller | **PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Stacy Zarin Goldberg
**HOLIDAY PHOTO STYLING:** MoKi Media Moeller
**DESIGN-BUILD TEAM:** WINN Design + Build | **CONSULTING ARCHITECT:** Harrison Design
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:** Richardson & Associates Landscape Architecture



The family's goldendoodle, Archie, sits among the Scandinavian and nature-inspired holiday decor throughout the family room, which includes one of two trees on display each year.



*(bottom, left)* The French Provincial facade includes copper gutters, a cedar shake roof, and steel front doors with simple red wreaths.

*(below)* A stacked stone fireplace with limestone slab is adorned with oversized holiday ornaments and greenery for a cheerful outdoor setting with landscaping by Richardson & Associates Landscape Architecture. The custom home was designed and built by WINN Design + Build with consulting architecture by Harrison Design.





*When Michael and Melinda Winn* tore down the 1950s Cape in McLean, Virginia they had lived in for eight years, they replaced it with a new custom home that looks like it had always been there. The exterior includes elements that age over time, such as a cedar shake roof, copper gutters, and painted brick with a stucco-like finish, giving it a French Provincial facade.

The interiors take on more of a contemporary feel. "The thing we love most inside is the light," says Michael. Natural light streams into the family room, breakfast room, and kitchen, the spaces where they live. "A kitchen with 10-foot ceilings and an island that size could feel cold, so we added exposed beams and kept the lighting low and layered," he adds. On a gray December morning, it still feels bright in the kitchen, where they spend a lot of time cooking from Thanksgiving through New Year's.





The kitchen includes a statement making range and brass faucet, hardware, and light fixture accented with colors of the season.



"We eat most of our meals as a family in the breakfast room, and it looks straight out onto the landscaping, so the view changes with the seasons," Michael says. They also spend a lot of time in the main floor study. "The study is smaller, warmer, and the room you disappear into with a book," he adds. "The study's custom stone fireplace surround is one of the personal touches that makes the house feel like ours and nobody else's."

"The house mostly works the way we planned it," says Michael. "But a few rooms have taken on new lives as the kids have grown. The clearest example is a former playroom in the basement that is now our home gym." It's the same space, but with a completely different purpose, much like the media room with game tables, which is now where their two teenagers hang out with friends. "That's exactly what you hope for when you design rooms with a little flexibility built in," he adds. "None of that was on our minds when we originally built the house, and that's the point; the spaces were able to grow into whatever the family needed."



The wicker chandelier and chairs reinforce the easy, organic feel in this much-loved and festive hub of the home.









Using vintage candlesticks and silverware, the table is decorated with blue accents that complement the same hue in the painting by Lisa Tureson. Jonathan Adler's animal-themed holiday ornaments are a fun surprise at each place setting.

## HOW TO CREATE A FESTIVE HOME

1. Line the windows with fresh unadorned wreaths for an organic feel. The wonderful aroma of evergreen is a bonus.
2. Unpack the heirloom silverware and serving pieces during the holidays and extend their use into the winter months for a warm, inviting, and nostalgic touch.
3. Prepare and display simple homemade treats, including seasonal fruits and nuts, to share with family and friends.
4. Consider gathering for a cookie exchange to fill the home with the smells of the season.
5. Add subtle festive touches to just about every room. For instance, the Winns' black matte French stove is accented with pops of red with a Le Creuset Dutch oven, pomegranates, and winter flowers to create just the right amount of holiday cheer.
6. Hang a fresh wreath on the range hood.
7. Place a small gift tied with bright ribbon at each place setting to not only create a festive look, but also to make each family member and guest feel special.
8. Display one real tree and one artificial tree in different rooms with varying decor for a festive family tradition.






Photo by by Nova Soul Imagery

*(top)* A wreath over the iron canopy bed brings touches of blue into the primary bedroom, which includes a vaulted and beamed ceiling.

*(above)* Although the study was one of the final spaces to be completed, it is currently one of the most used rooms with its prominent fireplace and wall of books.



A freestanding tub is the focus of the primary bathroom, which includes dual walnut vanities and a heated floor.

The Winns enjoy all the holidays throughout the year, but Thanksgiving is at the top of their list with extended family visiting, a full house, and a great deal of noise. "We designed the home with big gatherings in mind, and the house earns its keep every November," Michael says. Christmas is the other big holiday for the household. The Winns have an open house once during the season, a week or two before Christmas. "Once it's decorated, it seems like a waste not to share it," Michael says of this annual December get-together. "It's turned into one of our favorite nights of the year."

