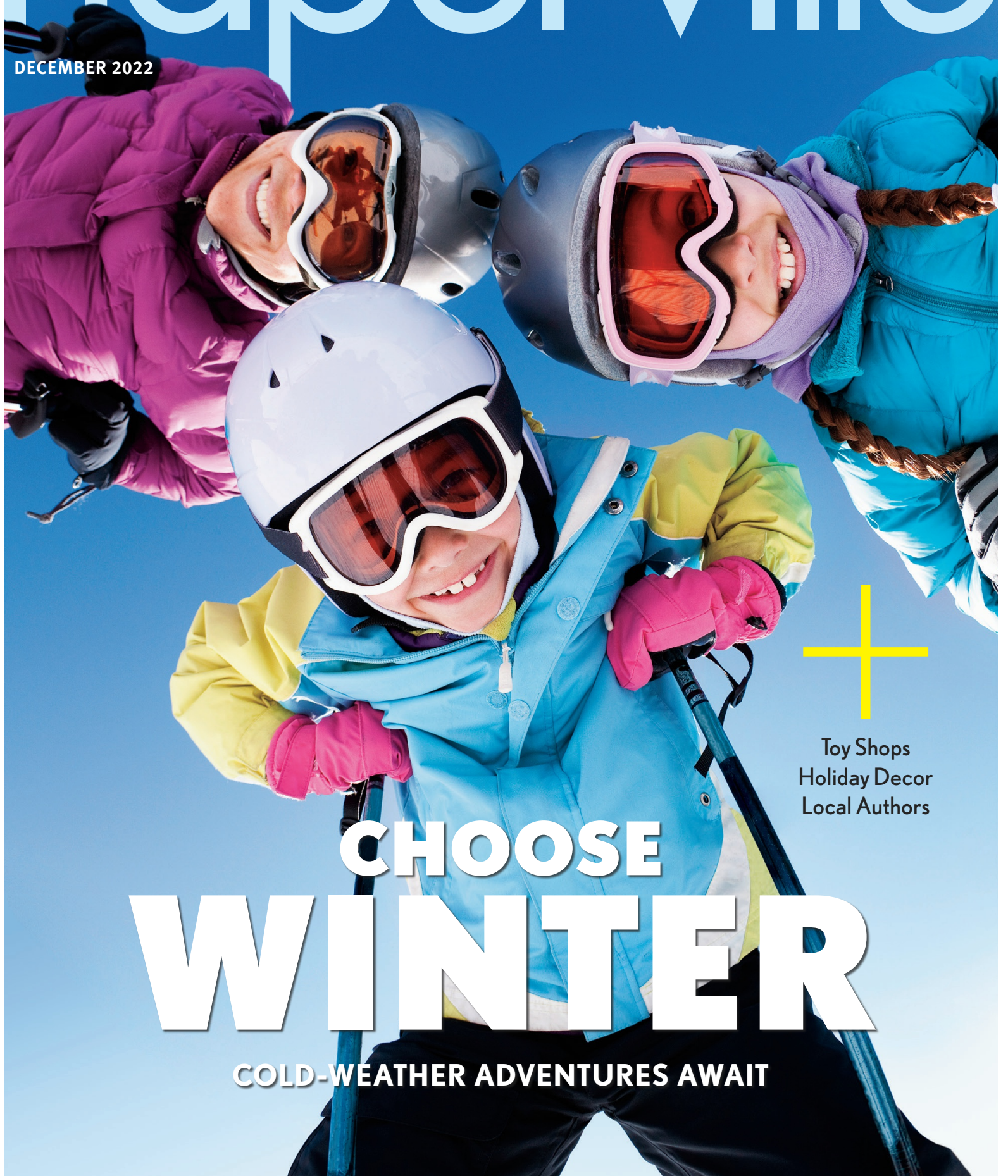


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*“I’m a huge believer in tweaking what you already have displayed.”*

—Interior designer Rachel Alcorn

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HOME

# MAKING MERRY

Let your home shine this holiday season with these decorating ideas

BY KARI RICHARDSON

**A**s a creative personality who designs spaces for a living, it's not surprising that Rachel Alcorn, principal and owner of Glen Ellyn-based Two Hands Interiors, gets her groove on decorating her own home for the holidays. But a global pandemic taught her that having a holiday-ready home is also a cherished tradition for her family, which includes children in middle and high school. "We weren't doing

any parties in 2020, but my family still wanted to decorate," Alcorn says. "I always thought holiday decorating was something I was doing mostly for myself, but I learned that it's a part of the holidays that we all really look forward to."

Alcorn knows that time can be an obstacle to decking the halls, especially during a season packed with activities and traditions. "Go all out in one room," she advises, focusing

if possible on the space you use the most or where you'll be doing your holiday entertaining. "That way, if you don't get to the kitchen, so be it."

To keep costs manageable, make sure the centerpieces of your annual holiday ornamentations are neutral and classic. Alcorn, for example, uses two large brass bowls each year, filling them with greenery, holiday trees, or barware as her tastes dictate.

When the holidays wind down, and it's time to clean up, Alcorn even finds a silver lining to the pack-up chore dreaded by some. "It's always satisfying to put everything away after the holidays and start the year with a clean slate."



1. Wondering whether pros gravitate toward fresh greenery or faux? Interior designer Rachel Alcorn mixes both, favoring the fresh for its wonderful smell and texture while using faux to add volume and to cut down on the cost of purchasing new supplies each year. Hit the post-holiday sales for the best deals.
2. Candlesticks—another staple of holiday decorating—make a bigger impact when grouped together and placed at varying heights. Though these are from different sets, all are made of metal and each holds a simple white candle, giving them a unified look.
3. Alcorn loves using mirrors in her designs year-round but especially at the holidays. “They are inexpensive and low commitment,” she says. They also reflect light, including the twinkling variety, which is especially welcome when daylight is scarce.
4. Alcorn collects vintage tablecloths “wherever she can find them,” using them liberally in her holiday decor. Here, a traditional plaid cloth is draped over furniture sporting a pop-up cocktail station. A pretty ribbon tied with greenery gives a standard table lamp a touch of holiday glam.



## DETAILS

## Materials Girl

Many of the tried-and-tested materials that interior designer Rachel Alcorn uses in her holiday decor are simple and easy to find. Here are some of her favorite goods for getting her home holiday-ready:

- Use fun, nontraditional wrapping paper to cover boxes of different shapes and sizes to display in your holiday embellishments.
- Mix dried eucalyptus, which is easy to find at many grocery stores, with greenery for an unexpected twist. Bonus: As it dries, it crisps, but it won't look dead or wilted.
- Ornament bulbs add festive bling to seasonal tableaux. Mix versions from stores such as West Elm with less expensive finds from craft stores such as Michael's and Hobby Lobby.
- Use bulbs or ribbons in a single color to unite the mishmash of handmade and sentimental ornaments on a tree.

## TRENDS



**5.** Gather readily available materials such as a vase, ice bucket, and glasses to pull together a seasonal vignette. “Sometimes it’s about staging little moments,” Alcorn says.

**6. and 7.** “I’m a huge believer in tweaking what you already have displayed,” Alcorn says. Bowls and vases on display the entire year get the holiday treatment with the addition of bulbs, bows, and greenery.

**8.** Red and green isn’t the only game in town when it comes to festive color schemes. In fact, the pairing often clashes with the existing decor in many homes. Variations such as sage and cranberry can be a better fit, Alcorn suggests. Shades of pink and blue, paired with brass, silver or copper are also rich, luscious options.

