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ELEGANT & ENCHANTING

Date: November 29, 2021 | **Story:** Tiffany Adams | **Photography:** Rett Peek | **Styling:** Stephanie Maxwell
Newton

In Little Rock, Chris H. Olsen uses nature’s bounty to adorn a house for the season

Having worked with these Little Rock clients on their Christmas décor for a number of years, Chris H. Olsen is well acquainted with the timeless look the family wants during the season. “They like everything to be very clean, elegant, and simple,” he says of the approach that perfectly complements the home’s traditional interiors. “They are all about family and making it feel like home—especially during the holidays.”

To achieve the look, Chris and a team of designers from his nursery and shop, Botanica Gardens, work tirelessly for three days to install the décor. “We always schedule this house for the second week of December because everything is fresh, and we want it to be perfectly in bloom for Christmas,” he says. This client is unique in that all of the magnolia greenery is ordered from New York and transported to Little Rock, a tradition both the



homeowner and Chris have grown to love. “When it arrives, we get to go wild and create with it,” he says.

While the greenery is the star of the design, Chris also fills planters and brings in accent pieces. He notes the owners like to change up the ribbon color each year, using everything from pink to this rendition's lime green and caramel-hued selections seen on the garlands and wreaths.

“Holiday décor is a little bit different for me because when I'm working outdoors and doing containers, I always want the pots to be stuffed to the brim and overflowing with color,” Chris says. “But my philosophy on Christmas décor is simplicity is everything. I want to let the natural beauty of the tree, the garlands, and the wreaths shine.”

The front entry is a showpiece in the home's holiday scheme with stunning garlands and dramatic, full wreaths. “This garland is almost like a drapery that puddles at the floor,” Chris says.

Refined Dining

In the formal dining room, Chris complemented the stately wood paneling and gracious accents with a timeless tablescape of silver, gold, and copper ornaments set atop magnolia leaves. “My rule is to keep it low so you can see the guests across from you, and I like to add in ornaments to help camouflage any drying that occurs over time,” he says. The buffet features the combination of amaryllis and holly seen throughout the home alongside ornaments in this neutral metallic palette.

Woodland Wonder

To complement the living room's palette and convey a traditional holiday feel, Chris mixed magnolia leaves, pinecones, and grapevine with ornaments and ribbon in subdued, wintry landscape hues. Wreaths were hung on both the interior and exterior of the windows to avoid shadows and give the look inside as well as outdoors. Additionally, pinecone wreaths were slipped around the bases of lamps for instant style. “Any ornaments I have left over I use to fill bowls,” he says. “It brings a little bit of bling here and there.”

Fresh magnolia wreaths accented with lime green ribbon bring a festive touch to the breakfast nook's expansive windows, while pinecones, pears, green apples, and cut stems adorn the table.

“

“My philosophy on Christmas décor is simplicity is everything.” —Chris H. Olsen, designer

Clean & Classic

Chris personally designs all the home's planters. “I like to take all the planters and the materials out to the driveway, line them up, and go to work creating different combinations for each one,” he says. In the kitchen, massive white bowl-shaped containers are filled with sheet moss, cut magnolia leaves, amaryllis, and holly branches, which are placed to help stake the amaryllises.



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Tree Trimmings

The family selects a fresh tree each year, and Chris and his team fill its branches with their collection of ornaments. “It’s an elegant look that’s very family-oriented but it still has a casual air to it,” Chris says, pointing to the bevy of colorful, cascading ribbons.



Gold ornaments and lime ribbon adhere to the scheme seen on the family room's tree and wreaths.

In the back hallway, Chris used a wooden planter filled with amaryllises, holly berries, magnolia leaves, classic red



ornaments, and caramel-colored silk ribbon to bring Christmas cheer.

Design Resources

Builder **Jack Hartsell, Jack Hartsell Construction** Interior design **James Michael Howard (Florida)**

Christmas design **Chris H. Olsen, Botanica Gardens**



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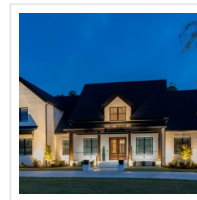
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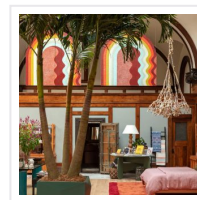


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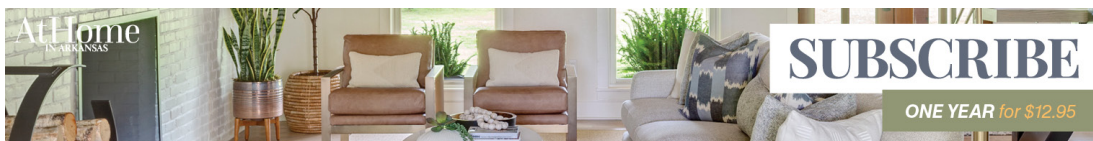
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