

merry and bright

**A local designer
decks the halls
for a busy client.**

BY MARYBETH BIZJAK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVE ADAMS

Eleven months out of the year, Paulette Trainor is an interior designer. But come December, she shifts gears.

That's when she helps several of her longtime clients decorate their homes for the Christmas holidays. Starting the day after Thanksgiving, she finds herself in a frenzy of tree trimming, wreath making and garland hanging.

In 2006, local developer John Thomas asked Trainor to work her magic on his Carmichael home. He was expecting lots of visitors for the holidays and wanted his house to sparkle.

So Trainor decorated the living room, family room, dining room, kitchen, foyer and powder room, using traditional elements and untraditional colors.

"He loves color," says Trainor, who employed a sophisticated palette of bronze, copper and gold in the formal living room but splashed out with festive blue, fuchsia and purple for the family room.



She trimmed two trees with sparkly white lights, oversized ball ornaments, and yards and yards of net fabric, which she wound through the branches. At the base of each tree, she draped billowy chiffon.

Trainor placed what she laughingly calls “phony packages” into the tree branches. “I wrapped empty boxes in beautiful paper to coordinate with my color scheme,” she says.

Another designer trick: She spray-painted inexpensive ball ornaments to match the scheme. “For the living room tree, I bought spray paints in gold, silver, pearl and copper and lightly sprayed the ornaments with all four colors,” she explains. “You can’t go wrong.”

She used those same ball ornaments and little packages to decorate the garland on the living room fireplace mantel. In the fireplace opening, she placed fresh greenery and white lights, topped with large pine cones. “We wanted the fireplace to sparkle,” she says, noting that the white lights make the pine cones glow.

For the dining room, she created a centerpiece using more of the decorated garland, which she wound down the center of the table and draped



In the fireplace opening, designer Paulette Trainor placed fresh greenery and white lights, topped with large pine cones. "We wanted the fireplace to sparkle," she says.



Trainor hung a large wreath, decorated with ball ornaments and ribbon, on a French door.

down to the floor. Then she positioned two miniature Christmas trees at the table's center and a gold candelabrum at each end. Finally, she hung a large wreath, decorated with ball ornaments and ribbon, on a French door.

In the entry, Trainor ran white-lighted garland up the double staircase handrails and along a half-wall on the second-story landing. She located ivy topiaries lit with tiny white lights at the base of the double staircase and hung a massive wreath trimmed with lights and fuchsia ribbon high above on the stair wall.

Near the family room, she placed large curtain-rod finials into square containers and wrapped them with garland, ribbon and big, round ornaments for an Alice-in-Wonderland effect.

Thomas loved the results. "He was just thrilled," says Trainor. **S**

GET THE LOOK

Designer Paulette Trainor shares her tips for holiday decorating:

- **Go big.** Itty-bitty ornaments don't cut it, says Trainor. Use large ornaments on trees, garlands and wreaths.
- **Spray paint is your friend.** Use metallic spray paints to add shimmer and shine to ornaments, fabric and greenery.
- **Phony it up.** Wrap empty boxes in pretty paper and place in tree branches. They also look festive piled up under the tree.
- **Double up on garland.** For a fuller look, use two, three or even four strands of garland.

