



The power of black

In terms of interior decor, there is nothing more poignant, more powerful than a black accent. When employed correctly, black packs a heavy punch and goes a long way in making your decor stand out. If a dramatic decor update is what you want for your home this Christmas season, black moulding or ceiling trim will certainly do the trick. Additionally, painting a wooden stained or white door frame in black will also give your home a fresh update.

Coloured front doors

Speaking of doors, changing the colour of your front door is a quick and easy decor ploy that will give the exterior of your home an immediate update. The effect of a pop of colour on an otherwise neutral exterior is extremely contemporary and chic, especially where trending door colours like reds, teal, coral are used.



Easy, affordable ways to 'PUT AWAY' YOUR HOME

Halcyon Prescott-Alexander

We've made it to December, and while this is certainly cause for celebration, for some people this month is usually accompanied by feelings of panic and anxiety over not yet being prepared for the Christmas festivities.

As a people we believe in tradition, and "putting away the house for Christmas" is one of them. We live for this time when paint, polish and varnish fumes are high and furniture shopping is an absolute must.

There are a lot of us, however, who are not able to do the usual splurge this year. And even some of those who are financially able, the normal will and excitement just isn't there. The year 2021 was brutal and it's no wonder we're all physically and emotionally exhausted. But we are a resilient people, and in the spirit of the Yuletide season we will soldier on. Here are some quick, easy and affordable decor updates you can use to spruce up your home just in time for the holidays.

Kitchen and bathroom hardware

Another quick, easy and affordable kitchen or bathroom decor update is to upgrade your hardware. New faucets and cabinet knobs and handles will change the overall look of the room without breaking the bank.





Cabinets and islands

Again, upgrading your cabinets and islands/vanities in both the kitchen and the bathroom is an instant game changer when it comes to boosting and updating your home's decor. This upgrade does not necessarily mean changing the cabinet or vanity doors. A new coat of paint in a new, contemporary colour will do.



Curtains and throw cushions

Add curtain buying to the list of frenzied activities of house painting and furniture buying that we love to indulge in as we prepare for the Christmas season. But, in these economically challenging times, infusing a new curtain panel to your original complement can have the same effect as replacing the old with an entirely new set. Similarly, changing your old throw pillows will give your living room a new feel and look for a fraction of the cost.



Bookshelf and coffee table styling

Your bookshelf or coffee table also offers opportunities for decor updates. It is certainly quite easy to change around the way these are styled, adding an accent piece or floral arrangement. The end result is will be ten-fold in terms of the fresh vibe that these minor changes can bring.



Accent chair makeovers

Whenever buying new furniture is not feasible, taking your living room set and dining room chairs to be re-upholstered is the next best bet. This year however, this option may not be possible because of the covid19 pandemic restrictions. If this is the case, consider re-upholstering one piece, an accent chair, for example, for that updated room upgrade.



Floral arrangements

As we're on the topic of floral arrangements, this is also an easy and affordable way to freshen up the look of your home in time for Christmas. If you're already partial to floral arrangements in your home, now is the time for out with the old and in with the new. If you're new to this particular décor element, adding a contemporary arrangement to your dining room table, hallway console or bathroom vanity is certain to bring a fresh vibe and look.

Subtle colour pops

Lastly, infuse some style to your interior decor by adding subtle colour pops to finish off the space or room in question. A throw blanket, or ceramic vase is a quick, easy and affordable way in which your décor can be updated this season.





BRING BACK XMAS JOY

Halcyon Prescott-Alexander

There's something about the smell of a ham baking in the oven, the smell of varnish, or the sound of a box base that takes us back to our childhood days and the nostalgic joys of Christmas past. If you long for one more chance to experience a touch of yesteryear, you're in loads of luck this season. One of the biggest Christmas décor trends for 2021 is nostalgia. It is a celebration and an ode to traditional decorations, carefully curated and styled so that it feels as though we're on to something new.

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Red, green and gold

Over the last decade, we've seen trending Christmas décor colour schemes in contemporary hues like teal, rose gold and even neutral palettes. This year, the traditional red, green and gold is making a brave, bold come back.



Pine cones

Yes, pine cones are back on the Christmas décor scene and it is as refreshing as tinsel was at one point. If you're not sure whether or not you want to embrace the nostalgic trend in its entirety, infusing some pine cones in your Christmas décor is a beautiful option. Get creative by making a one of a kind centre piece for your kitchen island, coffee or console table, and watch your guests get misty-eyed with sentimental joy.

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TIME TO DECK THE HALLS

You entrance hall is one of the most used areas in your home and the first place that guests will see. And even though you may not be expecting many visitors this year because of the covid19 pandemic, it doesn't mean you cannot create a welcoming environment in your entrance hall.

