

# New Canaan Darrien + ROWAYTON

BIRTHDAY BASH Celebrating Big in Darien

NOV/DEC 2020

## Holiday Magic

### FESTIVE INSPIRATION FOR EVERY ROOM

A peek into one  
of the homes  
on the Newcomers  
Club of New Canaan's  
Holiday House Tour

DESIGNED BY  
LORA GRAY

NEWCANAANDARIENMAG.COM



**LIGHT A FIRE**  
*Honoring those who go  
above and beyond*





An extra-long formal dining table designed by Carey Karlan is dressed with tableware from The Linen Shop and accented with dramatic tree branches in clear vases.





In the kitchen,  
Karlán used  
greenery  
accented with  
citrus for a  
festive but  
casual feel.

# Carey Karlán

LAST DETAIL INTERIOR DESIGN



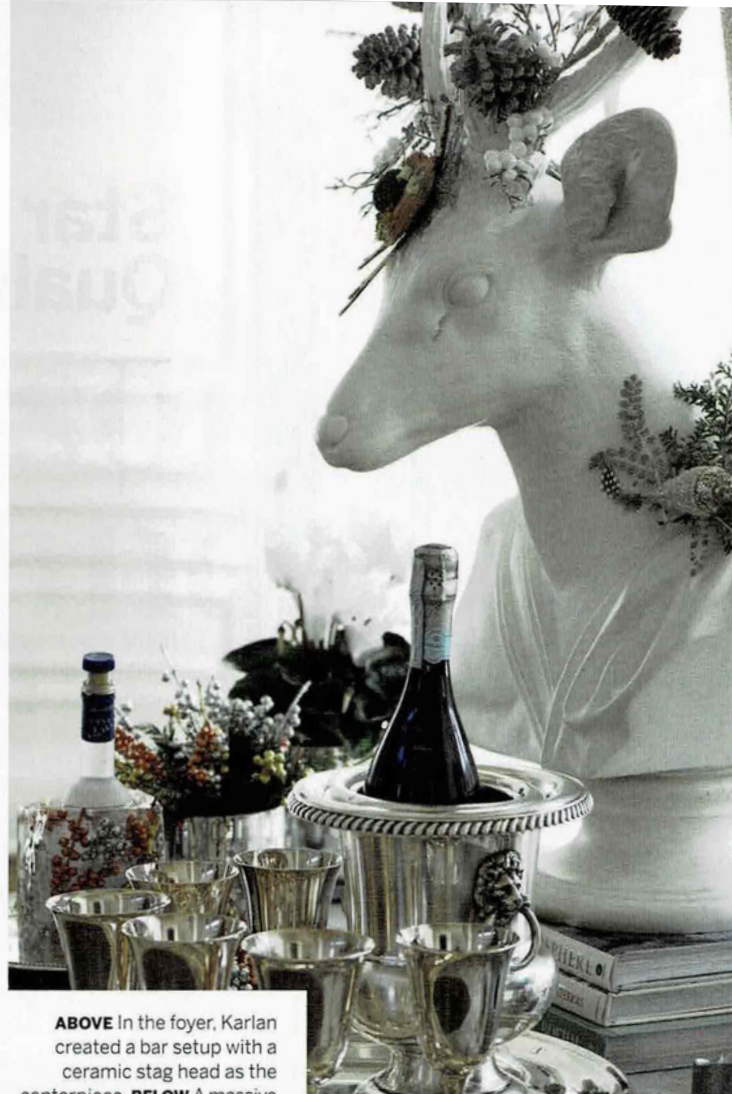
# Shiny & Bright

**C**arey Karlan, owner of Last Detail Design, explains that when decking the halls of this grand home that's traditional on the outside but contemporary inside, her challenge was how to make an impact in such a big space.

