



The Fruits of Their Labor

SURROUNDED BY A BUSTLING CITY, THIS CALM AND COZY COTTAGE IS LOVINGLY FILLED WITH HOMEGROWN HOLIDAY TRADITIONS.



For Leslie and Scott Fritz of fritz&gignoux landscape architects, Christmas preparations begin in the spring. “We use layers in our decorating and plan ahead in the garden for the flourishes,” Leslie says. “From year to year, we rotate the plant flourishes with a focus on keeping it simple. We make sure we have the plant material we’ll need for decorating at Thanksgiving and the holidays.”

The two grow everything in their garden in Washington, DC, where they created their own patch of the country in the middle of the city. Entering the Arts & Crafts cottage at Christmastime, you can see the fruit of the Fritzes’ labor in subtle touches of fresh greenery and sprigs of red berries complemented with hand-tied velvet bows and hemlock pine cone clusters. “For the holidays, we use *Ilex verticillata* berries from the garden [and] dried honeysuckle berries from our ‘Alabama Crimson’ honeysuckle,” Leslie says, noting that garland and a boxwood wreath are “holiday staples.”



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But the holiday preparations don't end there. "Once the greens are up, we unpack our boxes of treasures from around the globe," Leslie says. "The glass, ceramic, and carved wood figures add so much character and charm to our simple framework."

Their "boxes of treasures" include ornaments passed down from family and collected from their own various travels. Pieces picked up at the Christmas markets in Austria rest alongside finds from their daughters' adventures in Asia, and the tree is topped off with a German wax-and-velvet angel that belonged to Leslie's grandmother. "So, the tree literally has ornaments from all over the world on it," Leslie says.



In the dining room, a Jacobean buffet and china closet from Scotland holds a number of seasonal accents, including a pine cone wreath Scott made as a boy. The dark carved wood pairs well with the dining set, offering a rich contrast to the softer pastels of the textile elements in the space. An antique Baccarat crystal chandelier recovered from a hotel in Paris hangs over the table.



Curly maple cabinets lined with a cheerful robin's-egg blue lend the kitchen a warmth made more welcoming by the various potted plants that grace the counter and the greenery above the window.

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From baking Christmas morning croissants and attending music services at the beautifully decorated Washington National Cathedral to hosting a buffet-style holiday dinner for the neighbors, the Fritzes enjoy a number of holiday traditions accented by the warm lights they love to hang on the cottage's exterior. And on Christmas Day, every memory made is laced with the scent of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and the other spices Leslie infuses the home with every year.

Whether in the carefully cultivated greenery or the collected figurines, it's easy to see how important the holiday season is to the Fritz family. And in one way or another—from planning the garden to keeping an eye out for new treasures during vacation—thoughts of Christmas stay with Leslie and Scott all year long. ❄️

Text by Bethany Adams
Photography by Gordon Beall

The family room, which Leslie and Scott added to the house themselves, features an abundance of windows that serve the dual purpose of letting in plenty of light and providing a view of the garden, creating the flow between the indoors and outdoors that the couple wanted.

