

Season of Cheer: 178 merry & bright decorating ideas

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**NATURAL STYLISTS.** Whether Matt and Amanda are styling mini vignettes or whole rooms, they approach the process with this philosophy, as articulated by Matt: "Improvisation and trial and error. And whatever feels right." This dining room tabletop display reflects their style: old English touches with a Midcentury Modern twist.


# Merry Mod Lodge

Two creatives design a dream home full of Midcentury Modern, old English and Craftsman twists and give it a seasonal interpretation for the holidays.

BY AUTUMN KRAUSE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRET GUM  
STYLING BY JICKIE TORRES AND SARAH JANE STONE

**PUBTASTIC.** The lounge is particularly cozy and earthy during Christmastime, when the room's British pub-inspired hues interact beautifully with the Christmas tree. The tree fits nicely in between two Sofa Company armchairs that Matt and Amanda designed specifically for the space.





**MODERN CRAFTSMAN.** When Matt and Amanda were house shopping, they were immediately drawn to this home's Midcentury Modern-meets-Craftsman aesthetic. Since the exterior was already quite charming, they focused their renovation efforts on the interiors, although they do have plans for a wraparound porch and pergola.

## For Matt Gourley and Amanda Lund, two Southern California actors, writers and podcasters, their 1947 San Rafael Hills home,

which Amanda describes as a Midcentury Modern/Craftsman hybrid, is an extension of their creativity. Originally drawn to the house's cottage-like charm, expansive backyard and location on a leafy, tree-lined street, they've spent the past two years making the residence their own through hands-on renovations and styling.

The holidays are another time for the two to unleash their creative juices and their home, which features Christmas-friendly hues like hunter-green year round, becomes an elegant embodiment of the season under their touch. Matt says, "The minute Thanksgiving ends, Amanda and I get into decorating—not out of duty or anything, but out of the feeling that the year is wrapping up, work is winding down and we feel like we can be in our natural state, which is hibernation!"

### RESTRAINED ELEGANCE

When Matt and Amanda moved into the home, the dining room was closed off with two walls. "We opened it up to the kitchen and living area," Amanda says. "It really let the sun into the rest of the house." Matt installed an oak window seat and storage bench underneath the bay window, and the couple found a Prohibition-era cabinet from Sunbeam Vintage to center behind the dining room table. "It's basically a speakeasy bar cabinet," Matt says. They use it to display their liquor and barware, allowing the bottles and glasses to double as décor.

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**[TOP RIGHT] HOMEMADE BY HAND.** Matt built this window seat and storage bench combo out of oak over the course of a week. The couple style it with throw pillows made from Hungarian grain sacks (like those they used to reupholster the dining room chairs).

**[RIGHT] FIRST CHRISTMAS.** These deer sit on the media cabinet in the living room just below the TV. They hold special significance because they were the very first items that Matt and Amanda purchased for the home. "We had just heard that our offer was accepted, and we were at the Rose Bowl flea market," Amanda says. "We saw them and said, 'Hey, it's June but we love Christmas and haven't bought anything for the house yet, and these are completely us.'"





### MODERN COMFORTS.

A West Elm coffee table and custom sectional sofa from The Sofa Company make the living room an ideal spot to put one's feet up and Netflix binge. Top-down window shades from The Shade Store also allow the couple to control the light that floods in from the ample windows.

When it comes to decorating their dining room for Christmas, the couple goes for a restrained, functional approach. As Amanda says, "We keep it tame because we eat here and who wants a pine needle in their chicken?" Amanda loves poinsettias (in fact, Matt describes her as a 'foster mom' for poinsettias during Christmastime, as she is always bringing them home). A low tabletop centerpiece featuring the yuletide flower is unobtrusive yet lends holiday cheer.

As for the exterior, a few red poinsettias usually do the trick, but the couple say that the home itself does most of the work! "We do lights on the house and tree—but our house is already doing 50% of the job by being a giant Christmas tree-green-colored

structure," Matt says. "Now that I think of it, the place really is tailor-made for my favorite time of year."

### LOUNGING IN STYLE

The lounge is the heartbeat of the home, as it bookends the couple's day. In the mornings, they have their coffee in the cozy space and read the newspaper, while in the evenings, they have drinks and play cards there. The lounge is particularly meaningful to Matt. "It's been a dream of mine to have an old English section of the house," he says. He installed stunning alder panels, molding and arches—but perhaps the most eye-catching elements in this space are the leather-tufted door and the plaid wallpaper. The door,



**FORM WITH FUNCTION.** Matt sometimes records and podcasts at home, so the leather-tufted door is not only stylish but also offers the benefit of soundproofing.

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**HISTORIC MIX.** "The style in the dining room is a mix of Craftsman and Midcentury Modern," Amanda says. "Like the whole house really. It was built in 1947 and has an older feel, especially since it's in Pasadena, but you can tell the architect was thinking ahead and seeing where things were going." The couple personalized the room with a vintage hutch and set of dining room chairs, which they reupholstered with Hungarian grain sacks.







