

CANADA'S

style at home

45+
gifts
FOR
EVERYONE
ON YOUR
LIST!

Celebrate

THE SEASON WITH
**DESIGNER
STYLE**

DIY

Scandi-chic
decorations

WOW
GUESTS
WITH
4
DECADENT
CHOCOLATE
CAKES

Try it:
Use **TWINKLE LIGHTS** in your table setting!



A mint green vase holding white-painted branches decorated with glass balls and wooden snowflakes serves as a festive centerpiece in the craft room. The handmade paper star garland is destined for the living room.

DESIGN, Kelly Deck Design, kellydeck.com; **ARCHITECTURE,** Sunshine Coast Home Design; **CONTRACTING,** A.T. Home Construction; **GREENERY & PLANTS** (throughout), Art Knapp, The Flower Factory; **mini ball and snowflake ORNAMENTS,** Roost.

OPPOSITE Designers Nicole Mah and Kelly Deck dressed the living room mantel with candles, tiny cypress trees and paperwhites (a classic holiday flower) set among loosely placed branches.

Discuss **ARTWORK,** Cissy Cook Designs; **CANDLESTICKS,** Crate and Barrel; **mercury glass VOTIVE HOLDERS,** West Elm; **white glass VOTIVE HOLDERS,** Indigo; **reindeer STOCKING HOLDERS,** Pottery Barn.

CHRISTMAS MAGIC



TEXT LAURA MUIR | PHOTOGRAPHY BARRY CALHOUN

In a faraway place where the nights are long and the stars shine bright, two designers work around the clock to fill a cottage with the spirit of Christmas for a very special family.



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sounds like nothing short of a Christmas miracle: arriving home during the busy holiday season to find that everything – from the tree to the table – has been decked out for Santa. And, no, not merely put together by elves but beautifully finished by real-life designers. That’s what happened to the owners of this bright and airy cottage located on British Columbia’s majestic Sunshine Coast.

But in this case, the homeowners, Canadian expats who live in Bermuda, admittedly knew what was coming. They enlisted Nicole Mah and Kelly Deck of Vancouver’s Kelly Deck Design to decorate the house for the holidays, but gave the designers carte blanche so the decor would be a complete surprise when they arrived after a long flight. “The homeowners said, ‘Surprise us,’” says Nicole, who was also the interior designer on the project when the 4,500-square-foot cottage was being built. “I’ve gotten to know the owners’ tastes over the past three years, so it was really effortless for me to create a Christmas look that was true to their aesthetic and consistent with the style of the space.”



ABOVE The cottage’s clean, comfortable aesthetic and fresh, bright palette served as the jumping-off point for the laid-back natural holiday theme. In the living room, the faux Christmas tree is adorned with a simple felt ball garland and a collection of ornaments in a predominantly neutral colour scheme. “The tree trimmings range from traditional to modern,” says Nicole. “We

wanted the tree to look collected with a lot of different decorations. But keeping the colours consistent makes them all work together.”

Oxford White CC-30 **WALL PAINT** (throughout), Benjamin Moore; custom built-in **CABINETRY** (throughout), Pacific Rim Cabinets; Rachel Ashwell **SOFAS**, Shabby Chic; custom **ARMCHAIRS**, Bari Designs; **COFFEE TABLE, RUG**, Scrabble **BOARD GAME**, Restoration Hardware; custom

ROMAN SHADES (throughout), Hartmann&Forbes; **LANTERNS** (on coffee table), Crate and Barrel; faux **CHRISTMAS TREE**, Canadian Tire; white feather **TREES**, Roost; felt ball **GARLAND**, West Elm.

RIGHT, FROM TOP White-painted branches adorned with ornaments have a Scandinavian feel; a string of felt acorns hung on a reindeer stocking holder acts as a playful accent in lieu of

a stocking; the Advent calendar in the craft room was made by stamping kraft paper envelopes with the day of the month and pinning them in the shape of a Christmas tree onto a linen-upholstered cork board; the place setting boasts an earthy quality, thanks to a sprig of eucalyptus, but the designers edged the leaves in gold glitter to give the arrangement a touch of holiday sparkle.

