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Indonesian billionaire
aiming for government

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West End's best end
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Blowing baubles
The FT's very
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An aesthete's Christmas

Six leading designers give the traditional elements of seasonal decor a creative overhaul

Nathalie Lété

Artist and interior designer

"The sparkling fruits on the Christmas table are inspired by the stories our parents/grandparents told us about how, when they were children in the 1940s, they would only be given an orange for Christmas and this in itself became something to be treasured. I remember when I was little receiving a Christmas stocking from St Nicholas that was full of clementines, walnuts and chocolates - it was magical.

"For my Christmas design, I wanted to decorate the simple fruits that you find in winter: oranges, apples and clementines, to embellish the Christmas table. I imagined what I would have done if I were a mother

I love to use colour to bring personality and character to the table, perhaps cobalt blue with flashes of hot pink"

to surprise my kids in those hard days in the past. I would transform the fruits to make them resemble jewels in the candlelight.

"So I pinned some sequins and pearls on to the fruit. For me the ideal Christmas is when people make the gifts themselves.

"These decorated fruits are a good reflection of my design style. They are colourful and I like their handmade approach. They are inspired by popular culture, like much of my work.

"It's a cross section between something that might come from Mexico or a country in Asia. And I like the idea of transforming an everyday object, a piece of fruit, with just a few sequins or glitter. Just as women in the countryside once transformed objects using straw, branches, pine cones, this is what I try to do in my work - add poetry, colour and magic to everyday things, with the sensitivity of an artisan."

Tricia Guild

Interior designer and retailer

"When entertaining family and friends at Christmas I find all those small but thoughtful details - such as the choice of the ribbon for the wrapped gift, or the decoration on the tree - help to make the time more memorable. I love to use colour to bring personality and charac-



Christmas decorations, by Nathalie Lété, left, featuring handmade Christmas sequinned fruits in the style of folk art decoration, above and bottom left

Lee-Paul Rider



Lighting installation,

by Charles Edwards, above. "Toulouse lever handles", below, from £624

Rick Pughway



The Christmas table, by Tricia Guild, above, features the 'Maggie house', below, £45, and 'Vintage dec', left, £15

Rick Pughway

Charles Edwards

Lighting designer

"Christmas conjures up all sorts of memories for me - from being with an Italian girlfriend in the Piazza Navona in Rome on New Year's eve, to spending a surprisingly happy Christmas at an abandoned coach house after my parents' house was bombed towards the end of the war. After the ruin we had left, the cosiness of the little house made up for the lack of comfort.

"The best Christmases are not overblown. Spending a fortune on decorations and buying expensive presents for people who already have everything they need is ultimately rather vulgar. Christmas should be about looking out for other people. When my family lived in London, we almost always had at least one wall and stray staying with us.

"The lights I have chosen for this display are decorative, gold or silver. Elegance and attention to detail are the only other common threads, as I wanted

to choose lights that hint at the range we make. Variety is a vital part of successful interior design.

"Many of the lights are inspired by 19th and 20th-century designs and the team at my Wimbledon workshop takes great pride in making sure the detail and craftsmanship is every bit as good as the originals.

"I still love all sorts of things about Christmas and I am particularly fond of the carol services, but I definitely breathe a big sigh of relief when the whole thing is over and normality resumes. If I find it all too much, I retreat with a DVD of *Withnail and I* and a bottle of ginger beer..."

charlesedwards.com

Harriet Anstruther

Contemporary interior designer

"I rather dread Christmas. For me, the festive season consists of ignoring

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An aesthete's Christmas

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traditional social expectations, wearing sweatpants, watching back-to-back second-rate films and scoffing eggy noodles in the dark.

"So I have pulled myself together and decided to think of others. The concept behind these Christmas interiors is more about the mutual celebration of getting through another year, and time off together with friends and family.

"The word 'hall' is thought to derive from the Old English word *heall*, which refers to a covered space where the public life of a household proceeded, or an empty space in which to entertain. In reality, it is now invariably a space filled with keys, schoolbags, unopened mail

'My festive hall celebrates darker months with colour and candles, casting light at the centre of the home'

and coats, and is rarely an empty or separate space. Nevertheless, an entrance, lobby or inner hall should, quite literally, aim to entrance, to fill with wonder and delight, beckoning in guests and family alike.