Another tradition the family loves is one they created as their own. "Every fall we host an outdoor movie night in the backyard for family and friends," he says. "We project a movie onto the back of the house and set up a make-your-own-pizza station that includes a long table of toppings, and everyone builds their own. It started small and has gotten a little out of hand in the best way," Michael adds. "That night has nothing to do with how the house looks and everything to do with how it feels, which is the whole point. It's about the house being the place everyone wants to end up."

**SEE SOURCES, PAGE 112.**

# *A Traditional* East Coast Christmas

A 1942 home in Connecticut embodies traditional East Coast holiday charm.

**WRITTEN BY** Jolene Nolte | **PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY** Kristy Cadwallader



"During the holiday season, I want to keep things classic," Kristy says. "We hang wreaths with red velvet bows on every window, and I use a mix of fresh garland around our front door. We wrap warm white lights around our shrubs and garland. Our front door always has a fresh wreath on it. We have the best farm and market nearby with the most gorgeous wreaths and garlands."





The entryway provides a moment in our home," Kristy says, and that moment becomes especially enchanting at Christmastime with red velvet ribbon, twinkle lights, fresh greenery and holly berries.





*(above, left)* A fresh, full wreath with pops of red from holly berries and the bow greet you with classic, festive cheer.

If you didn't know better, this 1942 saltbox home dubbed Foxhill House at Christmas looks like it could be the March family home at the beginning of Little Women. Both share a Connecticut setting and are lovingly decorated with simple elegance. Sometimes with all the glitz and glamor of holiday decor, coming back to the basics of fresh greenery and red velvet bows is as wholesome as it gets.

## FOXHILL HOUSE

Homeowner, photographer and interior designer Kristy Cadwallader and her husband found Foxhill House in Wethersfield, Connecticut in 2017. They fell in love with the original details of the colonial home. "We loved all the original oiled hardwoods throughout, and the original hand-carved fireplace mantel. It had so much charm with the original French doors, dental crown moulding, and library built-ins," Kristy says. They knew it would require work to update, and since then, they have been investing in making their family home both workable for a modern family as well as retaining its historic charm.






Kristy and her family choose a fresh Frasier Fir every year. "They just say Christmas to me. They smell amazing and have such a uniform shape," she says. She and her family have collected 25 years' worth of ornaments to decorate with, and dried oranges adds a timeless touch. A red bow in lieu of a tree topper ties the tree in with the rest of the decor throughout the home. Zoey, a teacup Maltese, has been part of the family for 13 years.



*(above, left)* Who doesn't love a cozy fireplace during the holidays? Kristy loves the original hand-carved mantel, which sets the scene for family movie and game nights during the holiday season.



*(above, right)* Kristy keeps the porch "very simple and natural" with twinkle lights on the tree, vintage snowshoes she found on a trip to Maine and classic tartan pillows.

## KRISTY'S TREE DECORATING RECIPE

**Here are the elements Kristy combined for her stunning tree.**

- Warm white mini lights, wrapped from the trunk upwards to make sure the spacing is even.
- Dried orange slices for a timeless touch.
- Tie in with the rest of your decor. In this case, blue and white ginger jars echo the blue and white throughout the rest of the home.
- Layer in beloved ornaments. Reliving memories from years gone by with loved ones is a cherished holiday tradition.
- Use a bow as the tree topper. Tying in with the red bow motif elsewhere, a large red bow as a tree topper brings the whole look together.

## DECK THE HALLS

With such a solidly traditional home, holiday decor accentuates rather than overwhelms the historic details of Foxhill House. "I love to stay traditional with my holiday decor," Kristy says. "Staying classic fits our home so well."

As to Kristy's holiday decor vision, she says, "I want everything to feel warm, inviting, and timeless." For Kristy, her husband, and two young adult boys, staying classic means culling from 25 years of family ornaments and picking out a Frasier Fir together. Kristy uses real greenery inside and out and handmakes red velvet bows. She also peppers the interior with tartans. "They never go out of style," she says.



The recently repainted exterior is especially charming with a fresh wreath hanging in every window. On the front door, you are welcomed with a fresh wreath with holly berries from Kristy's very own yard. Open the door and a charming staircase greets you. Kristy says, "I love wrapping fresh garland on our staircase with warm white lights. It's so welcoming, since it's the first thing you see when you enter our home."

Fresh white flowers—tulips and roses—also add a touch of timeless elegance to holiday tabletops in the living and dining rooms. Red bows and fresh garlands also grace year-round decor for just a touch of festive cheer in the bedroom and the gallery wall. Some moments feel so quintessentially New England, such as the needlepoint old salt fisherman in the hallway with a festive bow or the white and blue slipcovered chairs with fresh cedar clippings and a red bow hanging on the chandelier above.