The designer and her team used most of their budget on a giant 15-foot tree in the foyer from Pound Ridge Nursery. They strung tons of white lights and sourced inexpensive round glass ornaments, tying them together in groups of three to make a statement. Huge stars in mixed metallic hues were tucked in among the ornaments, which reflected the gold and silver tones in the room's wrought iron staircase. For a tree skirt, Karlan purchased three different colors of netting from a craft store, braided it, then nestled it around the base of the tree. Her team wrapped presents in simple white paper tied with satin ribbon in hues of silver, gold and brown. "It's easy to find inexpensive wrapping paper but splurging on nice ribbon is effective and suggests quality and elegance," she says.

To the left of the tree—front and center in the foyer—she set up a bar vignette on a round table covered with a luxe damask silk fabric. A statuesque ceramic stag head was the focal point of this space, and vodka chilled in a pretty ice block surrounded by votives and floral containers of different heights filled with paperwhites. "I was suggesting a festive moment at a big party where guests would want to pick up a glass of champagne and go mingle," she says.

The dining room table was immensely long, so Karlan filled three glass containers with inexpensive large faux quince branches to add height. The branches were anchored with bunches of gold beaded garland at the base, and small gold and silver ornaments of various sizes hung from the tall stems. A nearby console table housed several 24-inch sparkly green and white paper cone-shaped trees. "I needed at least eight to make a statement, so make sure you have enough of an item when you group things together," she recommends. In the kitchen where it was more casual, Karlan laid one big oversized bunch of greenery down the center of the table and tucked in fresh clementines for a festive effect.



**ABOVE** In the foyer, Karlan created a bar setup with a ceramic stag head as the centerpiece. **BELOW** A massive tree welcomed guests in the foyer.



“Splurging on nice ribbon is effective and suggests quality and elegance.”

## KARLAN'S 411 ON HOLIDAY DECORATING

**DECORATE** to complement what you have. Go with your existing color palette and decorate within the style of your home, whether it be traditional or modern.

**STRATEGIZE** the best bang for your buck. For this home, it was all about making a statement in the grand foyer with the tree and bar.

**SET UP** small “scenes” throughout your space. “You want little stories happening in different places in your home for visual interest,” says Karlan.

**GO BIG** in an understated space. Karlan used overscaled, foot-long silver and glitter pine cones in the study, and large faux quince branches in the dining room to create that wow factor.





# Star Quality

This is a special house for a special family," explains Kate Ferguson, principal of Palomino Bazaar who worked on the home along with business partner Joanne O'Neil. The home was designed for a child with disabilities whose mother is on the board of STAR, Inc., an organization that serves individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities in Fairfield County. "Several grants written by STAR, Inc. were funded from the Holiday House Tour ticket sales and sponsorships for this special house," says Ferguson.

The house is spacious to accommodate a wheelchair and, with four kids in this family, Ferguson and O'Neil wanted to keep their design playful and fresh. "My best holiday decorating advice is to mix older items you already own with special

handmade or bespoke pieces, as well as newer items that will become family heirlooms over time," she says.

Ferguson and O'Neil brought in shades of pinks and purples—unexpected for the holidays—and integrated star motifs throughout the home as an homage to the beloved nonprofit.

Because of allergies, Ferguson and O'Neil sourced a faux tree from Balsam Hill and loaded it with metallic globes in hues of silvers, pinks and blues. "We layered in ribbon, star ornaments and metal star wreaths lit with fairy lights to fill in as much space as possible," she says. The designers wrapped presents under the tree with a mix of affordable wrap and hand printed paper from Japan. Ferguson loves sourcing ornaments at inexpensive craft and home stores, but also prefers a handmade element. She explains, "Many of the ornaments on our tree were hand-painted by students of the New Canaan Community Preschool, which was so special."

“Mix older items you already own with special handmade or bespoke pieces.”

For the table, vintage Tiffany plates printed with birds were placed atop new raspberry chargers and gold mesh placemats from The Whitney Shop. Teal and vintage purple water goblets by Carla Moretti blended with the navy dining chairs and the special rug, which is a traditional antique pattern reworked with overdyed and bleaching for a modern, impactful look. Vintage bamboo flatware and embroidered bird napkins speak to the Asian art collection in the home.

