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Season of Giving

Holiday Pleasures This festive table starts with natural decorations, a citrus topiary and clove-studded Meyer lemon pomanders. The 18th-century French walnut banquet table and framed textile of a Chinese child's garment are from the Hamptons Antique Galleries; dining chairs, sideboard, hurricanes and lamps are from Harbor View Antiques; and the sconce is by Vaughan Designs. See *Resources*.

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Dressed For The Season

TOUCHES OF NATURE AND STRINGS OF LIGHTS CREATE
A CLASSIC CHRISTMAS IN A VINTAGE RIVERSIDE COLONIAL

BY JAMIE MARSHALL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT GRANT

All The Trimmings A lavishly decorated tree (THIS PHOTO) is the focal point of the family room, where a wood trunk from Antique and Artisan Gallery serves as the coffee table. The sofa is covered in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric. The silver nut dish (OPPOSITE PAGE) is an antique. See Resources.



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HEN DESIGNER LISA HILDERBRAND hears the word Christmas, the first thing that springs to mind is an idyllic scene: a fire in the hearth, a blanket of snow and Frank Sinatra crooning *Jingle Bells*. "It's my favorite time of year," she says, singing a line from the holiday classic. Hilderbrand's passion is deeply rooted in her DNA, nurtured and encouraged by her Christmas-loving father. "He always went all out," she says. "Every year there were more decorations, more lights, more garlands, bigger bows. I was the head elf. To this day, I love decorating for the holidays."

So, last year when the time-pressed owners of a mid-19th-century Colonial in Riverside asked her to dress their home in the spirit of the season, she was happy to oblige. After all, she knew the house well. They had hired her to redo the interiors after buying it in 2011, and they'd been so pleased with the results, they had her design their primary residence in Manhattan. "We take our kids to visit family during December, and it's so nice to come into our beautifully decorated home," says the husband, who grew up in Riverside and has fond memories of his childhood there.

Built by the Marks family, which made its fortune selling willow trees to the government for prosthetics during the Civil War, the house has retained much of its antique charm. "It has a beautiful staircase, wonderful wainscoting, even the original fir and pine floors in some areas," Hilderbrand says. "I think an antique Colonial is the perfect setting for Christmas decorations."

The goal was to concentrate mostly on the downstairs living spaces. "I start with the focal point of each room—the mantels, the stairway," Hilderbrand says. "I want the decorations to enhance the interiors, to be abundant but not overwhelm." She devised a classic Christmas motif, using



Glad Tidings In the living room (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP), seasonal greens and berries fill a vintage tea canister and jardinière; a midcentury tray table is from Hidden Galleries; chairs are upholstered in a Cowtan & Tout fabric. A Chinese screen (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) reflects the homeowners' affinity for Asian art. A classic wreath hangs above the bench in the breakfast room (THIS PHOTO), where side chairs sport vintage velvet. The trestle table is from Yellow Monkey Antiques. A corner of the den (RIGHT) does double duty as a bar area. See Resources.



lots of natural decorations—garlands, greenery, pinecones, berries, fruit and flowers. “Almost nothing artificial,” she adds.

In the dining room, she created an elegant tablescape incorporating vintage blue and white china, gold-rimmed stemware, and tiny egg-cup pomanders of clove-studded Meyer lemons. Instead of a traditional floral centerpiece, she opted for a citrus topiary. “It had a vibrant, gorgeous color, a wonderful aroma and an authentic feel for a traditional house,” she says. An antique scone is festooned with gold artichokes and pinecones, jauntily tied with green bows. “A can of gold spray paint is always in my holiday arsenal,” she says.

A perfectionist at heart, Hilderbrand labors as much over tiny details as she does the big picture. The homeowners have an affinity for Asian art, and the house reflects their passion. In the living room, a vintage tea canister and a blue and white jardinière serve as receptacles for seasonal greens and berries, while on the mantel, a pagoda pokes up from a bed of juniper and fir. “I want the décor to reflect their personalities, and be personal and charming too,” she says. “We work with objects that still keep the spirit of the house year round.”

No doubt the showstopper was the gumdrop-shaped Christmas tree in the family room. To play up the tree’s proportions and embrace the room’s low ceiling, she cut off a little of the bottom, making it appear even fatter. She added strings of lights, starting them at the center and working them out and back in again, then hung tiny ball ornaments deep inside the branches. “It’s a technique I learned from my father,” she says. “Always add more than you think you need—the tree just glows.”

“There are so many lights on the tree, it’s ridiculous,” the husband says with a chuckle. “It’s something that would take me a week to pull off, if I could even do it. I’d have to start doing Christmas at Halloween.” ✨