There's no need for elaborate shopping lists or specialized color schemes. Just handmade red velvet bows and lots of fresh garlands and wreaths. Sometimes there's no better recipe for a cozy and elegant holiday as classic decor, and Kristy's 1942 Foxhill Home at Christmastime exemplifies just that.





Kristy uses the same double-sided velvet ribbon for the bows inside and out. "The garland on the chandelier in our breakfast nook is made with fresh cedar clippings," Kristy says.



The expandable dining room table can seat up to 10 people, and Kristy wanted the room to feel "like a jewel box, but not too overdone." She succeeds with the crystal chandelier providing a touch of glamour while the mahogany table grounds the space. Fresh cedar clippings add holiday charm and fragrance to the room.





*(above, left)* As the holiday hostess, Kristy loves to cook as well as prepare a beautiful tablescape. "I skipped the tablecloth and wanted it to feel elevated and old world with the warm woods," Kristy says. "I used our red tartan china and crystal glasses, and added extra pops of tartan with the placemats, napkins and crackers. I love to use fresh roses in my holiday centerpieces and mix in greenery. It feels so elegant."

*(above, right)* Bedrooms are sanctuaries, so Kristy wanted a holiday touch in the bedroom without overwhelming the peacefulness of the space. Just a few festive touches are all it takes.



## LOOKING AHEAD

For more on Kristy's home, renovations, and collections of New England lifestyle inspo, follow her **@kristynewengland** on Instagram. If you love Kristy's work, then you will be thrilled to hear that she is working on a book, Coastal Beauty, forthcoming in 2027. Kristy gives us a sneak peek: Coastal Beauty "is a love letter to the coastal summer, featuring my photography of all my favorite summer places, our coastal interiors, summer entertaining inspiration and highlights the classic American summer."

# Set for the Season

Three festive tablescapes offer fresh inspiration for gathering, celebrating and making the holiday table feel beautifully personal.








**WRITTEN BY** Kelly McMaster | **STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Anne Collins

*More than a mere backdrop* for a meal, setting the table at Christmastime is a place where color, tradition, treasured pieces and a few thoughtful details come together to create a feeling all their own.

We asked Anne Collins, who shares your fabulous tables on Instagram @ginghamsandbows, to show us a few of her favorite holiday tables. From a cheerful cottage table dressed in red, green and pink to a nostalgic setting inspired by Christmases past, these holiday looks show that a memorable table doesn't have to be complicated.

For Anne, her love of setting beautiful tables, and baking, too-really began with her mom. "Growing up, I loved watching her create special tables for our family and bake things for us to enjoy together. I learned so much from her, and those memories have stayed with me over the years. Now, whenever I set a table or bake something special, I find myself thinking of her. It makes both feel like a little way of carrying on something she loved and passed along to me, "explains Anne.

Start with something you love, layer in pieces that tell a story and add a little seasonal magic of your own.

## A NATURALLY SIMPLE CHRISTMAS

For this naturally simple Christmas table, the goal was to create something festive and beautiful using pieces already on hand. Classic white china layered over scalloped jute placemats sets a soft, neutral foundation, while green water glasses add just a hint of traditional Christmas color. For an easy centerpiece, a seasonal Trader Joe's planter filled with holiday greens was dressed up with sprigs of baby's breath, whose tiny white blooms lend an almost snowy effect. The sweetest detail comes at each place setting, where a homemade gingerbread reindeer cookie adds a touch of whimsy—and a little treat for guests to enjoy. The finished table is a lovely reminder that holiday decorating doesn't always require buying something new; favorite pieces can feel fresh again when paired with natural textures, greenery and a few thoughtful seasonal touches.

## A COTTAGE CHRISTMAS IN RED, GREEN AND PINK

For this cheerful cottage Christmas table, the inspiration began with a charming set of salad plates found at TJMaxx, featuring vintage-style Christmas trees and sweet pink bow details. From there, pieces already on hand came together in a classic red-and-green palette softened with pretty touches of pink. Green gingham placemats, simple white dinner plates and crisp white napkins tied with green satin ribbon create a layered look that still feels relaxed and approachable. At the center of the table, a red floral-patterned vase filled with berry stems adds a festive pop of color without overwhelming the setting. And for a playful finishing touch, a pink peppermint cake carries the rosy accent right through to dessert. Better yet, it's a reminder that holiday entertaining doesn't have to be complicated—a boxed cake mix dressed up with a few special touches can become a festive showstopper.





