

Custom

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- A festive holiday scene featuring a wrapped gift, a gold wreath, and a string of lights against a bokeh background. The gift is wrapped in dark paper with thin gold stripes and a gold ribbon. The wreath is made of gold branches with white flowers and gold berries. The background is a dark, out-of-focus field of warm, golden bokeh lights.
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CATCH UP WITH RONICA



Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday and this year it'll be even more special because we're looking forward to celebrating in our new home! We hope to host some family, if they're able to travel during the pandemic, but if not, we'll see them next year. (It'll be a hugfest for sure!) For now, we're grateful to be able to enjoy our immediate family in our new home.

I have so many wonderful memories of Thanksgiving gatherings. We've always had a party on Wednesday night (Thanksgiving Eve) to visit with people we won't get to see the following day, as well as the people we'll share the Thanksgiving meal with. My husband and daughter make an apple pie Wednesday night while our guests are arriving—imagine being greeted with the mouthwatering aroma of fresh fruit, buttery pastry and spices. They make the best apple pie!

We usually have our Thanksgiving feast at 5 or 6 p.m. and after dessert and the dishes are cleaned up, we settle down to watch *White Christmas*. We started this tradition a few years ago and it has stuck! Part of the fun is reciting lines from the movie and each year we discover new ones we love.

Holiday decorations--what you put up and when you put them up--can be traditional too, and filled with awesome memories. Imagining a holiday without that special piece could be heartbreaking. But, by being creative and incorporating that colorful turkey, cherished ornament or wooden Nutcracker soldier in a unique way like on a tablescape or a fireplace mantel or even as part of a coffee table display, could make decorating a lot more fun. I hope this issue of my newsletter gives you some great ideas that will save you time and make the chillier months a little warmer.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving! And I hope all of you find a way to safely gather with those you love, even if it's virtually, this holiday season.

Ronica Van Gelder

Owner, Custom Creations

Tablescapes that keep giving

Imagine how much more enjoyable and relaxing the holidays could be if you didn't have to take down *all* of your fall decorations in a day or two and then rush to put up *all* of the Christmas trimmings.

You can do this! It's a piece of cake...or pumpkin pie, if you'd rather.

By planning ahead and choosing neutral colors and decorations that serve double-duty, you can accomplish that transition smoothly. Besides saving time and energy, you'll save money too. And you won't have to sacrifice any of the festive, cheery embellishments that make the holidays feel so magical. You might even discover that being a little more creative with your choices makes the season brighter.

If you look it up, you'll see that the definition of tablescape is: an artistic arrangement of articles on a table. But that's such a simple description for turning a dining table into...a masterpiece.



FEATURE



Where do you start? All works of art require inspiration. The inspiration for your tablescape could be a nature theme like "Over the River and Through the Woods," a decorative piece like a cornucopia stuffed with fruits and vegetables, or even your favorite candle holders.

Choosing a standout color might be all it takes to get your creative juices flowing. Royal blue is a beautiful option because it pairs nicely with nature's spectacular fall colors—pumpkin orange, sunflower yellow and bronze. But blue also goes well with those metallic gold and silver Christmas colors, and it looks great with white, the most neutral color of all, like in the top photo. If you simply switched out those orange balls with ruby red or magenta, that tablescape would practically sing "Joy to the World!"

Another option is to go with a more traditional holiday color like green, but with a twist. The mint green Depression style glasses in the middle photo add charm to the pastel color scheme. But in the next photo, that pop of cranberry with the same green color scheme definitely leans toward Christmas. Adding some pine twigs or rosemary in place of the leaves and a red or gold ribbon wrapped around the napkins would take that place setting all the way into January.

Since the goal is to transition your decor from fall to winter, consider purchasing a reversible tablecloth that has a different look—color and/or pattern—on each side. It's always great to have two different options. If you have a beautiful wooden table and don't want to conceal the entire surface, a table runner or placemats are the perfect way to make a statement. They can be reversible as well.

Consider going the custom route with your table coverings in order to have a wide choice of fabrics so you can complement your dishes, or your window coverings, the fabric on your dining room chairs, or maybe to find a pattern that will really tie together your fall and winter decor.



WARM

AND COZIES



Adding throw pillows or pillow covers is the easiest way to bring holiday warmth and cheer to your home and that doesn't mean scattering black and orange, or red and green pillows around your house. Pillows for the holidays can have the same color scheme as the room they're placed in, with the simple addition of some festive trim or a message like "Joy" printed or embroidered on the fabric. To stay very neutral, how about a cream or black pillow with the words, "Have yourself a merry little Christmas," printed in a fancy font.

Plaids are perfect for fall and winter decor because they symbolize a cozy warmth like your favorite flannel shirt, and there are so many color choices. The pattern will add texture to your holiday landscape as well. A colorful or subtle tartan could be the inspiration for all of your holiday decorating, starting with a couple of throw pillows in the family room. Use the same pattern, maybe a green and black tartan, if you want to be traditional, or a gold and Burgundy plaid if that works better with your everyday decor. Checkered black and white is very neutral, but can still be festive. Mixing and matching colors and designs also works well.

Wind a plaid garland around the Christmas tree. You can use it for the tree skirt too. How about making a bow for the wreath on your door, around candles or for your table's centerpiece. Another idea is to tie a wide fabric swath around the top half of your dining room chairs and finish with a bow on the back. And don't forget to toss a cozy plaid throw over the back of the sofa. It will come in handy on chilly nights.

Fall into winter decor

Sometimes the simplest touches can make your space more welcoming, and are the easiest to modify when you make the switch between holidays.

- Tuck some cinnamon sticks, thyme, rosemary or evergreen twigs into your napkin rings. A single flower is a nice addition as well.
- Use seeded eucalyptus for your greenery. The little buds make the plant even more interesting than evergreens. And it smells heavenly. Another great option is magnolia branches. Either one would look great on a fireplace mantel with faux pears or green apples and some colorful gourds for fall. Pull out the gourds and add gold and silver votives for winter.
- Fill a big dough bowl, a basket or even a small antique suitcase with some fall favorites like dried calico corn, pinecones and mums. After Thanksgiving, switch them out with some painted or glass ornaments, stars, ribbons and holiday candles. Have fun with gnomes, elves or Santas too.
- Pick up some gold and silver spray paint and turn your fall pinecones, twigs, berries and garland into more shimmery Christmas pieces by spraying them all over, or just color the tips.
- A cool idea to ensure nighttime sparkle is to place some battery operated glimmer lights inside a porch lantern. Amber colored lights would be perfect for fall and you can use red, green or blue at Christmastime. Or just fill the lantern with a variety of ornaments that match your decor.
- Finally, setting up a hot cocoa bar is a delicious way to decorate as soon as the weather cools. There are so many colorful toppings available, beyond marshmallows, and interesting options for containers too. Sprinkles come in a rainbow of colors. Some other great options would be: toffee bits, pretzel sticks, white chocolate chips, red cinnamon hearts, candy canes and Andes mints. Mason jars with colorful lids and old fashioned milk bottles make unique containers. You can have fun creating colorful labels for the jars too. And don't forget to display all of your cute fall and winter mugs. Let your imagination run wild!

