

Decorating with Ornaments of Christmas Past



What interior designer would cheerfully admit she has no theme for her Christmas décor? [Talla Skogmo](#), for one. The founder of the eponymous Edina interior-design firm believes in celebrating with family and friends, surrounded by the well-loved decorations of Christmases past. Her talent for creating interiors that are timeless, balanced, and personal is evident in her own home—the house her mother built in 1952.

I know your house is unique. Can you describe it?

My mother wanted a stone house. She got my dad to buy six acres in the middle of a farm in Bloomington and built the house there. [She also designed it, with the help of an architect who was working on Southdale at the time.] It's built entirely of fieldstone, all split by hand, and butternut wood. There's no sheetrock in the house; the painted walls are plaster. Its 18-foot cathedral ceiling has beams that are supporting beams.

Do you have a theme for your holiday décor?

Not at all. I use things that are important to my family and things we love. Many of them belonged to my mother. The angels on the mantel are very old. They were Mother's. They came from Sotheby's—she bought them at auction. When she passed away, they came home.



What else is your mother's?

She made the pinecone garland—the cones are from the pine trees outside the back door. She hand wired them on antique ropes, so they swag beautifully, and stained them gray so they would match the mortar of the stone. She also made the tablecloth from orange plaid wool she bought at Amluxon's [a once-renowned Minneapolis fabric store]. The iron deer collection [some 25 of them, 3 inches tall, tucked into the cedar on the dining table] was also Mother's.

Do you have collections?

I am the keeper of other people's collections: my mother's deer, my husband's nutcrackers and tree ornaments. He loves wooden ornaments and collects them. When we were first married, we had two trees. Mine was covered with crystal ornaments, his with wooden. Now our tree is so large [13 to 15 feet tall], we use all of them. We also have [my mother's] Christmas plates with a Currier & Ives winter scene.

What other traditions do you keep?

This house is so fun to decorate. The garland goes up and the tablecloth goes on at Thanksgiving. My son and I get the biggest tree we can find and put it up Thanksgiving weekend. I love having a tree in the house. And the kids [two adult daughters who live in the metro and a son in school in North Carolina] can't wait to come home and see the herd of deer and the garland.

My favorite part of the holidays is being together, cooking, eating, and drinking. We have great fun. And it's fun creating incredible memories for family and children. We always have a big rousing round of The Twelve Days of Christmas, and the boys sing the three French hens part in French. It's a tradition. It's all about tradition.

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