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CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS BY  
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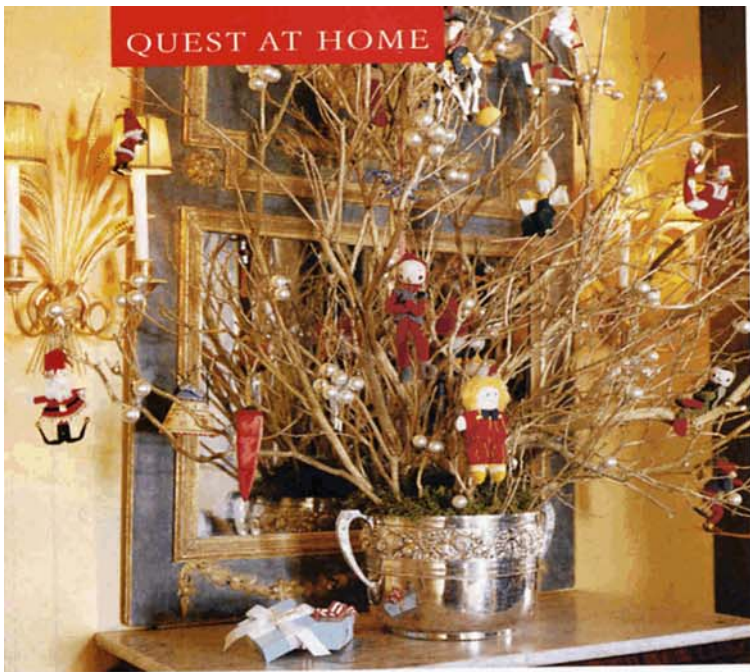
## WELCOME CHRISTMAS

**THE MERE THOUGHT OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** results in a certain paralysis in nearly everyone. Interior designer Stephanie Stokes and event decorator DeJuan Stroud decided to take the terror out of Christmas with an understated design in elegant hues of silver and gold. "Every design team takes pleasure in designing for the holidays—and this team had a great time doing it," says Stokes.

"I wanted to create the feeling of an old-fashioned Christmas with grand Regency convex mirrors," she continues. "So I took a

morning trip down to Canal Street to buy some cheap, plastic 'security' mirrors and brought them straight to DeJuan. I trust him completely to create something fabulous out of something ordinary." Stroud proceeded to surround the mirrors with gilded pinecones, ivy, and metal leaves. "They'll warm up the room and

*Above: Security mirrors are transformed with gilded pine cones and leaves and placed in the windows; a centerpiece welcomes the Christmas season.*



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they can stay up through the dark months of winter to provide endless visual amusement.” Stroud unified the theme with a standout centerpiece of pears and pinecones set atop the marble table from Jerome Jacalone balanced with equally engaging arrangements in front of the George II mirror over the fireplace.

The living room is filled with English and French Regency furniture from Florian Papp and Hyde Park combined with objects assembled from around the world to form a singular collection. The base palette for the room is formed with a linen rug, bound in fuchsia, from Beauvais Carpet and complemented with fabrics from Travers. Stokes studied for her masters at the Institute of Fine Arts and takes great pleasure in traveling; her collections reflect this wanderlust with pieces from Norway to Nepal. A Swedish coffee table is at home in a room with Indonesian sculptures. A collection of monochromatic Chinese vases adds a punch of color, while a charming grasshopper found its way onto a small table. “It was a gift from Sue Rotenstreich,” says Stokes. “I had admired hers and she sweetly delivered this one to me—I must admit it is my favorite object in the living room.” A Chola dynasty Krishna dances merrily in a corner, while a Pala period bronze hand from India sits on a table with a collection of ivory and sterling silver objects from Mexico, Africa, India, England, and the Caribbean. Of special pride is an American silver sandwich server from the Gilded Age of New York circa 1880 from Dallas W. Boesendahl.

Taking Stokes's collection of ornaments, many of which are heirlooms bought by her mother in Aspen in the 1940s, and combining them with her own collection from her world travels, Stroud created a nontraditional Christmas tree of gilded branches with silver baubles in front of a *trumeau* mirror purchased at auction.

The dining-room table takes a cue from St. Nick himself and goes around the world in a single setting. Starting in England, a special collection of Hanoverian pre-1770 silver is set with a beautiful collection of Japanese 18th-century dining ware belonging to Stokes's late client, John Gruber. Also from England, the goblets designed by William Yeoward, were part of his first collection. The blue and white glasses were picked up in a Paris flea market and mixed with experimental blue glass candy dishes and candlesticks found in a Stockholm antique shop two years ago. Italian Pratesi





QUEST AT HOME

*Opposite, from top to bottom: Golden, gilded branches become a place for silver baubles and ornaments, both old and new, as well as a spot to drop off and pick up the good things that come in small packages; The living room is filled with English and French Regency furniture co-existing with a variety of personal collections; Silver and ivory pieces from around the world provide an unusual focal point and a conversation-starter in the living room. Above: A family heirloom finds a new home in a "Soanian" niche, while visions of sugar-plums dance upon this globe-hopping Christmas table.*

napkins are placed within Russian blue and white napkin rings made of papier-mâché purchased on Stokes's last trip to Moscow in a flea market. Finally, the tablecloth is made from "homespun" American blue and white checked fabric. "I can be practical," says Stokes, "and this is so much easier to clean." The lampshade, custom-made by Blanche Field, was amplified by Stroud by adding metal leaves to create continuity between the living and dining rooms. Stokes, a board member of the Sir John Soane Museum Foundation, created a "Soanian" niche to house a mirror with



*The bedroom, with tons of trim and fabric, provides a ladylike retreat to refresh the spirit during the season's madness.*



special lineage. "It was a copy of a John Linnell piece my family saw in London and had recreated to fit their American mantle in their Federal town house in Greenwich Village."

A ladylike canopy bed is the centerpiece in the bedroom. "The bed is based on one I saw at Mallett's in London, and with the help of Humphrey Wakefield, I was able to recreate it," says Stokes. Two tiers of trim and tons of blue silk from Scalandre are as sumptuous as can be, while two Victorian slipper chairs purchased in London are covered in Claremont fabric. A charming painted Swedish table found in Hudson, N.Y., provides a space for books, completing a perfect refuge for when all the holiday fuss is over. ♦