



Celebrating the Season December 2006

Warmed by a roaring fire and resplendent with holiday spirit, the library of a designer's Paradise Valley, Ariz., home is the epitome of cozy. To see more of this home, turn to Page 184. Enjoy other holiday homes, as well as ideas for celebrating the season Southwest style, on the pages ahead.





SEASONALLY SUBLIME

Designer details stir the senses in a Paradise Valley home

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On any given day of the year, interior designer Wendy Black Rodgers' Spanish Colonial Revival home provides a showcase for her richly inventive decorating. Blended here are South American and European antiques with custom-designed furniture. But come the day after Thanksgiving, the real magic begins as the residence undergoes its annual holiday transformation.

Says Rodgers of the season: "I love the holidays, and I love to deck the halls!" To take her Paradise Valley, Ariz., home from daily divine to seasonally sublime, Rodgers skillfully orchestrates a symphony of sight, sound, scent, touch and taste.

The visual elements throughout are both dramatic and enchanting. Nature plays an integral role, and is brought inside with hundreds of feet of greens swagged and spiraled over door frames, fireplace mantels and armoires. "If you can't make it to the North woods, bring the North woods to you," Rodgers comments. "Use real pine trees and boughs whenever you can."

This year the designer opted for Southern flair and added leafy magnolia garlands to the mix. Nestled in the greenery are loads of voluptuous bows that Rodgers handcrafts every November. "You can use the same ribbon each year, but you have to remake the bows to achieve the fluffy shape," explains the designer. Rodgers uses 3-inch-wide velvet and brocade ribbon in rich shades of ocher yellow and burgundy.

And then there are the angels that seem to flutter and hover over every nook and cranny.

But these are not just any angels. Resplendent paintings from Peru depicting winged, lacy seraphim dance on the walls; multiple sets of elaborately carved wings perch high atop an armoire; and a pair of gravity-defying 7-foot-long carved wings flanks the arch leading to the living room, creating a dramatic and theatrical path for holiday revelers.

To further stir the senses, Rodgers infuses the scene with lights, candles and scents. "Some houses are day houses; some are night houses. Mine is a night house," she says. As evening falls, white- and amber-color lights illuminate fragrant evergreen trees. Santa Rosa candles from Patzcuaro, Mexico, bathe the winter wonderland in a warm, flickering glow. And simmering wassail, a drink made with lemons, oranges and cinnamon sticks, serves as both potpourri and a holiday treat. The designer extols the brew, stating, "It not only tastes divine, but it fills the house with the most delicious aroma."

Rodgers, whose delight in the season is palpable, turns the fashioning of those aforementioned handcrafted bows into an event in itself. She fills the house with holiday music, pours a glass of champagne, sits on the floor surrounded by ribbon and green floral wire, and begins twisting and molding the fabric into her signature creations. As each is completed, Rodgers tosses it back to one of her boys—either her husband or one of three sons—who places it on the tree or mantel.

In this home, the holidays are both a labor of love and a family affair. ■

Opposite: The front courtyard of interior designer Wendy Black Rodgers' home is a favorite gathering space for family members, who love the idea of having a Christmas tree outside. This one is dressed in handmade bows, accented with pine-cone garland wound in honeysuckle. Moroccan lanterns line the walkway, drawing guests inside; magnolia greenery frames the front door.

This page: Rodgers' grandmother owned a floral shop in Scottsdale, where the designer worked for years as the chief bow maker. Today, she uses her grandmother's technique to create handmade holiday bows for her own home. A pair of her bows sits atop the fireplace mantel. A painting of Archangel Ariel from Peru, an assortment of angels and a Santa figure also decorate the space.

Opposite: The homeowner says her dream is to one day live in Santa Barbara, Calif.; so she hung this painting of Saint Barbara in her home as a reminder. To complete the vignette, she arranged a collection of santos, a cross and angel-inspired accessories on a table.







Left: Imparting warmth and symmetry to the living room is a pair of custom-designed sofas upholstered in mohair. They were fashioned after the original Knole Settee from Kent Park in England. An oversize ottoman doubles as a coffee table. Angel wings of various sizes add to the room's holiday feel.



TIP: Infusing the home with holiday scents is an easy way to create a festive atmosphere. Rodgers fills her house with the aroma of a cinnamon-and-citrus wassail that can be enjoyed both as a potpourri and holiday drink. Below is her recipe:

WENDY BLACK RODGERS' HOT WASSAIL RECIPE

24 cinnamon sticks
12 whole cloves
1 teaspoon whole allspice
Lemons and oranges, sliced
chunky, ($\frac{2}{3}$ oranges and $\frac{1}{3}$
lemons)
Cranberry cocktail juice,
enough to fill $\frac{1}{3}$ of a large
coffee percolator
Apple cider, enough to fill $\frac{1}{3}$
of a percolator
Rum (optional)

1. Place first four ingredients in the filter of the percolator.
 2. Fill percolator with juices. Heat and enjoy.
- Serve with rum on the side for guests who want an added treat.

This page: Pendant light globes filled with glass Christmas balls and topped with Rodgers' bows bring seasonal delight to the powder room. A simple iron tabletop tree in the hallway is made fancy with a collection of Lalique Christmas ornaments.

Opposite: Holly sprigs and angels adorn an iron "candelier" in the dining room. Chairs upholstered in animal skins from Africa surround a custom-finished alder wood table.



TIP: Rodgers suggests fastening an eye hook to the back of a decorative angel and threading it with velvet or satin ribbon. It can then be hung from a chandelier or sconce, creating the illusion of a "flying" angel.







In the kitchen, custom cabinetry, joined by an arch, frames a French casement pass-through window. Hefty carved legs support a butcher block-topped island. Overhead, a rustic pot rack is dressed in magnolia garland and bows. Colorful chairs painted with Fernando Botero-style figures bring a modern touch to the room.



The simplicity of a "drapeless" iron canopy bed allows the frame's details to emerge. Fresh flowers offer color and fragrance.



TIP: A simple swag of garland can add a festive touch to unexpected spots.

See Sources.