

avenue

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15th
Anniversary
Issue

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Oh! Nirmala

CBC news anchor and style maven



Designer Decorations

Expert advice on how to decorate your home for the holidays, regardless of your budget or style

It's that time of year again. Time to drag out all of those dusty boxes filled with ornaments, bows and mistletoe from storage and let the Christmas decorations invade your home for another season. Used properly, the

right decorations can give your home a warm, festive feel. But in the wrong hands, they'll turn your living room into an explosion from Santa's workshop. We asked local design experts what works — and what doesn't. >>

Using the colour palette already in use in your home for your holiday decor helps create a cohesive and elegant look. Oversized but simple decorations such as these from HomeSense create a rich feeling.

LINDA VAN DIJK, OWNER, THE MUSE

In terms of holiday floral arrangements, we're going very traditional but with *pow*. People used to do more gold and white, but now the shift is toward keeping it homey with some edge. It's all about colours like red and black. Try red amaryllis, orchids or freesias paired with black vases on a dining table on either black or red tablecloths. Orchids are a tropical flower but can still be used at Christmas because of the colour. Seasonal greens have always played a role; you can use them and florals to decorate your plates and make a statement that way. A centerpiece is only needed if it's a sit-down occasion. On a dining table or buffet, the florals need to have height so they don't visually fight with the food. Use risers or bowls that are upside down or two vases stacked on top of each other to get height for grandeur and drama.

ROB KURKUT, BUYER AND SHOWROOM DESIGNER, GRAND GALLERY IMPORTS

Christmas is the one time of the year that brings out the display artist in everyone. So don't be afraid to give into your creative urges and express yourself. A decorating project I like to forgo is the traditional Christmas tree in favour of a festive tabletop made of tree branches. I put the branches into a cast-iron urn or vase. I use a plastic liner filled with sand, which keeps the branches upright and weights the base; then I cover the sand with moss. Branches over four feet give the display the presence of a seven-foot tree. Those tree branches can also be decorated with ornaments. For a shimmer effect, I like to use crystal and glass ornaments. You can build on this effect, without the use of plug-in lights, by placing the display on a table in front of a window, which will let the sunlight illuminate all the clear decorations. However, tea lights, or battery-operated tea lights, in clear glass holders scattered in front of the display can be used to create a modern and more subtle effect than the usual multicoloured, blinking Christmas lights. I enjoy staying true to my colour palette of white, clear glass and silver, which I find very classic.

VICTOR GAUTHIER, INTERIOR DESIGNER, INTERIOR LIVING

Keep holiday decorations simple. Keep in mind what colour theory you have already here in your home and either choose a contrast colour or keep within the pallet you have. Christmas is supposed to be fun, so keep everything simple and don't stress over the little things. If time is an issue, spread poinsettias throughout your home and call it a day. They make a statement and are easy to maintain. Also, try to keep holiday decor as natu-



"Christmas is supposed to be fun, so keep everything simple. If time is an issue, spread poinsettias throughout your home and call it a day." —Victor Gauthier

ral as possible. A real tree always looks, and smells, the best. But cinnamon sticks are also a great way to make your home smell like Christmas and the process is simple — just boil them in water.

CHANTEL C. SNYDER, PRESIDENT, CCS DESIGNS INTERNATIONAL

Christmas themes can be played up to go from traditional to contemporary, or whimsical to classic. The tree is an area where you can really get creative. If you do go with a theme, be it gold and silver, or a more minimalist, modern take, make sure it is consistent throughout your space. Larger ornaments always look better than the smaller ones, especially on a tree. If your budget allows, take the decorations to each room in your home. However, the most important place to make a statement is in the foyer. This area sets the stage for the rest of the house. Going big and bold with colours and ornament size here will make guests feel warm and welcomed upon entering.

Do**HAVE A GOOD TIME**

Listen to your favourite holiday tunes while you decorate. Keep it simple and remember that a few large decorations will make a bigger impact than many small ones. Feel free to make modern twists on tradition with colour or scale.

Don't**CLUTTER YOUR SPACE**

Be careful not to stuff your tree with a zillion decorations, or turn your home into a living museum that displays every decoration you've accumulated over the past 20 years.

DENISE CHAMBERS, INTERIOR DESIGNER, REVOLVE FURNISHING

Going modern with Christmas decorations is open to interpretation. A tree in a bold amethyst hue decked with minimal silver ornaments can create a very current look. In addition to a purple tree, black-feathered wreaths, sparkling candles and lots of lights can be used to bring on a funkier holiday feel. In the same vein, decorating can be taken to the other extreme of modernity, with sleekness and less colour to accent bright accessories. This can be done by using a white tree and white lights to make colourful ornaments pop against a dark background. Remember that decorations are meant to complement each other, while also contrasting both visually and texturally. The last piece of modern-holiday-decorating advice is not to create clutter. If it feels like there is too much going on, there probably is. **EW**