# PINK PEPPERMINT CAKE

**ANNE DRESSES UP A BOXED CAKE MIX FOR A TASTY SHOWSTOPPER.**

**What You'll Need:**

- 1 (15.25 ounce) white cake mix
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/3 cups water
- 1 cup sour cream (room temperature)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 4 egg whites (room temperature)

**Frosting:**

- 2 1/2 cups vanilla buttercream frosting (homemade or store bought)
- Optional:
- 2 drops pink gel food coloring
- Andes Peppermint Crunch Thins
- Crushed peppermint candies

**What You'll Do:**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Lightly spray and add parchment paper to three 8" round pans.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir together cake mix, flour, sugar and salt. Add water, sour cream, vanilla and peppermint extracts, and egg whites. Mix on low for 30 seconds and then increase speed to medium and mix for two more minutes.
3. Divide the batter evenly between the pans and bake for 30-32 minutes or until the tops are a light golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the centers of the cakes comes out clean. Place on wire rack. After 15 minutes, remove from pans and allow to cool fully on wire rack.

**Frosting the cake:**

Frost with your favorite vanilla buttercream. Add one teaspoon of peppermint extract and two drops of pink gel food coloring to your frosting recipe, if desired. Decorate the top of the cake with piped frosting and Andes Peppermint Crunch Thins.









## A CHRISTMAS TABLE INSPIRED BY MOM

For this nostalgic Christmas table, inspiration came from the beautiful holiday settings her mother created throughout her childhood. The memories came rushing back when she unboxed Stewart Plaid table linens, whose traditional tartan felt instantly warm, familiar and festive. To build on that collected-over-time feeling, she layered vintage Santa salad plates over ironstone dinner plates, then added vintage crystal water glasses and gold flatware. A simple evergreen wreath tucked with pinecones forms the centerpiece, while a glass hurricane and glowing candle add warmth without competing with the bold plaid. Red velvet bows tied around the napkins provide another classic Christmas touch, and mini dark chocolate Bundt cakes dusted with powdered sugar make a charming finishing detail—the rich chocolate even picks up the black in the tartan while the sugar gives them a snowy finish. More than anything, the table captures the spirit of those childhood Christmases: a beautiful setting prepared with care and ready for the people you love to gather around it.

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## *A New Tennessee Classic is Complete*

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Entry Door: Vintage Doors, fully custom 8-foot arched-top, half-glass mahogany door stained in Dark Walnut, vintagedoors.com
Garage Door: Clopay, Canyon Ridge 5-Layer carriage-house doors, Design 11 with REC14 windows, 9' x 8', finished in Black Fox through Clopay's Color Blast system, clopaydoor.com.
Roofing: TAMKO, Titan XT in Virginia Slate shingles, tamko.com.
Roof Installation: Smith Roofing & Exteriors, smithroofingservices.com.
Stone: Masonmade Stone, Orchard, with Oyster grout and cut-limestone sills, masonmadestone.com.
Windows: Windsor Windows, Pinnacle Clad Casement and Fixed aluminum-clad wood windows, bronze exterior with black interior and 2x3 grille pattern, windsorwindows.com.

## *Timeless by Design: The Full Reveal*

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To learn more about Plank & Pillow visit plankandpillow.com.

**Throughout the Home:**
Windows: Windsor Windows, Pinnacle Clad Casement and Fixed aluminum-clad wood windows, bronze exterior with black interior and 2x3 grille pattern, windsorwindows.com.
Wood Flooring: Mullican Flooring, Castillian Premier in Boardwalk, 9½-inch-wide planks, mullicanflooring.com.
Architectural Door Hardware: Regal Brands / Ageless Iron. Exterior doors: Keep One-Piece Handle set with A-Grip, Keep Plate and Keep Knob. Interior doors: Vale Short Plate with Keep Knob, agelessironhardware.com.
Cabinet Hardware: Regal Brands / Grandeur, including Fifth Avenue 1⅜-inch Cabinet Knobs in Vintage Brass; Geneva 6-inch and 8-inch Brass Handle Pulls in Vintage Brass; and Plain Flush Catches in Antique Brass, grandeurhardware.com.

**EXTERIOR**
Stone: Masonmade Design + Supply, Orchard, with Oyster grout and cut-limestone sills, masonmadestone.com.
Front Door: Vintage Doors, fully custom 8-foot arched-top, half-glass mahogany door stained in Dark Walnut, vintagedoors.com.
Front-Door Hardware: Regal Brands / Ageless Iron, Keep One-Piece Handle set with A-Grip with Keep Plate and Keep Knob - 2 3/8", agelessironhardware.com.
Garage Door: Clopay, Canyon Ridge 5-Layer carriage-house doors, Design 11 with REC14 windows, 9' x 8', finished in Black Fox through Clopay's Color Blast system, clopaydoor.com.
Roofing: TAMKO, Titan XT in Virginia Slate shingles, tamko.com.
Roof Installation: Smith Roofing & Exteriors, smithroofingservices.com.