A fresh holiday table setting mixing vintage Tiffany china with new pieces.



# Kate Ferguson & Joanne O'Neil

PRINCIPALS OF  
PALOMINO BAZAAR

Ferguson and O'Neil braided together several types of greenery including boxwood, cedar, juniper and princess pine to make one luscious, bold strand for a dramatic banister.



# Lora Gray

OWNER OF GRAY INTERIORS

Treats in the kitchen were made by students from New Canaan High school.

“It was so fun to stray from the traditional red and green that’s typical at Christmastime.”







A magical tree in the living room brought the home's *Nutcracker* theme to life.

# Winter Wonderland

The decor for this house, dubbed "A Season on Pointe" by the House Tour Committee, was inspired by the *Nutcracker* ballet. Designer Lora Gray conceptualized and executed the décor along with Emily Candee and Gillian Ozkaplan, who provided floral arrangements, and Sonia Del Monaco, from SDL Designs, who provided the greenery. "The homeowners' two daughters were performing in NEAD's version of the ballet the week of the Home Tour, which made decorating for the theme so much fun," says Gray.

Since the existing palette was mostly blue and white, Gray stuck to those tones, adding some silvers and greens as well as pops of pinks and pastels. "It was so fun to stray from the traditional red and green that's typical at Christmas time," she says.

Gray and her team recreated many of the beloved ballet themes in several rooms. In the living room, a winter palette of icy blues and snowy whites proved to be the perfect pairing to evoke the snow scene. The tree was decorated in silver, white and light blue ornaments mixed with tons of white lights, and "we topped the mantel with natural greens and white lights and mixed in some blue trees for an added pop of color," she explains.

A more pastel floral palette was used in the family room to recreate "The Waltz of the Flowers." The mantel's garland was a mixture of faux silk and paper flowers with pastel-colored bulbs wrapped with pale pink ribbon. The pink in the garland lent a feminine feel, and Gray wrapped pink tulle tutus around the base of a giant tree topped with a pair of ballet slippers.

The tree was flocked to evoke "The Land of Snow," and was lit with white lights, and blue silk and tissue flowers throughout, as if one was in an enchanted forest. The coup de grace was "The Land of Sweets" in the kitchen, where three big wreaths studded with cake and candy-themed ornaments hung in large windows. "One easy, fun thing I like to do for the holidays is to take a fresh wreath, add a pretty satin turquoise ribbon and fill in the wreath with fun, whimsical ornaments," says Gray. The kitchen island beheld a whimsical display of apothecary jars filled with candy, as well as specialty cakes and cookies baked by students at New Canaan High School. "It's every child's dream to walk into a land of sweets, and this family hosted the *Nutcracker* cast-member party and all the ballerinas got to enjoy the treats," she says.

## A MAGICAL MANTEL

### SKIP THE CLASSIC FRASER AND PINE

Choose a robust bed of eucalyptus as a base. Nestle in several succulents for an unexpected touch.

### MIX METALS

Think beyond traditional and mix finishes like gold, mercury glass and silver with your accessories.

### KEEP IT NEUTRAL

Choose muted tones for the majority of your décor for a soft and inviting space.

### TOP IT OFF

Fill hurricanes with silver ornaments on either end and add white floral arrangements or white lights in the center for a festive glow.



# Modern Love

When decking the halls of this contemporary farmhouse, Samantha King and Debbie Jackson blended design elements. "This home is neither all modern nor traditional so we decorated with both old and new design sensibilities," explains King.

The duo chose a non-traditional palette of navy, golds and silvers with pops of orange, reflecting the color of the owners' bright dining room chairs, a focal point downstairs. In this room, a dark-wood table was brightened with white square plates, opulent, colorful napkins reminiscent of a Gucci scarf and gold starburst napkin rings set with a pretty green stone. Placecards were set into gold artichoke holders, and blue coasters and amber glassware tied in elements of the orange as well as the navy velvet chairs in the adjoining sitting room, where a giant blue spruce tree glimmered with blue and gold ornaments.

