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Keith Katzman 925.376.7776 kkatzman@pacunion.com



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Decorating for the Holidays—Just Do It

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Table centerpiece display by Nikolene Isely.

Photos Doug Kohen

Getting Started

When you start to plan your holiday décor there are a number of things to consider, says Isely, who also does home holiday decorating professionally. "You need to think about the style of the house, the family's lifestyle, and the colors that run through the home."

There are a host of holiday decor color options available so that the decorations can be coordinated with the home's interior décor. "Right now there are a lot of copper-colored holiday decorations available," says Isely. She suggests mixing the copper with bronze and gold decorations for a home that has peach tones.

"I always start decorating right at the beginning of December, so we can enjoy the decorations through the season," says Mason. "But then I take it down really quickly once the holiday is over," she adds.

Vignettes and Accents

"Any surface can serve as a place for a holiday display, or vignette," says Isely. A tabletop, shelf, or stack of books with red bindings can be used as the platform for a mini-holiday scene. "Candles really warm up a room and you can turn almost anything into a candleholder," she adds. Isely uses cut-glass

punch glasses to house votives and notes that old teacups can be used the same way. "I like to add some sparkle to every room. And if something breaks I don't throw it away." Isely repurposed two leaky Waterford crystal goblets to serve as candleholders and placed the broken top of a glass decanter on her table display for some added glitter.

Isely acknowledges that holiday decorating can be overwhelming for some. She has been collecting decorations for years and knows where to get to just what she needs. She encourages starting small. "Try something new. Don't over think it. Just do it."



Isely places an antique porcelain doll tree-topper on her tree.



One of Erin Mason's many reindeer.



Table vignette by Erin Mason (on the left) and a table center piece by Sue Cuneo.

Holiday Decorating Tips from Nikolene

- Creativity comes from within, be spontaneous, make new connections.
- Decorate a month in advance, so you have time to enjoy it, then take it down fast.
- Think about placement. Temporarily take down a painting or move furniture to create space and avoid conflicts.
- Use everyday items in new ways—a colorful wool scarf can serve as a table runner.
- Use unscented candles, so there is no conflict with the aromas of cooking foods. Look for long-burning votives, some last up to eight hours.
- Place mirrors beneath and behind holiday displays to enhance the sparkle of lights and candles.
- Always use odd numbers, e.g., 1 Santa, 3 snowmen, 5 votives, 7 decorative balls, in vignettes.
- Don't over think it, just do it.

Nikolene Isely owns Staging By Design: www.stagerbydesign.com, nikoleneisely@gmail.com, (925) 360-0947. Erin Mason provides help with design, staging, and organization: emason@me.com, (704) 904-3387.

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