

NO-RULES

Holiday Decor

BY JANE LOCKHART



Decorating for the holidays is very personal. Some people really couldn't care one way or the other, and then there are those who can't wait for the season to arrive. Apparently, it says a lot about who you are if you put your decorations up early.

DECORATE EARLY, BE HAPPY

The New York Post reported that people are happier if they put up holiday decorations, earlier than most, outside their home. A study published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* backs this up. We make associations with things that make us happy, and Christmas is, generally, a happy time. By putting up outdoor decorations evokes social cues to our neighbours, and suggests that we are friendly.

If this describes you, then chances are you've already brought out the boxes from storage, and you're living in a Christmas wonderland.

Photography, Gillian Jackson



From elegantly understated to boldly festooned, let your holiday style be an expression of who you are

ONCE UPON A TIME

There was a time when the traditional colour themes included red, green and white, with a touch of gold or silver for sparkle. Today, there aren't any colour limits and you can be as creative as you want to be. Visit any big box store after the 31st of October and you'll be inundated with possibilities.

If you're a person who prefers to decorate to a theme each year, then you'll know that new ornaments (and themes) are constantly being introduced to the market. If you can't find exactly what you're looking for, then make it. Home-made touches always add a special element.

WHEN DESIGNERS DECK A TREE

In our office we hold a tree decorating competition. One year our theme was A Wine-derful Christmas, which include wine glass, bottle ornaments and hand-made cork garland. For our Nordic Noel Tree, we used light-toned wood ornaments, hand cut white paper snowflakes, and played up a red, white and silver theme. Last year we did the the Tree of Misfit Fabrics. You guessed it – we used leftover fabric pieces, shaped them into bows, and complemented it with black, white and silver ornaments. It's always the homemade touches that get the most love.

WHEN TO LET LOOSE

Even if you tend to be a more restrained decorator when it comes to your home environment, you may show your playful side come Christmas. You don't have to go overboard (like we did), but by introducing the right lighting and holiday decor it can further elevate the moods of your family and friends.

There aren't any hard and fast rules for decorating your home for the holidays. Some (and you know who you are) go as far as to replace their dishes, serving ware, towels and bedding, and they decorate every room in the house. And, they do it faithfully every year. If you love to do it, then do it. However, if it's stressing you out, don't become a slave to a theme, as your family and friends would prefer to see you relaxed and happy.

WHEN TO SHOW RESTRAINT

If you're really gung-ho about getting the holiday started early, please remember that although we are surrounded by retailers pushing it earlier and earlier, we can still show a bit of restraint. Many feel that it's best to wait until after Remembrance Day, out of respect for those who fought for our freedom. It still leaves more than 40 days of letting the neighbours know that you're friendly and happy. ■

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