

Deck Your Halls

By Melissa Larsen

This season, transform your drab dwelling into a fortress of festivity. These four holiday decorating pros tell you how.



BRITT SCRIPPS INN



MISSION INN HOTEL & SPA



ARIZONA BILTMORE RESORT & SPA

Gordon Hattersley Each year, Britt Scripps Inn, a 19th-century-inspired boutique hotel in San Diego, becomes the very picture of Christmas with more than 100,000 Italian mini-lights, wreaths on every window and a stunning tree adorned with Victorian ornaments. As the owner of the inn and the man behind its award-winning holiday displays, Hattersley knows a thing or two about ringing in the season in style.

HIS TIPS:

- To give an artificial tree a seasonal scent, add branches of fresh pine and juniper. (Note: This retains the fire safety benefits of artificial greens.)
- Decorate your light fixtures with mistletoe, artificial garland and antique ornaments.
- Wrap string lights around hollow cardboard tubes to avoid the challenge of untangling them in 2008.
- Continue to add to your holiday décor yearly. This way, you can have an enjoyable ongoing project that gets everyone in the mistletoe mood.

Kelly and Duane Roberts Inspired by their extensive travels to Austria, Germany and Spain, the Roberts convert Riverside, Calif.'s Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, which they own, into a spirited stay (with a dash of European flair) each winter. "Many small towns and large metropolitan areas decorate the city centers and streets to draw a greater sense of community," Kelly says. "[The décor] allows all citizens the ability to mingle and enjoy the holiday."

THEIR TIPS:

- Picking the perfect tree is a must, as is keeping it adequately watered. Also, use live garland and wreaths wherever possible.
- Glass and crystal ornaments bring a splash of sparkle and reflect the lights of the season.
- Don't forget to employ nature's own adornments, like fruits, nuts and berries.
- When packing up your decorations, store the items with tissue or newspaper, place lids on lightly and label the boxes to make decorating less of a chore next year.

Doug Topham Since 1989, Topham, owner of Arizona-based Christmas Light Decorators, has transformed high-end Phoenix-area homes into holiday havens. Most recently, Topham and company have been spreading joy by adorning the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa, Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, Westin Kierland Resort and Spa, and the luxe list goes on.

HIS TIPS:

- Use quality products, and remember that more is not always better when it comes to twinkle lights.
- It's best to let an experienced lighting professional deck your home. The final look is dependant on how the lights are installed, including proper spacing and the straightness of lines.
- Consider where and how much power is available in your dwelling. This holiday season, try out LED lights, which consume approximately 85 percent less power with the same brightness.