



dressed DESIGNER DENISE MCGAHA OPTS FOR
for the SEASON NATURAL, DOWN-TO-EARTH HOLIDAY
DÉCOR IN AN ART-FILLED DALLAS HOME.
TEXT TIFFANY ADAMS
PHOTOGRAPHY STEPHEN KARLISCH



Previous pages: McGaha gave the formal living room a current feel by refreshing the walls and ceiling (which features a plaster treatment) in one neutral color. These pages, opposite and right: Intricate German lace adds elegance to the garland along the main staircase. Below: Understated wreaths hint at the festive décor inside. Bottom right: The front entry includes a snowy scene by 19th-century German artist Johannes Bartholomäus Duntze.



Designer Denise McGaha loves creating elegant spaces where families can make memories—especially during the holidays. For Gail and Ron Berlin’s Dallas home, McGaha started by making a few updates to better match the couple’s classic yet cosmopolitan style. In the process, she learned what pieces were important to them, their colors of choice, and even their family traditions, ultimately leading her to create a holiday décor scheme that complements the home’s design.

McGaha originally met the Berlins when they toured a house she had completed. The couple appreciated her aesthetic and asked her to collaborate with them on their home. Together, they curated a personalized plan that included changes in paint, wallpaper, and lighting, along with new fireplace mantels and kitchen cabinetry.

Many of these updates were made to display the Berlins’ extensive collection of art, most of which is from the 16th–18th centuries. “We have bought art throughout the United States, Europe, and South America,” says Gail. “And we have been given several pieces from my grandparents’ collection.”

In addition to their art, the Berlins had a number of heirloom furnishings. To bring comfort and modernity to the





This page: The dining table is set for the season with Gail's Lenox "Winter Greetings" china and Waterford "Lismore" crystal. Opposite: "I don't have a plan for my gallery walls," says McGaha. "They come together in a very organic fashion. I just know when it feels right." The gallery in the Berlins' dining room features traditional European art they have collected throughout their 44 years of marriage.





design, McGaha “peppered contemporary pieces in with the antiques.” The storied items lend a curated feel, while additions such as the teardrop chandelier in the dining room and the tulip table in the breakfast nook keep the look current.

Similarly, the Christmas décor includes a mix of old and new with a heavy focus on tradition. McGaha also capitalized on the property’s abundance of magnolia trees by placing the foliage throughout the home. “Fresh garlands and wreaths give that instant holiday feel,” she says.

The home’s main Christmas tree, located in the family room, is adorned in neutral hues to flow with the everyday décor. In the dining room,

a similar subdued palette sets off the couple’s holiday china that is paired with a variety of collected glassware and serving pieces. “I mixed in green Parrot tulips and berries that work with those pieces,” McGaha says.

With halls decked and trees adorned, the Berlins look forward to welcoming their family into their home. “Every year, the grandkids bring me an ornament with their picture to add to the ‘Nonnie Tree’ [their nickname for Gail],” says Gail. “We enjoy looking at these ornaments year after year.” It’s traditions such as these that continue to make this festive home a place where memories are made.

Opposite: A neutral palette with highlights of bronze and gold sets the tone for the family room’s holiday décor. Above: The breakfast nook can be seen upon entering the front door, so it was important to the Berlins and McGaha for it to feel as festive as the main gathering rooms. A fresh wreath adds flair to the mirrored wall, while a neutral-hued arrangement accents the table.