Here are some styling tips to help you transform your space.

1. Set the scene

Think about the first thing you want your guests to see. Create a warm and welcoming entrance with candles in lanterns or tea lights in a jar. Even outside the house you can have a pretty welcoming sign, or lanterns leading up to the house.

2. Decorate with wreaths

Decorating your front door and the exterior of your home at Christmas is a must, but don't forget to dress your interior doors, too. Seeing as the hallway leads to all rooms in the home, you could pop a wreath or swag on all internal doors or door handles.

3. Create ambience

With the days already getting shorter, it's a great opportunity to play with mood lighting for your hallway. Warm-toned lighting is perfect as it creates a cosy atmosphere, which your loved ones are sure to appreciate as they relax at your home on Christmas Day.

Warm, yellow-toned lights will add an inviting feel to your hallway. If you prefer white-toned lights for your tree, these could also work nicely in mimicking a colder environment. Micro lights work well in this setting too, as they're subtle and pretty. You could use LED tea lights to dress your console table, while taper candles look gorgeous in front of mirrors.

4. Dress your staircase

The staircase is a focal, if not the main, fixture in your hallway, so use this to your advantage and make sure it's looking super Christmassy. The first



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recommendation is to deck the halls with a Christmas garland. Choose a garland that matches your theme. For a chic and fresh look, choose eucalyptus or for a more traditional feel, opt for pinecones and berries. If you have any spare or loose baubles or tree decorations, work your way up the stairs and tie these along the handrail – it'll look ultra festive.

5. Embrace rich colours

Rich colour can make a space feel luxurious at any point of the year, but during Christmas the opulent look comes into its own. Hallways are a perfect place to start and can effortlessly create an inviting, festive feel when you enter the home. Red and green are typical Christmas shades but by opting for styles with stripe or patterns your space will remain on trend year round.

6. Utilise the console table

Have you got a console table or sideboard in your hallway? It can be a great base for decorating, and it's not exclusive to the holiday season either.

At Christmas they call out for perhaps a small tree. At Easter, huge vessels with spring blooms. At family birthdays, loaded with cards and gifts. If you only have the time or inclination for just one project make it this one. It's the perfect considered and effective way to set the tone for whatever the season.

7. Create your own Christmas-themed bunting

Crafting has been big during lockdown, so why not continue your creative streak and make some festive decorations too? It's also a great way to reduce your environmental impact during the festive season. You could try making your own bunting. Cut out festive shapes from sturdy cardboard, paint them, then create a small hole at the top of each one and thread through some ribbon or string. You could, of course, buy bunting if you'd prefer.

8. Set up an additional Christmas tree

If you have the space, it's definitely a great idea to place a Christmas tree in the hallway. If space is an issue, remember it really doesn't have to be as large or extravagant as your living room tree. There are some great slim Christmas trees to invest in, or even small Christmas trees that you can pop on a console table or a stool for extra height. (housebeautiful.com)

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THE BIGGEST TRENDS FOR 2021

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Child's play

A huge part of a nostalgic Christmas has to be the fond memories of receiving presents as a child. It stands to reason then, that a significant element of the nostalgic Christmas décor trend this year is the incorporation of toys into the overall décor. Train sets joyously choo-chooing under the Christmas tree; a red decorated wagon on the front porch; an automobile on display. This trend is all about child's play.



Cherries and apples

There was a time when an ornamental cherry was a standard Christmas decoration and apples were only available during the Christmas season. This year, the nostalgic Christmas décor is incorporating cherries and apples (both ornamental and real) as part of the overall décor. Somehow it makes perfect sense.



Christmas collections

When did you last see a Christmas village or a nativity set, complete with the three wise men? It seemed that we lost a vital element of Christmas when these went "out of style." But this year Christmas collections are shining as bright as the lights on your Christmas tree.



Poinsettias

What would Christmas be without a poinsettia or two? When it comes to décor, this is definitely a timeless Christmas décor trend. It is constant yet brings back feelings of nostalgia. For this reason alone, it is included in the nostalgic trend that picking up momentum with each passing day. Feel free to get a little crazy with poinsettias this year.

Stockings and hats

In the same vein as the Christmas collections, Christmas stockings and Santa hats are now regaining popularity on the Christmas décor front. Since we do not have a climate that necessitates fireplaces, hanging your stockings on a staircase or a suitable alternative will do the trick. Then too, finding innovative ways of incorporating Santa hats will give you twice the pleasure when you see your creativity come to fruition.



Christmas figurines

Similarly, traditional mythical characters taking the form of Christmas figurines are also making a merry comeback this year. Santa Claus, reindeer and angels can all be found on entryway tables and book shelves a plenty. The effect is overwhelmingly magical.