**[ABOVE] SENTIMENTAL STYLE.** The various decorative elements throughout the home reflect the couple's interests, backgrounds and taste. "I love things that have an old English style," Matt says. The dog bookends look like they are from a British pub, and one of the books is a collection of poems about Whittier, the Southern California city that Matt grew up in.

**[RIGHT] STUDY IN STYLE.** Matt uses this corner of the living room to do artwork and drawing.

which was custom made by local company Lanzetti Upholstery, was inspired by James Bond's boss M in the 007 movies, and the wallpaper was printed by Astek Inc. "We wanted details no other house would have," Amanda says. "We jokingly call the wallpaper the Gourley-Lund tartan." The room's woody plaid and warm tones give it a winter lodge feel. As Matt says, "I never thought about how much it would work for Christmas. The tree goes in the corner because the wallpaper is basically screaming for it." The couple decorate their tree with a variety of quirky, personal decorations, from wooden ornaments with great scientists on them to a ballerina that reminds Matt of Amanda to a framed picture of their cat, Margaux.

#### WOODLAND SLEEPING

For the master bedroom, the couple sought, in Amanda's words, a "peaceful and serene" retreat. Matt restored and repainted the windows and replaced the





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**SIMPLE, SERENE.** The couple utilize a simple approach to decorating their kitchen for Christmas. Evergreen sprigs on a shelf do the trick, lending the holiday spirit to a shelf that also features a watercolor of Atwater Village (where Matt and Amanda used to live) and some old Soviet tin mugs.



**|OPPOSITE| LET THERE BE LIGHT.**

Though the couple were initially concerned about the dark and oppressive kitchen—"It gave us pause before putting down an offer," Matt says—it's now one of Amanda's favorite rooms. They fixed the problem by removing two walls, installing a new door that featured windows and enlarging the window over the sink, giving the room lots of natural light and flow.

**|ABOVE| CRAFTSMAN DETAILS.**

Matt and Amanda kept these three Motawi art tiles above the stove. "They keep a bit of the Craftsman look in the house," Amanda says.

**|RIGHT| SEASONAL SCENTS.**

This kitchen countertop décor featuring candles, pomegranates, cinnamon sticks and pinecones smells as amazing as it looks, giving the room a wintry feel and engaging the senses of sight and scent.





**[OPPOSITE] CABIN COZY.** A cozy red-and-black plaid blanket is a seasonal addition to the bed (during the other months, the couple use a white duvet). With the birch tree wallpaper and soft gray rug that evokes snow, the master bedroom has a distinctive Christmas woodland feel during December.

**[ABOVE LEFT] RETRO METRO.** "For our main bathroom, we were inspired by the restrooms found in Chicago train stations," Matt says. They completely gutted and remodeled the bathroom and installed new fixtures, including a Signature Hardware oak vanity, medicine cabinets from Pottery Barn and faucets by Hans Grohe.

**[ABOVE RIGHT] TINY BUT TERRIFIC.** The small bathroom off the kitchen had some major space issues when Matt and Amanda first moved in. "It's tiny, and the toilet and sink were both facing and overlapping each other," Matt says. They rearranged the toilet and sink configuration, and Matt added woodwork and tile, and repainted the walls, also putting up birch tree wallpaper. "The wallpaper goes a long way," Amanda says. "It makes you feel like you're washing your hands in a winter wonderland."

**[LEFT] MERRY MOD.** The living room has an airy feel, contrasting with the darker, cozier aesthetic of the lounge. It features white board and batten wainscoting, crown molding, and window and door frames, all installed by Matt last summer. An upholstered bench provides extra seating and is a great place to display Christmas presents.



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WEB

For more on Matt's custom wood molding, check out the couple's renovation details online.

trims, baseboards and door moldings with stained mahogany, and highlighted the trim with Farrow & Ball Black Blue paint. A Cole and Sons wallpaper via Anthropologie featuring spindly birch trees completes the room, its illustrative style giving the space a whimsical feel. "We both love the woods," Matt says. "So voila!" A fluffy, cat-friendly rug ties in with the faux-fur throw pillows and a plaid blanket, evoking a sense of winter-

time camping. Since the room reflects the season so well—in fact, Matt says, "without realizing it, we created a year-round Christmas home"—hardly any holiday décor is needed. But a mini Christmas tree on the window seat overlooking the backyard gives the bedroom the fresh smell of pine. **CB**

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**|OPPOSITE| OLD MEETS NEW.** Throughout their home, Matt and Amanda pair vintage finds with new pieces from places like Target or West Elm. Here, a Lane dresser from Sunbeam Vintage is set against Anthropologie wallpaper. "We certainly don't take decorating too seriously or worry about what something's supposed to look like," Amanda says about their methods. "It just happens day by day."

**|ABOVE| WINTER PICNIC IN.** Stained mahogany trim around the window seat gives the bedroom a timeless look, while the decorative elements—a mini Christmas tree paired with a fur pillow and plaid thermos—tie in with the room's outdoorsy, wintry style.