In the sitting room, the designers brought in a pair of seasonal orange amaryllis and hung double 24-inch wreaths vertically above each other with navy blue ribbon on the floor-to-ceiling glass door. "One of my favorite holiday tips is to use live greenery or flowers to add a dramatic or surprising element to your holiday decor," notes King. In this home, floral designer Meghann Smith created an unexpected baby's breath waterfall that cascaded from the kitchen the island toward the floor.

In the kitchen, the owners' collection of hurricanes and candlesticks lined a glass table topped with bowls of fresh fruit and a long piece of driftwood.

In the foyer, lush pine greenery was wrapped up the staircase to evoke a sense of being in the wild. The designers took this idea one step further using faux fir pine trees in the foyer and faux fur throws and pillows to add warmth.

The butler's pantry, just off the dining room, became a post-dinner dessert station where guests could grab a cup of coffee and fill up their plates with candy and cookies beautifully displayed in glass apothecary, cork-topped and brass-lidded jars.

“Use live greenery or flowers to add a dramatic or surprising element to your holiday decor.”



**ABOVE** King and Jackson chose elegant tableware in non-traditional holiday colors.

**BELOW** In the sitting room, the designers brought in a pair of seasonal orange amaryllis planted in classic ginger jars.



## ELEVATE YOUR EXTERIOR

"Everyone always focuses on the interiors, but don't neglect the exterior of your home during the holidays," says King. Here's how she and Jackson recommend making an impact outdoors:

### GET COZY

If you have a covered patio or porch, use blankets or outdoor pillows to make that space feel cozy.

### ALL THAT GLITTERS

Flank your barn or garage with planters of tall topiaries and decorate them with ornaments or lights.

### COLOR STORY

Bring indoor colors outdoors. "We wove orange ribbon into the outdoor topiaries as a nod to the pops of that same color going on inside," says King.

### FIRST IMPRESSION

If you have driveway gates, King and Jackson like to hang 60-inch giant eucalyptus wreaths on each one for a big impact.

### CURB APPEAL

At the base of your driveway, choose containers in an unusual shape or size. King and Jackson used a pair of sculptural wrought-iron orbs stuffed with magnolia and pine leaves from Copia Nursery.



# Samantha King & Debbie Jackson

DESIGN DOT TEAM



Floral designer  
Meghann Smith  
worked in large  
arrangements for  
added drama.



Each room housed a tree  
of a different theme.

# Michael Canoro

PRINCIPAL AT EASTMAN-INTERIORS





## A SWOON-WORTHY TABLESCAPE

### A CHIC CHARGER

Canoro went for a whimsical pheasant-feather style.

### FESTIVE AND FORMAL

Layer with plates of several sizes, feel free to mix and match.

### MONOGRAMMED NAPKINS OR THEMED NAPKIN HOLDERS

Canoro used the homeowners' horse bits to hold their crisp linens.

### SIMPLE FLATWARE

Or use your very best sterling silver.

### MULTIPLE DRINKING GLASSES

It's all about function with a festive sparkle.

“The Art Deco living room had a gold and cream palette and the tree was trimmed with peacock feathers.”

with copper ornaments as well as delicate mercury glass fruit and unique food-themed ones.

As you entered the cozy family room, the designer brought an equestrian theme to life by integrating horse-themed accessories into the room. This tree was decked with riding boots, horse shoes, saddles, silver bridles, black and red trimmings and leather ornaments.

Outside in the pool house, the porte cochère had a natural tree filled with woodland animals and birds sourced from Etsy. Amazon and Terrain in Westport. Grapevine, winterberry branches and natural sprigs of greens added to the natural look. Canoro layered

multiple textures here with a decorative wooden horse head, wrought-iron coffee table, wicker furniture, flannel blankets and a woven firewood basket.

