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From Inexpensive to Extravagant Holiday Decor

By Ann McDonald



Photos Couture Chateau

It's that time of year again. Holiday decorations are everywhere and the pressure is on. From glittered pinecones at OSH Hardware in Moraga to finery at Nieman Marcus in Walnut Creek, how is a savvy Lamorinda resident supposed to make sense of it all? Decorate your own home? Hire it out? Spend lavishly or scour the discount stores for last year's bargains?

Moraga resident Margaret Bang starts with inexpensive, but elegant decor. "Each year I start with a base of fresh greenery, faux garland and add layers of white," she says. "I particularly like to use a mix of textured white candles because they burn non-toxic, go with every color and they always look elegant."

Stores like Costco offer 25 feet of fresh garland for approximately \$15, which can be supplemented with low cut branches from evergreen trees, boxwood or scavenged items from the backyard. Well-made pre-lit, pre-decorated garland can be found for as little as \$60 and can adorn banisters, entries, and even be added to Christmas trees for a fuller dimension.

Local homeowners create vignettes in foyers or on porches using ribbons, holiday collections, or other unique items to add an emotional element to their holiday decor. Orinda homeowner Catherine Soso's turquoise dining room opens to her living room where she flanks her fireplace with not one, but two Christmas trees.

She says she is always on the lookout for what might work. "Sometimes it's that 'thing' that finds you. It's almost never in your budget but it's a must have item that is true

to how you envision your holiday home," Soso says. "It becomes a treasure and delight from year to year. You use it and embrace it. But you have to be open to seeing it."

Lamorindans wanting a more extravagant look adorn the base of Christmas trees with silk taffeta tree skirts or fabricated multi-use gift boxes. Others get ideas from department store displays, in magazine spreads - or in one of the many gift catalogues clogging mailboxes this time of year.

So what is this year's hottest holiday trend?

"Custom trees are all the rage with the high-end," says Daniel Coxon, assistant project manager at Couture Chateau in Orinda. The firm recently spent more than two weeks custom dipping and painting a faux tree to create a striped look and created custom ornaments for a unique yellow-themed Christmas tree. "We just waited for the inspiration to hit and once it did ... well, wow!"

Whether choosing the inexpensive or extravagant, Lamorinda homes are sure to be beautifully dressed for the season. For more holiday decor ideas, visit www.couturechateau.wordpress.com.

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