**KITCHEN**
Cabinetry: Brass + Ivory Cabinetry, white oak with a custom natural-color stain; inset recessed-panel doors and drawers with custom reeded details, brassandivorycabinetry.com.
Countertops and Backsplash: Taj Mahal Quartzite with a slightly eased edge and softly rounded corners; the same stone continues into the full-height backsplash behind the range.
Range Hood: Hoodsly, Box Style Wood Range Hood, 48"W x 50"H, with custom 21-inch depth, hoodsly.com.
Range Hood Insert: ZLINE, 46-inch Wall-Mount Range Hood Insert, model 721-46, zlinekitchen.com.
Range: ZLINE, 48-inch Paramount Dual Fuel Range, DuoPro, model PSDR48, stainless steel, zlinekitchen.com.
Refrigerator: ZLINE, 36-inch Built-In Refrigerator, model GRBIV-36, panel ready, zlinekitchen.com.
Dishwasher: ZLINE, 24-inch Tallac Dishwasher, model DWV-24, panel ready, zlinekitchen.com.
Cabinet Hardware: Regal Brands / Grandeur, Fifth Avenue knobs and Geneva pulls in Vintage Brass, grandeurhardware.com.

**SCULLERY**
Cabinetry: Brass + Ivory Cabinetry, inset recessed-panel cabinetry, brassandivorycabinetry.com.
Countertops: Honed Absolute Black granite.
Microwave Drawer: ZLINE, 24-inch Microwave Drawer, model MWD-1, stainless steel, zlinekitchen.com.
Cabinet Hardware: Regal Brands / Grandeur, grandeurhardware.com.

**LAUNDRY ROOM**
Cabinetry: Brass + Ivory Cabinetry inset recessed-panel cabinetry, brassandivorycabinetry.com.
Cabinet Hardware: Regal Brands / Grandeur, grandeurhardware.com.

**MUDROOM**
Custom Lockers: Designed and built by Henry Jones of Plank & Pillow.
Bench: Red oak stained with Minwax Dark Walnut.

**LIVING ROOM**
Fireplace Surround: Custom cast stone with molded, stepped profile.
Firebrick: Ivory Firebrick, installed in a vertical stacked pattern.
Built-Ins: Custom designed and built by Henry Jones, with reeded white-oak backs.
Wood Flooring: Mullican Flooring, Castillian Premier in Boardwalk, 9.5" wide planks, mullicanflooring.com.

**DINING ROOM**
Wood Flooring: Mullican Flooring, Castillian Premier in Boardwalk, 9.5" wide planks, mullicanflooring.com.
Windows: Windsor Windows, Pinnacle Clad Fixed aluminum-clad wood windows, windsorwindows.com.

**PRIMARY BEDROOM**
Wood Flooring: Mullican Flooring, Castillian Premier in Boardwalk, 9.5" wide planks, mullicanflooring.com.
Windows: Windsor Windows, Pinnacle Clad Casement, windsorwindows.com.

**ENTRY / FOYER**
Front Door: Vintage Doors, custom 8-foot arched-top mahogany door stained Dark Walnut, vintagedoors.com.
Door Hardware: Regal Brands / Ageless Iron, Keep One-Piece Handle set with A-Grip, Keep Plate and Keep Knob, agelessironhardware.com.
Wood Flooring: Mullican Flooring, Castillian Premier in Boardwalk, 9.5" wide planks, mullicanflooring.com.
Windows: Windsor Windows, Pinnacle, bronze exterior/black interior, windsorwindows.com.


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# Tied Up *in Cheer*

Layers of ribbon, color and playful accents create a Christmas tree that feels festive, fresh and full of fun.



**WRITTEN BY** Kelly McMaster
**STYLED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY** Wendy Conkln

*This tree from* our 2026 Brand Ambassador, Wendy Conklin, is a celebration of color from top to bottom. Hot pink takes the lead, joined by candy-stripe reds, buttery yellows, soft greens and blush tones woven through the branches in loops, bows and trailing ribbon.

Oversized ornaments, whimsical gift-box accents and a statement bow at the top add to the playful, collected look, while coordinating packages below carry the palette all the way to the floor. The result is festive, fun and full of personality, exactly the kind of tree that makes you smile and reflects Wendy's exuberant style perfectly.

For more of Wendy's colorful Christmas style and tips on using bows, turn to page 78 and to page 16 for her last column as our Brand Ambassador.


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