“An Adirondack style was reflected in the rustic pool house, as if you were in Lake Placid,” says Canoro. A 13-foot Fraser fir was the focal point and decorated with snowshoes, skis, and red-and-black plaid ornaments. A beautiful, life-size black bear at the base stole the show next to a roaring fireplace.

Canoro's favorite thing about the project was that each room had a different theme and they all reflected the homeowners' warm, comfortable style.



# Into the Woods

I love a traditional aesthetic when decorating for the holidays,” explains Michael Canoro, principal at Eastman-Interiors. His overall theme was created in keeping with this antique colonial home and the homeowners' eclectic style.

Canoro trimmed the front door and entrance by wrapping swags of fresh magnolia amidst urns of fresh fruit and cedar branches.

The designer believes the more trees, the better, and he chose a different theme for each tree in the home. “The Art Deco living room had a gold and cream palette, and the tree was trimmed with peacock feathers, floral ornaments and glitzy adornments,” he explains. Canoro added whimsy by hanging a peacock feather wreath and putting a shimmery bow on a ceramic cheetah, which sat under the period piano. He completed the tree by wrapping several gifts in beautiful paper and festive ribbon.

In the breakfast room, copper cookware was displayed along the working fireplace's mantel. Canoro decorated an adjacent tree



# Christmas Past

his unique home has a rich history in that it has been an inn as well as a private residence.

At one point long ago, the homeowner was a piano teacher, and the front rooms once housed several pianos. "The whole idea behind the holiday décor here was to keep with the traditional nature of the home," explains Cindi Levi. "The current homeowners wanted the décor to be focused around music and reflect an old-fashioned feel."

A garland of magnolia leaves, gold hydrangeas, plaid gold ribbon, silver-beaded garland and glass ornaments with feathers ascended the foyer stairwell and greeted guests as they came in the door. The designers chose a theme of gold, silver, blue and white, which was elegant and a nod to an earlier time. One of the three trees had a musical theme, so Levi and Terrance Rhodes folded old music sheets into stars and spray-painted old 45s for ornaments. "We wanted to bring in a real homemade feel to this Christmas scene," she says.

For the dining table, Juliska supplied stunning tableware. "We chose a formal place setting with silver and gold chargers and a lace runner down the center of the table," notes Levi. Rhodes, who is also a florist, created an arrangement made of nearly all white flowers mixed in with some dried gold hydrangeas that he had cut from the owners' garden, dried and spray-painted gold. The candlesticks, which were filled with pale blue-and-white-striped tapers, were vintage French horns that the designers bought from an antique shop.

Levi and Rhodes paid special attention to the patio. "The front urns that flanked the doorway were really special," she remembers. Sourced from Lillian August, they look like wood but were concrete and filled with a mix of various

greenery, spindly branches that the designers spray-painted white, and more dried gold hydrangeas.

A few other favorite additions from the designers include a set of vintage blue velvet stocking handmade by Rhodes, and the popcorn garland that the design team hand-strung and wove into the family room tree. The finishing touch was that the homeowner made over 1000 cookies to be handed out during the Tour for guests.

"This home had that special, personal touch," remembers Levi, "and in this time where we're all together a lot more, sitting down and stringing popcorn or making some homemade ornaments during the holidays adds that extra special element," she says.

## LET'S GET CRAFTY

**PAINT** Styrofoam cones with glue and roll them in glitter to make pretty trees that can be used on a table or sideboard. \*Wrap Styrofoam balls with vintage fabrics and tie with pretty ribbon for fun ornaments.

