

Adorned with Heirlooms

Stylist Missie Crawford seamlessly incorporates treasured collections into her family home—during the holidays and all year long.



Missie's gallery wall includes pieces by local artists Karly Martin, Annie Kammerer Butrus, and McKenzie Dove, as well as paintings by her mom and sister. She scored her coffee table from an auction sale at The Club. The gilded Victorian chair next to the tree was discovered at a booth manned by local artist Patty B. Driscoll. "It's a little worn and weathered, but that's what I love about it," says Missie.

Text by JULIE GILLIS / Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP



Why

goal is to use the best of what's already there, add to it, and make it better," says photo stylist Missie Crawford. And nowhere is that more evident than inside her own home that she shares with husband Sims and teenage sons Nelson and Tucker. "I've always had an appreciation for antiques and art, so I'm constantly working with favorite pieces and heirlooms I have collected over the years," she says.

For the holidays, Missie takes that approach one step further as she incorporates seasonal décor that complements and highlights her collections. "I'm drawn to navy in a lot of ways, whether in my interiors or my wardrobe," she says. "My wedding china (Bernardaud Ithaque Gold) has a navy polka dot pattern, and I used that as the inspiration for my holiday palette. I also mixed some grays into the scheme, especially in my dining room tablescape. The color combination creates a sense of warmth that welcomes guests."

Those beautiful gray hues flow into the family room, where the painted fireplace adorned with custom-made stockings takes center stage. "The stockings are from Julie Terrell Interior Design," says Missie. "They each have hand-stamped porcelain charms with our initials on them. It's a fun way to change up how you personalize your stockings."

To counterbalance the gray tones, Missie worked with friend and fellow stylist Kay Clarke to cover the mantel in an abundance of garland and accessories. "Sometimes, it helps to have a set of fresh eyes when you are decorating," Missie says. "I can always count on Kay to discover a new or unique way of arranging things that I may not have seen since I'm living in this space all the time."

For the family's Christmas tree this year, Missie chose a new place for it—the living room. "It just felt right to have it in this space surrounded by so much of my art collection," she says. "I decorated the tree with white lights and a variety of sentimental



Carrot Cake with Cream Cheese Icing and Candied Orange Slices

4 cups water
4 cups sugar
3 navel oranges, sliced ¼-inch thick
1 cup sugar

Bring water and 4 cups sugar to a boil in a wide Dutch oven. Add orange slices, and simmer over medium-low heat about 45 to 60 minutes, gently stirring occasionally. (This works best in a shallow layer, so it can be done in 2 batches.) Add more water to prevent burning if it evaporates before the slices are tender.

Remove slices from syrup, and let dry overnight on a wire rack. Toss in 1 cup sugar, and place in a single layer on parchment-lined baking pans.

Note: Any remaining orange syrup can be used in cocktails. Slices can also be dipped in chocolate for another treat.

Cake Layers

2½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
1½ cups vegetable oil
2½ cups sugar
4 eggs
8 ounces crushed pineapple, drained
2 cups finely shredded carrot
1½ cups sweetened shredded coconut
1 cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts

Whisk together flour and next 4 ingredients. In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat oil and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat until well combined. Slowly add flour mixture. Stir in remaining ingredients by hand.

Divide batter evenly between 3 (8-inch) metal pans coated with vegetable cooking spray and lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes, and turn out onto a wire rack or parchment paper. Let cool completely before icing with cream cheese icing.

“I can always count on my friend Telia Johnson of Telia’s Cakes to help me create the most decadent holiday sweets. You can’t go wrong with her carrot cake or iced sugar cookies.”

— Missie Crawford

Cream Cheese Icing

¾ cup butter, softened
12 ounces cream cheese, softened
1½ to 2 pounds powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Gently beat butter and cream cheese at low speed of an electric mixer until combined. Slowly add powdered sugar and vanilla, beating until creamy.

DETAILS MATTER

“Sometimes, the smaller things make the biggest impact,” says Missie. “One of my favorite things to use when entertaining is a set of small Italian washed-linen coasters from Mark & Graham. You can even get them personalized.”



NATURAL WONDER

Never underestimate the beauty of a wreath made from magnolia leaves. "I continue to use these wreaths even after the leaves turn brown," says Missie. "I've even spray-painted the leaves gold and changed the ribbon to get another year out of them."



Missie adorned the family room mantel with a magnolia wreath and garland from Weston Farms (westonfarms.com). "Erin Weston creates the most beautiful arrangements from the magnolia trees she grows on her family farm," says Missie.



How To Wrap the Perfect Gift

"Wrapping gifts is one of my favorite parts of the holidays. I grew up wrapping gifts for customers at my dad's store in Mississippi, so I guess you could say it's in my DNA."

