

While much of the Christmas décor changes in placement and accents each year, the classic finsel-covered tree and needlepoint stockings are mainstays. Opposite: A mural of colorful butterflies, meant to represent change, greets guests at the front door of the Walkers' home.



MERRY *meets* BRIGHT

In North Carolina, designer Gray Walker's color-filled home is dressed in its holiday best.

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The facade of the traditional Georgian-style home is adorned with magnolia garlands for the season. In the living room, a cloud diptych by Memphis artist Catherine Erb creates a focal point. Opposite: Walker highlighted the dining room's timeless architecture, including a pair of built-in corner cabinets, by lacquering the walls in a vivid blue hue. Unexpected features—such as the mix of American pottery and heirloom silver in the shelves, a crushed red velvet console, and the celestial-style ceiling treatment—add to the room's personalized style.

Visit designer Gray Walker's Charlotte residence during the Christmas season and one thing is certain: you won't see the same look twice. "It's different every year and always evolving," the designer says of the layers that bring the spirit of the holidays into her home. With collections that rotate in and out of the scheme, Walker likes to start with a mood she wants to convey. "I get one thing in my mind, and it flows from there," she says.

This year, her vision was to bring the outdoors in with favorite winter garden varieties, including amaryllises and lots of fresh greenery. Working with The Royal Gardens of Charlotte to execute the idea, Walker adorned banisters and mantels with lush garlands, and planters of flowering bulbs are scattered throughout the rooms.

Built in 1966 and purchased by the Walkers in the early 2000s, the home's overall style is reflected in the mix of traditional and whimsical Christmas décor. The classic, three-story Georgian boasts



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The kitchen and adjoining breakfast nook were intentionally designed in a neutral palette, allowing Walker to incorporate color through accents. A Hunt Slonem butterfly work echoes the scene at the entry. A chunky, woven raffia wallcovering brings character to the walls in Geordie's study. The work over the sofa is by New York photographer Celia Rogge.

a timeless facade, a closed, room-by-room floor plan, and detailed millwork. "We put an offer on this house the day we saw it," Walker says. Located in the heart of the city, the property is nestled on seemingly undiscovered, wooded acreage. "My husband, Geordie, and I fell in love with this house because of its location; it feels like you are in the middle of the woods, but it's right in the middle of the city," she adds. The two have a shared love of older homes that she feels was influenced by their hometowns, Geordie having grown up in Baltimore and Gray in Columbia, South Carolina. "I feel like we are kindred spirits with the couple who built this house," she says.

While the architecture of the home adheres closely to classic standards, the interior exudes an inviting, personalized charm that is both fluid and





In the primary suite, an Osborne & Little wallcovering sets the purple palette that is adhered to in the adjoining bath. Walker re-covered her headboard in a shade of lilac to match the scheme while a multicolor, sherbethued rug and bed skirt bring an air of youthful fun to the space. A vintage-style white tree and packages trimmed in purple satin bows fill the room with holiday cheer.

features like timeless millwork and built-in display cabinets—all of which Walker has accented in hues that reflect her taste. For example, the corner cabinets in the dining room received a refresh in a shade of blue the designer pulled from the living room rug. Upstairs, the primary bedroom is covered in shades of lilac. “When people see this space, they always say, ‘Your husband must really love you,’” she says with a laugh. “It’s a very girly room.” Even the neutral kitchen was designed with color being top of mind. “I always want the kitchen to feel clean and uncluttered,” she says of the predominantly white space and its adjoining breakfast nook.

Similarly, every room has a touch of flair for the season, from the traditional, tinsel-adorned tree and needlepoint stockings in the family room to the white Christmas tree in the couple’s bedroom. Walker says, “I always like to make my house feel special at the holidays because Christmas means so much to me.”

fresh. Upon moving in, Walker executed full-scale renovations in the kitchen and primary bath to modernize the spaces and make them fully functional for her family. Structurally, she left the rest of the home intact, bringing in her style through fabrics, finishes, and furnishings. She also made the rooms play to the best use for her family. Case in point, she relaxed the style of the formal living room to make it a place everyone wants to be. “I wanted it to have a level of glamour for dressing up and hosting friends but also be a place where you can watch a movie in your pajamas,” she says.

In every space, color plays a role. At the front door, guests get a hint of the hues seen throughout the house with a butterfly mural that extends from the ground floor up the staircase. “I love hand-painted walls, and I’ve always loved butterflies because they represent change,” Walker says. Famed interior designer Otto Zenke worked with the original owners on the home’s design, incorporating



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