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FOR THE BIRDS

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ANDREA KERRISON

gets your home ready for the holidays

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DECK THE *Halls*

WHETHER IT'S YOUR HOME OR TABLE, INTERIOR DESIGNER
ANDREA KERRISON SHARES TIPS ON DECORATING FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

By JENNY LARSON

PHOTOS BY TATE CARLSON



Decorating during the holidays is fun, but can be a daunting task. With the holiday season right around the corner, we've turned to an expert—local interior designer Andrea Kerrison—to provide us with holiday decorating tips for your entire home, indoors and out.

As owner of LarsonKerrison Interior Design, Kerrison has long been respected for delivering an exclusive, all-inclusive interior design experience in the transformation of life's most valued luxury: the home. She designs a home as a whole—a synergy of details, character and style that together captures the spirit and stories of those who live there. Her passion is to create warm, layered, life-filled environments that look and feel like they've always been there.

Kerrison brings a personal design concierge approach that caters to every client's need: listening, leading, creating, coordinating, orchestrating and delivering spaces that transform the home and the lifestyle of the client. She is gifted not only in design, but in every detail of project management, working with contractors, vendors, builders and architects—right down to flatware and flowers. She holds degrees in interior design and business, has more than 20 years of experience with architecture, interior design and real estate, and holds a mini-master's in investment real estate.

"Homes are not just places, but sensory experiences where you enjoy this luxury called life," says Kerrison.

The holidays are a particularly exciting time for decorating, offering people the chance to create a beautiful setting for their festivities. Kerrison offers suggestions for a traditional holiday theme or a more modern approach. And for her, it all starts outdoors. Lanterns or candles are a beautiful way to create the mood upon arrival and illuminate the walk. Kerrison believes nothing welcomes your guests better than a path lit with luminaries made from ice.



USING *place cards* AT YOUR HOLIDAY TABLE ENSURES GUESTS AREN'T LEFT WONDERING WHERE TO SIT—AND ADDS AN ELEGANT TOUCH.

Another exterior opportunity for festive decorating is the front door or porch area. Kerrison fills window boxes and planters with evergreen boughs and red berries. For a more serene theme, she uses birch branches, small lanterns with tea lights, and sparkling snowflake ornaments hanging from garland-wrapped columns and urns filled with spruce tips. Tying the look together is the holiday wreath hung from the front door.

With the holidays come the holiday parties, dinners and get-togethers. Rather than an evening party, Kerrison likes to host an afternoon tea. It's a European tradition, she says, and it feels cozy and intimate. "I often include a sparkling wine to get things started," says Kerrison. "It's a nice break from the traditional evening parties."

As guests arrive, Kerrison says lighting is key. Candlelight and wood-burning fireplaces are the quickest way to make a room inviting. She suggests keeping candles in hurricanes or votives for the perfect twinkle and as an added measure of safety if children are present. For a clean, natural holiday scent, she likes to fill a room with fragrance from a balsam candle, rather than cinnamon and spices, which can be overwhelming.

"At our house, everything happens in the living room around the large wood-burning fireplace," says Kerrison. "I create a holiday display on the mantle by arranging blue and white ginger jars filled with box wood branches, draping garland and hanging a stocking or two."

For the living area, where most of the conversation occurs, Kerrison places



“HOMES ARE NOT JUST PLACES, BUT SENSORY EXPERIENCES WHERE YOU ENJOY THIS LUXURY CALLED LIFE.” —*Andrea Kerrison*

a few small branches in unexpected places, over a large painting or mirror and around the door for that extra holiday feel. She also places small arrangements of fresh flowers around the room for added color and texture.

“I like to use the unusual, such as an antique tea caddy filled with a few fresh red or white carnations and a hint of evergreen,” says Kerrison; “a small crystal juice glass filled with a few fresh stems is appealing on a small table.”

Whether you're dining with family or a group of friends, a beautiful holiday table really sets the mood for a wonderful holiday party. Kerrison says layering is crucial when decorating a table, regardless of the theme or style. She believes that, much like designing for a home, it's in the details. For a sit-down dinner, she begins with a tablecloth and then adds the place mats, chargers, place settings and glassware. She recommends using place cards and centerpieces that are low so guests can see each other across the table.

“Using place cards eliminates everyone standing around the table discussing where they should sit,” says Kerrison, “and it's another elegant touch to a sit-down dinner.”

For a traditional holiday table, Kerrison likes to use a festive tablecloth that sets off the “Oh Christmas Tree” table service by Spode that she uses. She stacks all of the china, napkins and flatware atop a rattan charger, which anchors the place setting and provides a woody feel to the overall look. She places small evergreen tree decorations as the place card holders. For a traditional centerpiece, she combines a large pineapple with pomegranates, Bosc pears, a bit of fresh-cut evergreens and some chestnuts in a soup tureen to complete the look.

“When planning my holiday décor, I gravitate towards the season's natural offerings,” says Kerrison.



If your style takes more of a modern approach or a wintry look, going with a white and silver color scheme can really set the room. Kerrison uses silver chargers, white china and lots of sterling silver serving dishes. These combinations can be interchangeable for a blue and white holiday theme as well. Using silver snowflakes or other silver, blue and white items can make any table more festive. For a simply stunning and elegant look, Kerrison creates a simple silver tree by completely covering a Styrofoam cone (18"–24" in height) with shiny and matte Christmas balls, and places it in a silver urn with just a hint of fresh pine.

In the spirit of giving a hostess gift, Kerrison suggests a personal approach. If your host is a food and wine lover, then presenting your wine in a unique

tote made from wood is a fun and one-of-a-kind offering. And who wouldn't enjoy a lovely box of English toffee, handmade caramels or a box filled with frosted cut-out cookies? Kerrison believes the presentation is just as important as the gift, but doesn't need to cost a fortune. A lovely red box filled with red velvet cupcakes tied with a beautiful tartan plaid ribbon and a sprig of pine adds a personal touch.

“Nothing conveys thoughtfulness like frosted homemade cookies, along with an ‘in honor of’ donation to a local food shelf that you know your hosts supports” says Kerrison. For the dog or animal lover, present a homemade milk bone with a donation to the local humane society or animal shelter, she says. Your hosts are sure to be delighted by the gesture. //

A blue and silver color scheme sets a modern tone, and can be used for both Christmas or Chanukkah celebrations.



For more information on Kerrison's designs, visit larsonkerrison.com.