FESTIVE FACTOR

QUIET HOLIDAY MOMENTS SPEAK JUST AS LOUDLY AS BOLD, OVER-THE-TOP ONES – THE KEY IS TO KEEP IT SIMPLE AND STICK TO A COLOUR SCHEME.

The Xmas Files

holiday decorating style

NATURAL ELEMENTS PAIRED WITH SUPER-CHIC SILVER AND GOLD AND HINTS OF SOFT BLUE AND GREEN.

tree trimming tidbit

GET EVERYONE INVOLVED, AND HAVE FUN WITH IT – PLAY FESTIVE MUSIC AND SERVE YUMMY SNACKS.

unexpected decor touch

THE DIY ADVENT CALENDAR MADE OUT OF KRAFT PAPER BAGS (FILLED WITH CHOCOLATES) ARRANGED IN THE SHAPE OF A CHRISTMAS TREE.

most cherished christmas memento

THE FAMILY'S COLLECTION OF CHRISTMAS CARDS FROM FRIENDS AND RELATIVES.

outdoor lighting strategy

SOFT WHITE LIGHTS LINING THE ROOF, WINDOWS AND TREES.

it's not the holiday season until...

THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS ERECTED. "WE PREFER A REAL TREE, BUT AN ARTIFICIAL ONE IS MUCH MORE PRACTICAL FOR A COTTAGE," SAYS ONE OF THE HOMEOWNERS.

The kitchen's large eat-in area boasts comfortable slipcovered chairs, a generous banquette and breathtaking views. A palette of white, pale aqua and earthy beige tones gives the holiday table setting a modern look and ties in with the rest of the home.

Custom **DINING TABLE, DINING CHAIRS**, Once a Tree Furniture; **PENDANT LIGHT**, Circa Lighting; aqua **DINNER PLATES**, gold fig **VASES**, The Cross Decor & Design; white **SALAD PLATES**, The Seasoned Kitchen; **NAPKINS**, Smith Handmade; white cut-out **POTS**, Crate and Barrel.



TOP The craft room takes the place of a home office and provides a spot for the family to indulge their love of DIYs.

Schumacher **WALLPAPER**, AnneStarr; **DESK, DESK CHAIRS**, Pottery Barn; **SEAT CUSHION FABRIC**, Caitlin Wilson Textiles.

ABOVE "We didn't want anything to take away from the beautiful turquoise door," says Nicole. So the designers strung a simple wood-disc garland

that says "Merry Christmas" along the transom window.

Blue Ground 210 **FRONT DOOR PAINT**, Farrow & Ball.

RIGHT In the grand entryway, the banisters are decorated with faux evergreen garland embellished with pretty bows and delicate acorn and snowflake ornaments.

CONSOLE, Stanley Furniture; **GARLAND**, IKEA; acorn and snowflake **ORNAMENTS**, Roost.

Using the cottage's subdued colour scheme – inspired by sea glass from the beaches of Bermuda – and its contemporary, comfortable vibe as the starting point, Nicole and Kelly focused on a natural theme to keep things simple and fresh and in line with the coastal setting. "We wanted to create a playful, modern interpretation of the classic Christmas look so it would reflect the style of the rest of the house," says Nicole.

Whether store-bought or DIY, the decorations offer a handmade feel that's both whimsical and cozy. Organic elements and greenery like the white-painted branches, eucalyptus sprigs and potted paperwhites enhance the modern, fresh approach. A bit of essential Christmas sparkle and shine was incorporated via ornaments and accessories, which adhere to the colour scheme of white, gold, silver and soft blues and greens.

While the designers ensured the holiday decor suited the cottage's casual style, they also wanted it to be practical, so they picked a few artificial pieces like the Christmas tree in the living room and the staircase garland to make it a bit easier for these offshore homeowners. "We chose items they could easily store and then bring out and reuse every year," says Nicole.

Giving the family their privacy, Nicole and Kelly were away for the big reveal, but with the presents under the tree, the table set for dinner and even a game of Scrabble displayed on the coffee table – "They love to play board games together," says Nicole – it's safe to say these homeowners experienced the magic of Christmas as soon as they walked in the front door.

