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Top tips for decorating
your home this Christmas



HerFeature

by Chrissie Moe

Christy Maingot

Christmas lovers rejoice—the Yuletide season is upon us once again. And if you're a big fan of Trini Christmas traditions, chances are you're getting ready to turn the entire house upside down—painting, cleaning and decorating for December 25. Luckily for us, interior designer Christy Maingot is sharing some useful and on-a-budget tips to make this year's Christmas decorating fun with unique holiday ideas that can transform even the most mundane spaces into something beautiful and festive.

The face, muscle and brains behind the CMID Interior Design brand, Maingot boasts 11 years' experience in the design field and comes highly recommended. A practising designer since 2012, she holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Florida's International Academy of Design and Technology and a Master of Design Studies from Boston Architectural College. A stickler for perfection with a focus on quality, the Diego Martin resident has won numerous accolades for her work.

This year alone, she copped a Luxury Lifestyle Award for Best Luxury Interior Design Studio in Trinidad and Tobago and she was the Muse Design Silver Winner for Soirée Beauty at the recently held Muse Design Awards. Last year, her work on The Mediterranean Glam Residence earned her a Five Star Award from the International Property Awards for Best Residential Interior Private Residence in Trinidad and Tobago. Interior Design was something Maingot always wanted to do—even as a child she had an eye for detail, as she tells *HER*, "The ability to create functional and aesthetic spaces out of nothing drives my passion for design. I thoroughly enjoy the planning and selection process in addition to the project management aspect and working a job site. I'm very hands-on and I like to be there to see my design come alive."

HM: With 20 days to go before Christmas, share with us some tips (small ones too) to spruce up our homes and get us into the holiday spirit—on a budget.

CM: Less is more when it comes to Christmas decor and I don't think you need to spend a lot in order to make a space festive; touches of greenery with the addition of some inexpensive LED fairy lights and simple baubles tied in can make a world of difference. Another idea would be to create an

inviting, glowy village centrepiece with a collection of chic white ceramic building figurines and tea lights. Accessorising living spaces with monochromatic tones or even deep green and cranberry coloured velvet pillows will also add a touch of luxury in an inexpensive way.

HM: What's trending in Christmas home decor this year?

CM: I've noticed that flocked Christmas trees that are not overfilled with decorations are trending. Mixing metallics—silver with touches of gold to add warmth is also very much on trend. The contrast between the two is very dramatic if done correctly. White, which also ties back into the snow effect of the flocked trees, is also very popular for those who want a more casual and laid-back setting. As a result of Covid, we will also see a more sustainable approach to Christmas decor this year and in the years to come. Recycled and upcycled items and just using what you have from the year before is also on trend and encouraged.

HM: Speaking of trends—how do they come about anyway? Who makes the rules?

CM: There are two primary ways trends show up in culture, from fashion and interior design to music and art: top-down and grassroots. Top-down trends come, as they sound, from the top. In interior design, that's the elite tastemakers, professional designers, industry experts, and those who are manufacturing and designing the goods we're purchasing. Grassroots trends, on the other hand, come from the people and make their way up the trend ladder, becoming popular cultural moments.

A great example of a grassroots trend in interior design? The ubiquitous "Millennial Style" and "Modern Farmhouse" that grew more out of social media and has now become the style you see in every trendy home goods store. An example of a classic top-down trend—granite countertops came onto the scene in the mid-1980s and was seen as a highly luxurious material as it had to be imported, then fabricated into a countertop—making it both extremely expensive and a sign of the elite. It began gracing the kitchen and being featured in high-profile design magazines and became this aspirational ideal.

Then, in the 90s, the supply chain for granite suddenly improved, and turning granite into countertops became much

less expensive. So, more and more sources began producing granite. With that, it became the material of choice for real estate developers building homes with a sense of luxury—and soon a granite countertop made its way onto nearly everyone's "must-have" list when house-hunting. But now that it's seen as an "accessible luxury," granite countertops have all but lost their mass appeal. And so, the trend cycle moves ever forward—quartz countertops are now trending and are also a better material choice that is more durable.

HM: With Covid taking a toll on people's mental health, and with more employees working from home, psychologists recommend changing up your home spaces to improve your mood and to help create a better home/work environment. As it relates to decor, what changes would you recommend?

CM: If possible, try to position your workspace to facilitate a view of the outdoors or try bringing the outdoors in through low maintenance indoor plants. The biophilia phenomenon is the idea that human beings have a natural desire to be connected with nature. While the concept of biophilia is debatable, the effects of the phenomenon are not; researchers noted that simply staring at an image of natural scenery for 40 seconds was enough to trigger the brain into a more relaxed state.

Another suggestion to improve productivity would be to remove all clutter and have a place for everything. Proper lighting (as much natural light as possible) coupled with task lighting and ergonomic furniture will all aid in creating a comfortable work environment.

HM: For someone aspiring to be an interior designer, any words of advice?

CM: Knowledge—from a formal education—(it is imperative to have a degree in interior design from an accredited institution—everything else is considered a decorator) to building up a core knowledge of the industry is what will set you apart from the rest and elevate your designs above and beyond.

For the first few projects you may have to offer your services for very little compensation, but I can guarantee the knowledge that you will gain during those first vital projects is indispensable. Being able to efficiently and successfully source the right furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) to suit your clients' needs is imperative to providing the best service possible and will make you stand out as a designer with a strong portfolio in the long run.

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