Here, Missie offers advice on how to ensure your gifts look beautiful.

CHOOSE QUALITY PAPER

Well-made, sturdy paper makes all the difference. "I like to buy the one-of-a-kind sheets at Paper Source," says Missie. "I also love the papers at Alabama Art Supply and the new line at Ami à Vi. (amiavie.com)"

INVEST IN RIBBON

"I prefer a thick satin or grosgrain ribbon," Missie says. "I usually find them at Midori (midoriribbon.com) or locally from Cocoon Silk Ribbon (IG: [CocoonSilkRibbon](https://www.instagram.com/CocoonSilkRibbon))."

ADD AN EMBELLISHMENT

Missie likes to tie a piece of greenery or an ornament into the ribbon to give it a little extra flair. "It's almost like a gift on top of the gift," she says.

USE COLORS FROM YOUR DÉCOR

Since her décor includes navy and gray, Missie uses those colors in her gift wrap. She also mixes in marbled papers from Alabama Art Supply.



as do the simple linen drapes. "We use this space for more than just special occasions, so I didn't want it to be too fancy," Missie says. "On any Friday night, you might find a group of teenage boys in here chowing down on pizza."

As much as she loves her dining room, Missie says her newly renovated kitchen may be her new favorite spot in the house. "Everything in here is tailor-made for how we cook and live—right down to the beverage fridge that I keep full of soft drinks and waters for the boys," she says. "We also took out the upper cabinets and replaced them with open, wooden shelving to create a more spacious feel—and to force myself to get rid of clutter."

Like the other rooms in the house, the kitchen displays some nostalgic pieces. "My everyday dishes belonged to my great grandmother," Missie says. "And I love to use the checked cloth napkins that were hers as well. I always keep them on the counter right beside jars full of snacks. That way, the boys and their friends can grab something to eat whenever they want to." It's just one more way that Missie ensures a welcoming home full of style, comfort, and collections—during the holidays and year-round.



ornaments—silver ones from godparents, recycled cardboard ones from Food 52, and an abundance of crosses, guitars, and handblown glass balls.” The newest additions to the tree are stars carved from local wood. “Cliff Spencer of Alabama Sawyer made them, and I love how they perfectly nestle in between the lights,” Missie says. “They really add a unique element to the tree.”

When it’s time to entertain family and friends, Missie loves seating guests in her spacious, oval-shaped dining room. “Five of my Chippendale dining chairs belonged to my grandfather,” she says. “I salvaged them from my mother’s attic during Hurricane Katrina. Then I found three more at Chelsea Antiques that were a perfect match!” She adds that the table is a relatively new purchase from an estate sale. “It took almost 10 years to come across just what I wanted, but it was worth it to find the right piece for this space.” For a punch of color, Missie brought in a piece of modern art by Betty Freeman that she bought at Arceneaux. The art also adds a casual element to the room,



“I purchased the pine wreaths and garlands in my home from my son Nelson’s Boy Scout sale. I support his troop every year by buying these, and then I spruce them up with my own accessories,” Missie says. For the kitchen wreaths, she simply added kumquats and pine cones.

“When it comes to holiday shopping, I am adamant about supporting local. I start buying for Christmas photo shoots in the summertime, so I’ve seen what’s going to be up and coming by the time I style my own house for holidays.”

—Missie Crawford



Sugar Cookies (from *Southern Living*)

1½ cups butter, softened
1½ cups sugar
2 eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
4 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt

Beat butter and sugar in a stand mixer on medium speed until light and creamy. Add eggs and vanilla extract, beating until combined. Gently add flour and salt at low speed. Divide in half, and wrap each half in plastic wrap. Chill at least an hour.

Roll dough on a lightly floured surface to ¼-inch thickness, and cut with your favorite cookie cutter (or biscuit cutter). Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet, and bake at 350° for 8 to 10 minutes or until barely brown around the bottom edges. Let cool 5 minutes and transfer to a wire rack. Cool completely. Decorate to your liking.

Cookie Icing (from *sallysconfections.com*)

1 pound powdered sugar
3½ tablespoons milk
3½ tablespoons light corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix all ingredients together until smooth. Add a little extra milk or powdered sugar to make it the perfect icing or piping consistency.

Christmas Cheer Punch

1 cup orange syrup from candied oranges or simple syrup, chilled
½ cup 100% pure cranberry juice, chilled
3 cups ginger ale, chilled
2 (12-ounce) bottles sparkling water, chilled
fresh cranberries for garnish

Stir all ingredients together and serve. Makes 6 servings.

