



holiday whimsy

With a fresh and nontraditional color palette and custom-made centerpieces with fresh lemons and apples, Richard and Sally Edrington keep holiday decorating fun.

BY LAUREN LABORDE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFFERY JOHNSTON



OPPOSITE PAGE: Christmas is for indulgence and celebration — festively sprinkled cookies and bubbly are necessities this time of year. TOP RIGHT: Sally Edrington's eclectic style is evident even in the eye-catching wrapping paper that she uses. Presents are tied up in scraps of cloth, courtesy of Gretchen Howard, who has helped with much of the design of the home. ABOVE: Roland Montealegre, creative director of Urban Earth Design Studios, created the centerpiece on the table that features miniature apples. He also created the wreaths in the background. The pieces are rustic yet fashionable accessories for the winter holidays.



The Edrington home is proof that decorating for Christmas doesn't have to involve digging up dusty nutcrackers and taking ornaments down from the attic. Their decorations are a whimsical mix of tradition and trendy do-it-yourself sensibility, just like their home.

Richard and Sally Edrington — along with their Labradoodle, Sydney — live on Coliseum Street in the Garden District, where they've lived since March of 2004. Michael Carbine orchestrated renovations to the shotgun house that included adding a den and a banquette on the side of the kitchen. Carbine collaborated with Melissa Ruffy of MMR Interiors on the design of the house. The result is an oddly harmonious mix — dining chairs upholstered in animal-print fabric set against the background of mustard-yellow curtains on the windows — that reflects Sally's style.

"In my home, I have artwork that I inherited, and then near it, you see a big red piece that's modern art," Sally says. "It's all in the mix for me, all about mixing the old with the new. I like to make it interesting."

One might think that Christmas decorations and the Edringtons' modern color palette would be a disastrous clash. But the Edringtons, with the help of some decorators, have found ways to achieve a festive holiday look that works in their home.

Roland Montealegre, partner and creative director of Urban



Earth Design Studios, created some of the rustic touches that provide a holiday feel while still looking fashionable. Montealegre created two table centerpieces: One uses lemons and narcissuses, and the other uses miniature apples. He also created wreaths for around the house and a garland draped over a mantel with lemons and ribbon intertwined.

Gretchen Howard designed the wreath on the front door — which has a cover from Gentry — as well as the home's more artistic decorations. She created turquoise place mats for the dining table with forks and knives painted on them in gold. For the tree, which is from Perino's Garden Center, she bought ornaments from Target and painted over them in black and white. Howard also used scraps of cloth in lieu of ribbons to tie presents.

But not everything used to decorate the home is new. Sally likes to use decorations her children created in their school days, as well as smilax vine like the kind her mother used to decorate with during the holidays.

Although many of the Edringtons' Christmas decorations buck tradition, the activities the family plans for the holidays are not too out of the ordinary. On Christmas Eve, the family — which includes Richard and Sally's three children and their four grandchildren — heads to Antoine's for dinner. They celebrate late in the afternoon on Christmas Day by having the family over for turkey; dressing; scalloped oysters; cranberry relish; and a family specialty called "spinach tin balls," which is like a spinach soufflé. They also serve different milk punches and English trifle for dessert.

Because the Edringtons' children and grandchildren all live in New Orleans, Christmas — and decorating for Christmas — is a special time for them. "The holidays are always important," Sally says. "My family is here in New Orleans, so it's an important time for all of us to get together and celebrate." ■



TOP: The tree, from Perino's Garden Center, is festooned with ornaments in black and white that were painted by Gretchen Howard to offer a contemporary update on an age-old tradition. The animal-print chair suggests a touch of whimsy. LEFT: The Coliseum Street home is an especially cheerful place during the holidays. OPPOSITE PAGE: The dining room, with mustard-yellow curtains, animal-print chairs and a mix of modern art and colorful decorations, will be the site of a grand family feast on Christmas Day. The garland draped over the mantel, made by Montealegre, features lemons and turquoise ribbon that complements the dining table place mats, which are courtesy of Howard. The table centerpiece, also by Montealegre, echoes the lemons in the garland and adds height and interest with narcissuses.

