

INDOORS



NEW TRADITIONS

Designer Robin Strickler of Irvine-based Design Works pulled together the holiday décor at this home by focusing on silver, gold and rose gold with touches of white.

Holiday decor seem a touch too familiar? Ten tips from a pro help you give it a fresh sheen

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Holiday decorating, for most of us, means unboxing our mismatched ornaments, garlands and other Christmas-themed tchotchkes and placing them in their usual locations. Family heirlooms. Crafts our kids made in elementary school. Ornaments bought on family trips. Doilies crocheted by artsy aunts. Mixed together, they make up our largely red-and-green holiday collections.

But what if ... you could start over? If you had a sleek new house, or a newly remodeled one, and wanted new holiday décor to complement it. Where would you start?

That was the challenge facing interior designer Robin Strickler of Design Works when a family whose brand-new Hidden Canyon home she recently decorated (she was involved from the start of the project, assisting with finishes and choosing the interior furnishings) asked her to fill it with Christmas spirit.

She started with a fresh palette and an untraditional approach: Less is more.

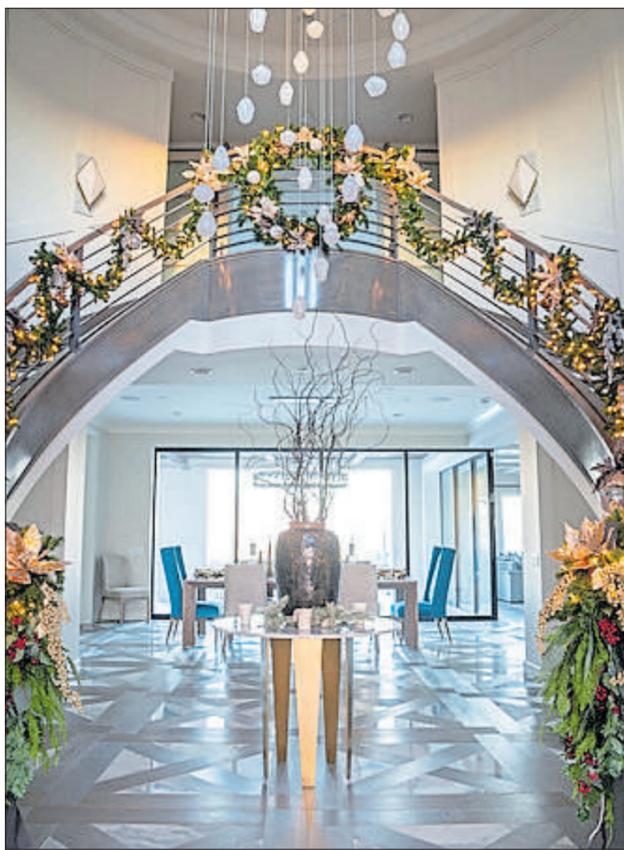
1. THE PALETTE » Silver, gold, rose gold and blush, all touched with sparkle, laid the groundwork for décor carried throughout the ground floor of the 6,200-square-foot home. "It's basically the brass and gold trend we're seeing in interior design carried into a holiday look," said Strickler, founder and principal designer of the Orange County-based firm. To those metallic elements she added a healthy dose of white in the form of polar bear and Santa figures, snowflakes and candles. The result is a crisp, clean look that works

beautifully with the home's décor, which features white woodwork and metallic accents. The décor already had glamorous touches, which made adding holiday sparkle and iridescence an easy fit.

2. THE PLAN » Strickler and her team started with the mantel, because it's the focal point of the room. From there, she transitioned to the dramatic staircase and finally to the 9-foot tree. The garland that drapes the mantel and staircase adds a natural element to the mix, softening the metallics and pulling the look through the house. To fill out the artificial garland, she used dried stems, leaves and berries. They are woven into the boughs along with the LED lights.

3. THE TREE » Artificial trees are becoming more popular, Strickler explained, in part because they have become much more realistic looking in recent years. Another reason her clients favor them is that many are available with lights, which eliminates the most cumbersome of decorating chores. And lastly, some of her clients don't like the idea of cutting down a tree for the sake of a few weeks of holiday décor. The tree decorations mirror the rest of the décor with silver, gold and rose gold ornaments mixed with simple white and sparkly balls. Keep the ornaments light so the branches don't sag and tuck some deeper into the tree to give it a fuller look. This tree is from Roger's Gardens.

4. TABLETOPS » The metallic/neutral mix was then applied to the dining room table, kitchen island, coffee table, table in the foyer and other surfaces. Gold leaf garland creates a runner on



Staircase garlands plus other wreaths and greenery soften the metallic presence of the decor and add a natural element.

the island and the dining room table, one with berries, one without. The island is layered with two runners, one raffia and one linen with a touch of sparkle, tying together natural and glitzy elements. The iron reindeer "provide a little relief," Strickler said, from all the shine. And fluffy white polar bears roam the coffee

table, near the wire and glass bead trees. The trick with accessories, Strickler explained, is to create an eclectic mix "that is cohesive but not matching," and to avoid crowding too many pieces together.

5. TAKE THE TIME NECESSARY TO DO IT RIGHT » This decorating effort took Strickler and her team

of five all day to do. Less is more, but it still takes time and attention to detail to do well. Gather the elements, make a plan and don't be in a hurry. Enjoy the effort as well as the result.

6. BUT WHAT IF YOU CAN'T START OVER — OR YOU DON'T WANT TO? » You look forward to taking out your collected keepsakes every year and love to have them around you during the holidays. According to Strickler, you can freshen your holiday décor no matter what already fills your Christmas crates.

7. DON'T USE EVERYTHING » Just because you have it doesn't mean you have to put it out. There's no harm, Strickler said, in leaving some things in their Christmas boxes. If clutter is the result of unboxing everything, you're better off leaving some behind. You can always rotate them, bringing out different pieces every year.

8. FIND NEW WAYS TO USE OLD THINGS » Every round ball doesn't have to hang on the tree. Make a centerpiece by filling a glass cloche or bowl with all the red ones. Clustering like-colored items can help keep the color riot under control.

9. ADD NEUTRALS » Mixing in neutrals can give your colorful decor a fresh look. A few metallic, white or crystal elements will provide relief from red and green overload.

10. SHOP AROUND FOR ACCESSORIES » Adding a few new things to the mix can give the older ones a new look. Strickler does a lot of her shopping at places that only designers can access, and particularly likes the less-traditional accessories by Roost. But she also likes the quality and variety at Pottery Barn. So while you're gift shopping, check out the décor options.

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