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*Kieran
Andrew Khan*

The best part about decorating a tree is that it can be a fun and involved activity for the whole family or your pod of friends that you have kept close during these tough times. It can also be a chance for a new tradition, maybe a new tree, or a new way of decorating it because we spend so much of our time indoors and at home now. Here are some of the ways we can really make that tree just a touch more magical this season.

The tree

If you are choosing a tree, the best advice is to keep it simple. Sure, LED pre-lit trees are great, but a simple evergreen tree can last decades. So go for good quality and a decent size. If you are on a budget, anything over six feet is ideal but if you go under, mounting it on a box, draped in fabric can do the trick too. If you have a small space do not go for a large, oversized tree. In fact, if you prefer, one miniature tree or several can easily replace the one. Think of it as seeing a forest instead of a tree. Decorate each one uniquely but stick to a theme such as metallics, or a colour or a theme of colours.

The lights

Layering is key to a full look of lights, so you want to lay lights on each ring of branches as you go up moving inwards to the trunk (or centre) of the

MAKE MAGIC WITH YOUR TREE

tree in a triangular pattern. Determining how many lights you need varies by type and size of lights used and the size of the tree. Some decorators estimate 100 lights per foot of tree but this can go up to 200 depending on the thickness of the tree. Cool white or warm white lights, multi-coloured, still, or sparkling lights are personal options.

The decorations

Now this is where the magic happens. If you want to be on trend with the themes this year, then a monochromatic approach works. Pick one colour and run with it. You can even pick up bells and



taken a hold in the season of covid19 with trees featuring larger and louder looking decorations than ever before.

However, minimal Nordic and Scandinavian designs are also welcome this year, a reflection not just of leaner times but of a need to get back to basics as well. But drawing on this for inspiration there are ways and means of using

baskets and coconut husks to great effect for a local spin on the Christmas tree too. And in these times, if you feel like going all out, for a white winter wonderland, do that too. Whatever brings you joy when you get to enjoy it with the family at home is what you should do.

A new chance for tradition One good way of bringing the family together when we can't physically be as before is to have each family make a keepsake heirloom piece to send to other family members trees. This can be a hand decorated bauble or even make use of plaster and moulds too. It can be messages in tiny bottles or a handmade Christmas angel. The point is that every family line can be represented by your tree and if repeatedly annually, you will have a number of trees in a number of households, full of family heirlooms to visit in times ahead when we do just that again.

And remember, what goes up, must come down. So keep it simple and when packing it away, keep it organised and labelled for easy set up next year too.



Christmas tree. Image: Nordic House



TURN INDOOR WALL INTO A FESTIVE MURAL

complete layer of protection, or a matte sealant if you don't want a high gloss. You'll want to ensure that protection, especially

from dust. Because once dust settles on artwork it has a way of deteriorating the surface. You will also find, if not sealed, the

colours may fade. And some of the sealants even have UV protectors to maintain the brilliance if colours."

Artist Fitzroy Hoyte at work on one of his murals. Hoyte says a mural is a great way to introduce the "wow" factor to an indoor space. PHOTO COURTESY FITZROY HOYTE.

It's the time of year when people look for new and creative ways to decorate their homes, and new pieces of wall art are among the top decor choices.

Artist and founder of the Port of Spain-based ThinkArtWorkTT studio, Fitzroy Hoyte said while decorating with individual art pieces are popular, the option of an indoor wall mural is also a great way to create the ambience you want.

Murals date back to 30,000 BC from the earliest paintings in the Chauvet cave France, and are usually done in outdoor spaces. But Hoyte said they could make the aesthetics of your indoor spaces pop, especially in a child's bedroom.

"You can do it on the wall or you can use a super board – a compressed laminated fibre board which comes in different sizes." He said the super board can be attached to the wall using plugs and moulding can be placed around it. It can easily be unscrewed and removed. "I use it when I'm doing mosaic murals."

He said any type of media can be used to create a mural. "You can use, acrylics, oils, mosaics tiles, mirrors, shells, glass, mixed media. It all depends on the look and feel you are going for."

Hoyte said the first step is to decide on a budget, what type of medium you want to use, and how long you would want to keep the mural. "You have to consider that it may be costly, because the material and time will not be cheap. Everything has a value to it and you will need to work within your budget."

He said the next step is to either draw the image you want on the wall or the super board, or draw a prototype and use a projector to project it onto the space and trace it. "Then you can use whatever media you wish to complete it."

Once the mural is finished, he said sealing it is very important because when it comes time to clean it, you want to be certain it has a layer of protection.

"The options are spray varnish to coat surface, resin which gives you a



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