

TRIMMINGS

All the



After thoughtfully renovating their 1920s Virginia home, this family of four decks its halls and *enlivens its traditional bones* with their magical, maximalist holiday designs.

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Homeowner Brittany Sydnor furnished her living room with a midcentury Milo Baughman sofa upholstered in Moore & Giles leather, a white tulip table, and an antique portrait. She decorated the Christmas tree with a similar eye for mixing new and vintage baubles. Then, she says, "I just brought out the tinsel and went to town." The wrapping papers "have this sweet nostalgia to them," she says.



Brittany Sydnor fully subscribes to the adage “Patience is a virtue” when it comes to decorating. “A house doesn’t develop character overnight. It takes years to layer it with soul,” she says. “I have always wanted my home to feel more collected than designed. And that’s how I approach decorating for the holidays too. A Christmas tree is just another chance for me to add a few more layers of character.”

Perhaps that’s why Brittany doesn’t limit herself to just one tree in her family’s 1926 Colonial Revival home in Lynchburg, VA. Her flourishing collection of vintage ornaments, which she has curated over her lifetime, adorns three full-size trees this year. “We lived through a two-year renovation and kept the holidays very low-key,” she says. “When we were finally settled into the house, I promised the kids we would go big. It was about time for a decorating extravaganza.”

For Brittany, a self-taught designer who enjoys the thrill of the hunt, that meant embellishing every room in the house, including the foyer and the butler’s pantry. Full-size Christmas trees delivered extra holiday magic to her children’s bedrooms. With a desire to pair sophistication and whimsy, Brittany pulled her Christmas bins from the attic with only one steadfast idea in mind: Less is certainly not more.



“I don’t like spaces that feel overly orchestrated and perfectly stylized,” she says. “I want a room to feel quirky and unexpected, and I like my Christmas decor the same.” So when she stumbled on a basket filled with vintage tinsel at an estate sale, she said to herself: “Jackpot—I’ve found the holy grail of tinsel.” For a week in November after her

kids went to bed, she painstakingly untangled the bird’s nest of silver threads so she could blanket her living room tree with the shimmering strands and create something new.

“When I had covered the tree top to bottom, I told my husband, Brandon, ‘I think it still needs something more.’ He said, ‘Of course you do.’” Brittany found yards of chiffon ribbon, cut it into sections, and casually draped it over the tree limbs. “There was no strategy, but when I was done and the tree was loaded down, absolutely dripping with ornaments, ribbon, and tinsel, I was thrilled.”

Brittany says she knows a room—or a Christmas tree—is “just right” when it moves her. “I want all the patterns,

textures, history, and colors to hit me emotionally. It takes time to figure these things out in your own space. I’m sure there are people who would walk into my house and it would be too much for them. But that’s what is fun about design—it’s so personal. It comes down to knowing what brings you joy and being willing to go for it, tinsel and all.”

ABOVE Brandon and Brittany Sydnor, with their children, Briggs and Sloane, and Labradoodle Piper, decorate their home’s front porch simply—in contrast to the interiors. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** “I love a big, lush garland and a more organic look on a banister,” Brittany says. “Weaving a real garland with a really good faux one is a way to extend its life and bulk it up a bit too.” The felt characters on the tree, she says, “seemed like a rarity—something I hadn’t seen anywhere.” Brittany accessorizes with lots of ornaments in bowls and glass containers. The slightly worn finish on vintage glass baubles—whatever their hue—makes them compatible.





SUNROOM Brittany had the legs cut down on a sofa she owned so it would fit beneath the windows; she reupholstered it in a velvet to match the color of the walls, trim, and shutters and added tassel fringe for texture. The red window muntins complement the ceiling wallpaper. **MUDROOM** At the back door, Briggs balances holiday packages ready for delivery. Brittany designed the space to reflect the house's age. "We splurged on all the wood for the walls," she says, "something I'll never regret because it feels authentic." Simple wreaths made by a local artisan announce the holiday season. "I have a weakness for quality greenery," Brittany says.



holiday decor
Maximal
Impact

'Tis the season to decorate with vivid colors, vintage ornaments, and a bit of glimmer for good measure.

Brittany is a busy mom of two, a VP at Moore & Giles leather company, and lead interior designer at Penny Lane Properties. She also owns BeFound Collective (a vintage and antique rug shop) and is always on the hunt for Christmas decorations. Here are a few of her favorite sources for holiday decorating.

Ribbon

"I love a crushed-velvet ribbon for its texture and movement. Anthropologie and Etsy were my go-tos this year, and I used chiffon ribbon I found on Amazon on the tree for its ethereal drape."

Wreaths and Greenery

"Laura with Laura Rhodes Naturals has

an Etsy shop, and, as it turns out, she's 20 minutes from my house. So I make a quick trip out there for fresh wreaths and garland. I love my greenery a little wild and deconstructed, which is Laura's specialty."

Gift Wrap

"I have a few sources for fun gift wrap. Locally, The Farm Basket in Lynchburg is my first

stop, but for shopping online, John Derian, St. Frank, and Katie Leamon are bookmarked."

Ornaments

"Vintage ornaments of all kinds, with their peeling paint and faded colors, speak to me. Even miscellaneous chandelier crystals make for a fun

sparkle. I look to eBay, estate sales, and vintage shops."

Artificial Trees

"When I'm using a fake tree, Balsam Hill is where I go. They have an option for everyone—whether evergreen or frosted. And their quality is top-notch. Our living room tree is the Balsam Hill Noble Fir Flip Tree."



Brittany fills the pantry walls with vintage landscape paintings and portraits.

KITCHEN Holiday baking takes place on the island, a 13-foot worktable from a farm in Texas that Brittany bought at auction. "I wanted taupe cabinetry and warm elements, like the chevron-plank wood floors and the vintage rug," she says. "The goal was to keep it from feeling utilitarian since we seem to live most of our lives right here." **PLATE RACK** Brittany designed a storage rack as both a practical solution and a space for display. "I loaded it up with all my old cutting boards, John Derian platters, and the kids' artwork. It's all stashed in there in no particular order, and I use it daily." **PANTRY** The English-inspired pantry sees frequent traffic, warranting its own tree. Brittany potted a small one and decorated it with vintage miniature balls in azure and gold. "The colors of the ornaments play off the art and their frames," she says.



SLOANE'S BEDROOM The ethereal chinoiserie wallpaper seemed to beg for a softer, lighter tree, so Brittany chose a white one and decorated it with an assortment of vintage glass and metal ornaments—including a collection of handblown glass hearts she bought in Mexico. “Who buys a load of fragile glass hearts on vacation and asks her husband to transport them home in his carry-on? I do, that’s who,” she says with a laugh. **BRIGGS' BEDROOM** Briggs wanted to decorate his tree with sentiment: plush animals he and his mother have picked out together on trips, homemade ornaments, and a bevy of quirky favorites. A vintage rug fills in as a tree skirt. ■



Brittany added texture and color to the semiflocked tree with bits of red yarn tied to the tips of branches.