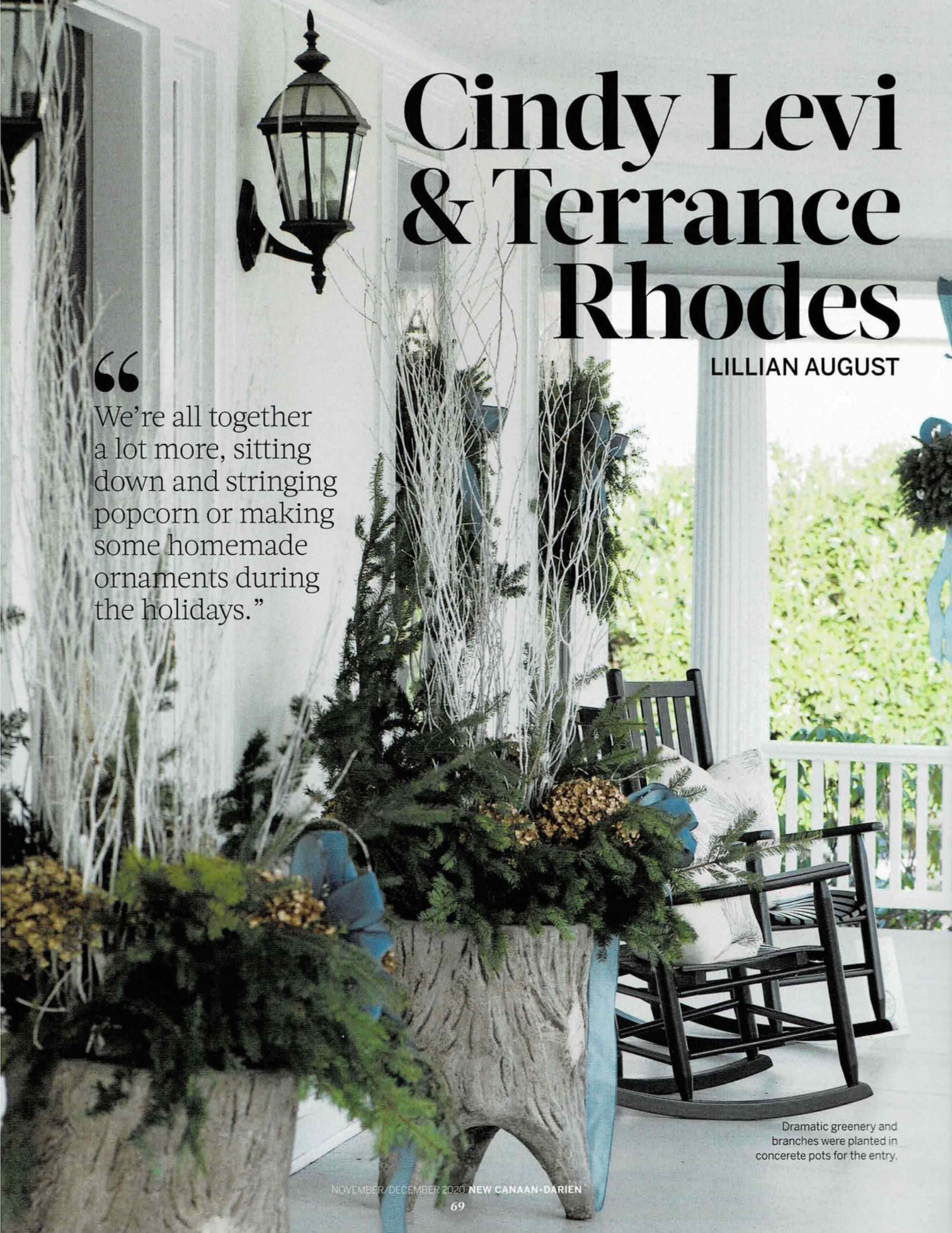
**CREATE** a cozy area to have homemade cookies and cocoa where the family can go to decompress and be together or guests can relax.

**MIX** magnolia leaves and greenery remnants from your garland to form small bouquets that can be put in small vases or silver bowls in various spots of the home. Surround with votive candles.

**ABOVE** Juliska provided a beautiful formal table setting. **BELOW** A cozy hot chocolate and cookie nook.







# Cindy Levi & Terrance Rhodes

LILLIAN AUGUST

“

We're all together a lot more, sitting down and stringing popcorn or making some homemade ornaments during the holidays.”

Dramatic greenery and branches were planted in concrete pots for the entry.