



David Bakken, co-owner of A Place Called Home, adds the finishing touch on his table setting by styling some Boca Bon Bon truffle boxes.

Home (Décor) for the Holidays

Maple Grove's 'Best Interior Designer' shares his (local!) product picks to decorate for the season.

Gifts, feasts, family: all are words that spark up excitement for the holiday season.

Rearranging, stress, mess: these are the words that prove to be daunting, yet oft-times necessary, components of throwing a successful holiday gathering. However, the words that pop into David Bakken's head when it comes to interior decorating for the holiday season are the ones everyone wants to hear: quick, easy and effective.

Bakken, co-owner of A Place Called Home (7889 Main St.), has the credentials to put hopeful home decorators at ease. His furnishings shop won the gold medal for "Best Interior Designer" in our "Best of the Best" reader survey in June. Bakken himself has countless clients that hire him each year to decorate their house for the holidays, not counting the slew of customers that come into his shop daily to purchase furnishing items and get design advice.

This month, Bakken offered to share some of his secrets on how to get a house prepped for the holiday season—minus the headache. In addition, we've tracked down

some feature items and accessories (all from local shops) to highlight along the way.

Dining Room Dazzle

There's nothing more important during the holidays than bringing family and friends together to share a meal. Assuming the main component—dinner table—is already present, Bakken says three other items are crucial to bringing the dining room together: dinnerware, a centerpiece and takeaway.

When it comes to dinnerware, there's no law that says you have to break out the same old china to match each holiday feast. If you want to journey from the norm, Anthropologie (located at the Shoppes at Arbor Lakes) has just the equipment to wake your dinner table up from years of hibernating through tradition. (Warning: This isn't your grandmother's dinnerware.) The store specializes in mixing and matching different patterns, colors and shapes to make for a creative and fun, yet attractive, setting.

For a look that's conducive to all holidays,



By Bobby Hart
Photos by Marshall Franklin Long



Anthropologie features a variety of table settings that are perfect for the holidays. Shown here is the Red Curlicue Etched Stoneware Collection dinner plate, \$12 to \$14; Gold Detailed Dessert Plate collection (available in various colors) for \$14; white coffee plate from the Fleur de Lys Dinnerware collection, \$10 to \$16; \$12 Horta water glass; and the \$18 amber colored Backyard Champaign Flute.

start with a Red Curlicue Etched Stoneware Collection dinner plate, which ranges from \$12 to \$14. To spice it up a bit, add the Gold Detailed Dessert Plate collection (available in various colors) for \$14. A white coffee plate from the Fleur de Lys Dinnerware collection, which ranges from \$10 to \$16, adds a nice ivory tone to mix with the red dinner plate. Add a white Monogrammed Mug, available in all letters, for just \$6. For drinks, use a \$12 Horta water glasses with ornately etched flowers, and there's no better way to toast the holidays than through an \$18 amber colored Backyard Champaign Flute.

A takeaway item, or a small gift, at each place setting is also a good way to decorate the table while at the same time showing that you appreciate your guests. To serve this purpose, Bakken says he often uses Boca Bons one piece-truffle boxes wrapped in ribbon.

Now that the place settings are taken care of, the table needs a focal point. The centerpiece can be set up in one piece (a bowl of fruit in the middle of the table) or two pieces (tall glass Hurricane vases rising above the table's center). Bakken likes an oil-rubbed bronze-finish metal bowl with scroll design and copper accents, sold exclusively at A Place Called Home for \$169, or pillars of Tortoise smoked glass with a metal base, caramel and brown in color, for \$49 each.

While many people think they have to keep adding objects to freshen up their holiday décor, Bakken says the key to the dining room is simplicity. "People have a lot on their plate," he says. "Think simple, concise ideas," and leave it at that.

Readying the Rest

When it comes to primping the other rooms of the house for the holidays, Bakken recommends touching areas such as the great room coffee/sofa table, the kitchen center island, a foyer table or fireplace mantel. "When decorating, look for ... what you see first," Bakken says. "Pick your stops with impact."

Accessories such as trays, bottles and jars are "must haves," Bakken says; A Place Called Home sells metal, rubbed and glass trays ranging from \$29 to \$99, but customers often fill up their own trays with items such as fall pumpkins, gourds, leaves, candles or ornaments. "They are perfect for center islands and kitchen tables," he says of the trays. "They're easy to move when needed."

To decorate coffee tables, Bakken suggests using something other than a vase, such as A Place Called Home's vintage-inspired bottles (\$20-79) or jars (\$59-79) that can be layered with artichokes, acorns, leaves and potpourri. But if you have a vase you're



A Place Called Home's vintage-inspired bottles (\$20-79) or jars (\$59-79) are easy and effective decorations that can be layered with artichokes, acorns, leaves and potpourri.

looking to fill somewhere in the house, pick up the ever-popular LED branch lights at Goodthings (inside the Shoppes at Arbor Lakes); 36-inch stems range from \$42.95 to \$49.95, and 14-inch stems cost between \$26.95 to \$29.95. Tyler Conrad, owner of Goodthings, says the branches, which come with between 30 and 80 lights, constituted Maple Grove's biggest decorating trend heading into the fall. (He recommends placing the stems in a vase with faux flowers or greens for an "instant glowing flower arrangement.")

Other quick and easy additions, such as pine garlands for your staircase or something as simple as ginger-scented hand soap for the bathroom, can make the extra holiday impact you're looking for. "I think the average person could cover all those zones (including the dining room) within two hours," Bakken says. "These are just quick things that you can do to trim your house." //



Go online to maplegrovemag.com to learn some simple tips on the art of tree-trimming.



(No More) Classic Colors

When choosing holiday colors, David Bakken recommends thinking outside the box. Instead of the classic Thanksgiving/fall colors of red, orange and brown, take one of those and mix it with either lime green or icy turquoise blue. And for Christmas, throw out the traditional red and green combo. "That's part of our success, I think," he says. "A lot of our trees will be orange and brown or gold and brown."