

FESTIVE IDEAS FOR THE SEASON!

# Southern home



HOLIDAY  
*warmth*

COZY ROOMS  
EXCEPTIONAL GIFT IDEAS  
INSPIRATION FOR DECORATING



# *festive* Touches

FOR CLIENTS NEW TO WASHINGTON, D.C., DESIGNER KELLEY PROXMIRE CREATED A POLISHED RESIDENCE THAT WEARS A LAYER OF CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS SUPREMELY WELL.



TEXT LYDIA SOMERVILLE  
PHOTOGRAPHY GORDON BEALL





Previous pages: Proxmire established a color scheme of gold, red, and white and applied it to both the tree and the gift wrapping in the living room. Wreaths of red poinsettias hang in the windows for an extra pop of color. In the entry, Proxmire adorned the mirror with greenery and composed an arrangement of magnolia branches and greenery in a jasperware urn. Walls covered in grass cloth give the room instant warmth. Proxmire painted the fireplace mantel black to enhance the focal point's impact. Gold painted poinsettia blossoms make a bold statement on the tree and carry over to the garland on the mantel, picking up gold tones in the abstract painting above.







Usually, when clients enlist a designer, they bring a lifetime of furniture and collections to the project. But when a couple recently approached designer Kelley Proxmire to decorate their new condo, they came minimally burdened with furnishings. The husband had retired from a career with the state department, and the pair had lived in furnished housing during most of his career. Proxmire was free to choose antiques and furniture to complement the artwork they'd

collected in their travels. In addition, the clients gave Proxmire free rein in her design direction. "They were so easy to work with," says the designer. "I said, 'Let's do a red dining room!' And they said, 'Fine!'"

That dining room, wearing a snakeskin textured wallpaper, provides the perfect backdrop for a Christmas display that relies heavily on greenery, glimmering gold, and pops of red. "I kept to a palette of red, gold, and white in the decorations and the gift wrapping," says Proxmire. Where a family portrait usually presides over a console



The dining room's textured red wallpaper creates a perfect setting for Christmas dinner. An embroidered Cowtan & Tout fabric covers the host chairs. A collection of blue-and-white ceramics displays arrangements of Belles of Ireland and red berries, while brass pheasants and gold pinecones decorate the table.





Above: In the den, above, a straw reindeer prances on the coffee table and gingham ribbons echo the black accent of the woodwork. Opposite: Reflecting Proxmire's philosophy of "a little bit of Christmas in every room," small boxwood wreaths hang from gold ribbons in the bedroom, and flower arrangements add a festive note. Right: Even the kitchen gets a dose of Christmas, with a pewter reindeer and a low arrangement in a white planter in the window overlooking Connecticut Avenue.



table, Proxmire replaced it with a magnolia wreath surrounded by a display of gold-and-white china that she bought in an antiques store. On the antique dining table, a centerpiece of red roses, amaryllis, and berries in a white bowl is surrounded by smaller botanical accents. Brass pheasants mingle with gold-painted pinecones scattered around the table. On the sideboard, blue-and-white ceramics display arrangements of bells of Ireland, red berry branches, and evergreens.

Grass cloth wallpaper lends the living room a polished aspect. Proxmire spiked the mainly white scheme with notable fabrics, like the ottoman's chinoiserie print. Beneath it all, a creamy wool and silk rug adds subtle texture. She decorated the tree with large gold bows and ornaments in her red, gold, and white palette. On the mantel, a mixture of

fir branches and magnolia leaves creates a layered display, with red berries and gold accents.

In the den, Proxmire painted the shutters and door glossy black, again with the clients' support. "Black woodwork seems to add gravitas to a room," she says. Holiday decorations around the room add quiet notes of the season. "I like to put something Christmassy in every room," says Proxmire. Wreaths in the windows, a raffia reindeer prancing on the coffee table, and a low arrangement of ranunculus and roses add a merry note.

Even the bedroom gets some Christmas cheer. In the blue-and-white room, judicious use of greenery transforms the peaceful retreat. A small bedside floral arrangement and wreaths in the windows hung from wide gold ribbon show that the spirit of the season fills every corner of the home.