"My Christmas hall is one in which the birds represent people; people with the occasional but inevitable desire to fly away from everyone. It also celebrates the comforting darker, colder months with bright colour and candles that cast a soft, fluid, warming light at the centre of the home. The mixing of old junk shop finds and inherited pieces with modern and contemporary things, creates an eclectic amalgam of silhouettes, colour, light, materiality and context."

harriestanruther.com

Sheridan Coakley

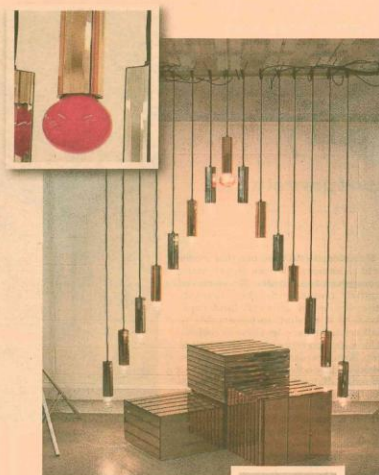
Furniture retailer and manufacturer
"I really enjoy Christmas, it's the best time of year to spend relaxing with friends and family. In our characteristically classic style, we have chosen a collection of modern and vintage products for the SCP grotto [named after Coakley's furniture store].

"Everything is centred on the Oscar sofa by Matthew Hilton, which we make

The Christmas hall, by Harriet Anstruther, above, features neon hand-dipped baubles, below, £4.50 each, by Neon London
Neil Pughmore



The Grotto, by Sheridan Coakley, above, includes the 'Infinite tree', £45, by Fort Standard, right, and a brass candle holder, £90, by Ilse Crawford
Neil Pughmore



The Ghost of Christmas Tree Past, by Afroditi Krassa, right, featuring the 'Pentagon pendant', top, from £225
Neil Pughmore



using sustainable materials at our specialist factory in Norfolk. This particular version is upholstered in a dark blue velvet. The design itself is a fine example of what SCP does best – take existing product typologies and update them for the modern world. Matthew Hilton has a real talent for this.

"Alongside the sofa is a pair of Jasper Morrison side tables, which have been reissued in 2014; the originals were launched back in 1986. These, along

with Terence Woodgate's Sax coffee table in front of the sofa, are all about form and function: simple, elegant and useful. To add some colour and vibrancy to the scene we have used cushions from the latest Donna Wilson collection, a vintage hand-sewn Ralli quilt from Pakistan and a beautiful Moldovan flat-weave rug.

"On the side table we have placed a new product from emerging US designers Fort Standard, the Infinite Tree. The

coffee table has the all-important vintage Picquot Ware tea set and tray on it, Christmas needs good cups of tea. Our wall is adorned with antlers, which feels fittingly northern European. The scene is lit by a Mantis floor light from the designer and sculptor Bernard Schottlander. It is a delightful piece that has been recently issued based on his 1951 designs. The Parallel shelving system by Terence Woodgate in the background is adorned with a colourful collection of vintage German vases, which have some wonderfully tactile glazes on them."

scp.co.uk

Afroditi Krassa

Product and interior designer

"Christmas is all about darkness and light. I remember as a child waking up in the middle of the night and the Christmas tree lights would be on, overloaded with glitzy decoration. No matter how cold and grim it was outside, I felt warm,

'Simplicity, wit and storytelling are constant points of reference for our design work'

loved and protected. So, we decided to recreate the iconic shape of a Christmas tree with light alone. We suspended 15 Pentagon Pendants from the AKollection, our own signature collection of products, over an imaginary tree. The pendants are made in mirror rose and smoked bronze.

"We also added some glamorously sleek presents at the bottom, three boxes made in bevelled mirrored glass, which are part of the Pleat Mirror Panels range. There is no need for a traditional Christmas tree; this is an ethereal and ghostlike version of this seasonal must-have.

"Simplicity, wit and storytelling are constant points of reference for the interior design work that we produce at the studio. And just like Christmas, I am asked to design spaces that ultimately make people feel good, Christmas or not. They say that the secret to the groundbreaking music of Pink Floyd is not what they added but what they took out. So, when excess and 'loudness' is the name of the game, it is good to start questioning what are the things that matter the most to all of us."

afroditi.com