

WRITER ROBIN AMSTER  
PHOTOGRAPHER PETER RYMWID  
DESIGNER VALERIE GRANT

# 'TIS THE SEASON...



... to take some risks with holiday decor, says a designer who practices what she preaches in her own home



**Left:** The English Country architecture of designer Valerie Grant's Summit home lends itself to classic holiday decor: tasteful garlands interspersed with tiny lights and draped around the columns and upper railing. A traditional green wreath with lights and red ribbons graces the center of the upper railing.

**Above:** The designer's living room is marked by traditional style mixed with modern updates. A coffee table with a Lucite base, antique brass corner detail and glass top sits between a sofa she had reupholstered in ecru chenille and a newer velvet settee. The custom drum pendant is made of mica strips. Luxurious décor includes a faux fur throw and ostrich feather pillow on one of the living room sofas, small ostrich feather trees on the fireplace mantel and a whimsical reindeer in a faux fur scarf on the coffee table.



The foyer is the picture of elegance with its handcarved mahogany console flanked by grayish brown silk velvet chairs. The walls are slate gray metallic Venetian plaster; the floor is French limestone inlaid with wood. The holiday décor is as elegant as the space: a garland of magnolia leaves draped over the mirror, hand-blown glass ornaments suspended from the top of the mirror and a gold Christmas tree and reindeer.



## THE HOLIDAYS PRESENT HOMEOWNERS WITH A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO FASHION A FESTIVE DÉCOR

that's fun, playful and "takes risks that you may not necessarily want to live with in your everyday life," says Valerie Grant, principal of Summit-based Valerie Grant Interiors.

The designer artfully follows that principle for the holiday décor in her own Summit home. But she combines it with another principle: "It's also important to stay true to the style of the home," Grant says. "Holiday décor should be an extension of what's already there, but that doesn't mean you can't have fun and push things farther."

Grant's home has classic English Country architecture with interior spaces that mix traditional style with modern updates. Whether it's finishes, fabrics or furniture, the designer looks for opportu-

nities to modernize. In the living room, for example, a coffee table with a Lucite base, antique brass corner detail and glass top sits between a sofa reupholstered in ecru chenille and a newer velvet settee whose frame has an antiqued silver finish. Above the coffee table is a custom drum pendant made of mica strips.

In the dining room a 19th century Danish Neoclassic mahogany table is paired with newer, sleek mahogany chairs upholstered in gray wool sateen. A server with doors of gray leather and a gray marble top is flanked by cut-velvet side chairs in a contemporary chevron pattern in shades of gray and black. Walls of graphite Venetian plaster with metallic powders form the backdrop.

Valerie Grant calls the family room holiday scheme "rustic modern." A wool blend sofa in shades of brown and oatmeal and chairs covered in dark brown velvet complement the tone of the room.



The holiday décor in the dining room — like that of the living room — features luxurious elements in keeping with the designer’s philosophy that holiday décor should reflect the style of each space. Decorations include a spray of silver branches in a vase atop the server, which has gray leather doors and a gray marble top, and silver antler candelabras on the 19th century Danish Neoclassic mahogany dining table. Cranberry pillows on side chairs covered in contemporary chevron-patterned velvet are there year-round but are especially fitting for the holidays.

#### FASHIONABLE INSPIRATION

Before turning to a career in interior design, Grant worked in fashion for 15 years as a senior merchandiser with storied brands such as Ralph Lauren, Prada, Coach and J. Crew. The “frivolity and opulence” of these companies’ holiday window displays inspired her to add a glam element in all of her own holiday designs.

She translates that inspiration into holiday décor such as a faux fur throw and ostrich feather pillow on one of the living room sofas, small Christmas trees made of ostrich feathers on the fireplace mantel and, on the coffee table, a reindeer that sports a faux fur scarf for a touch of whimsy. The Christmas tree in the living room is adorned with white lights and tinsel, but it’s pared back and elegant.

Grant amplified the more luxurious elements of

holiday design in the formal rooms — the living room and dining room — while choosing “rustic modern” holiday décor in the family room to reflect the rustic-leaning “luxurious lodge” design of that space. The family room Christmas tree, for example, is dressed in a collection of feathered, metallic and gold spindle ornaments. The family room also includes a tiny twig garland spray-painted gold on the fireplace mantel, a birch bark wreath suspended over the mirror atop the fireplace and small Christmas trees made of “snow”-covered pinecones flanking the fireplace. **DM**

*Robin Amster, a regular contributor to Design NJ, is a Madison-based writer and editor.*

**SOURCES Overall:** interior design and holiday decor, Valerie Grant Interiors in Summit. **Living room:** chandelier, designed

by Valerie Grant Interiors and fabricated by Jim Misner Light Designs in San Francisco; settee and coffee table, Edward Ferrell in New York City; loveseat, Baker Furniture through Schwartz Design Showroom in Metuchen (T); oil painting, Adele Seltzer in Palo Alto, California. **Foyer:** feature wall, metallic Venetian plaster by Alternative Interiors in Basking Ridge; console, Hickory Chair Furniture through Schwartz Design Showroom; chairs, Swaim Inc. through Schwartz Design Showroom. **Family room:** loveseat, designed by Valerie Grant Interiors with upholstery by Rogers & Goffigon in New York City; chairs, designed by Valerie Grant Interiors with upholstery by F. Schumacher & Co. in New York City; lamp, Greathouse in San Diego; chandelier, Bradley in Atlanta. **Dining room:** walls, Pietra Plasters in Newark; dining chairs, upholstery by Donghia in New York City; accent chairs: upholstery by F. Schumacher & Co.; chandelier, Barovier & Torso in Italy; artwork, hand-painted silkscreens by Retna through Alternative Interiors. T = To the trade.

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