

EST. 1920

# Ideal Home's

## COMPLETE GUIDE TO CHRISTMAS

# 548 ways to make it wonderful

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for you**

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- \* BAUBLES
- \* WREATHS
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# 62

pages of  
decorating  
inspiration!

\* 50 FESTIVE RECIPES INSIDE! \*

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Bakes & Sweets \* Party Nibbles \* Supermarket Best Buys



**GET CREATIVE**  
Easy makes and pretty  
giftwrap tricks



**STYLE IDEAS**  
Finishing touches to make  
your home magical



# *A classic country* CHRISTMAS

*Sarah Norton gives her rural cottage a magical makeover for the holiday season using festive trimmings, foliage and flowers*



### **RED & WHITE**

Sarah's classic Christmas colour scheme of red and white is made extra special with hand-painted, heart-shaped baubles hung from ribbon bows. Wooden painted baubles, from a selection, Sarah Norton Interiors



TIP

*If you've gone for a large tree, keep the rest of the room decorations simple and natural so that the tree is the star of the show*





#### PICTURE PERFECT

'The thing I love best about our home is the view of the garden from the house – it looks beautiful even in winter,' says Sarah

With its low thatched roof, beautiful beamwork and living-room wood burner, Sarah and Paul Norton's country cottage in a hamlet in Hampshire is the perfect rural idyll in which to celebrate Christmas. For the couple and their children, Ella, 14, and Violet, 10, its gentle cream interior is the ideal backdrop for the traditional festive decorating they love.

Hand-made decorations and candle arrangements can be found in every room, and the advantage of the cottage's relaxed colour palette and simple style means it's quick and easy to transform to reflect the holiday season. Sarah, who is an interior designer and florist, decorates using wreaths, garlands, hand-painted baubles and hearts, and favourite pieces, such as a Jan Constantine star in pride of place on the top of the tree.

However, while the cottage may be chocolate-box perfect inside and out now, it took a lot of hard work to make it happen. 'It's one of the oldest houses in the village,' says Sarah. 'When we viewed it, we could see it had potential as a family home, with a spacious kitchen-diner, a really good-sized living room and a beautiful garden, but we were in for a few surprises when it came to redecorating.'

The cottage had been the former owner's weekend bolthole, and had suffered a series of botched repair jobs over the years, the most challenging of which was its external rendering with cement, which had caused the 17th-century walls to become impregnated with damp. 'The cob (a natural building material made from horsehair) was so damp, much of it just fell away,' says

*The girls and I love to dress the tree while Paul bakes mince pies'*



#### SET THE SCENE

For her Christmas table, Sarah goes for a duck-egg blue cloth and white and silver accessories. Duck-egg cotton fabric, £32 per m, Susie Watson Designs

**WINDOW DRESSING**

Each year, local villagers come and look at Sarah's window displays. For similar hanging snowflakes, try Party Delights.

**UTILITY AREA**

Sarah has dressed up a simple heart garland to give a practical space a seasonal touch. For a similar heart, try the natural twig, £7.95, Live Laugh Love.

**CLOCHES COLLECTION**

Don't just use cloches for cakes and mince pies, follow Sarah's lead and use to arrange an eye-catching festive display.

For similar cloches, try the Paron, £45, India Jane.

Sarah. After engaging a specialist builder to re-render the property inside and out with horsehair and lime, as appropriate for a building of this age, new windows were made and set with hand-blown single-glazing to comply with the cottage's Grade II listing.

Other major work included laying oak flooring on the ground floor, adding a new bathroom and shower upstairs, and giving the kitchen a makeover. 'All the cabinets had to be made by hand and fitted individually because none of the walls are even,' says Sarah.

Putting right the money-draining essentials ate into the couple's budget, but it enabled Sarah to use her skills to the full when it came to decorating. By painting the interior in soft neutral shades, and using layering techniques to add warmth and texture, she has brought a sense of modern comfort and style to the interior, while never letting it stray far from its period roots.

Customisation is one of Sarah's much-used decorating tricks. 'To give an example, I chose an oak cabinet for the new bathroom, but I didn't like the handles, so I swapped them for hand-crafted ones by a specialist maker. It's not a complicated thing to do, but it can make the difference when you're trying to bring a sense of individuality and personality to your home.'

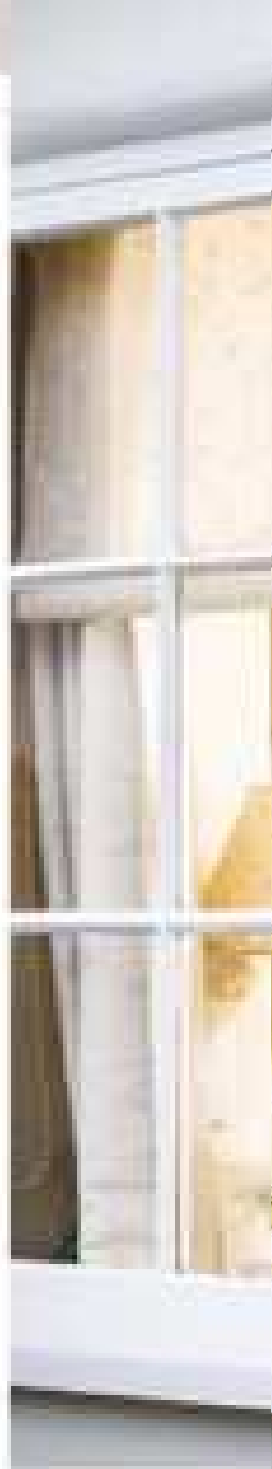
One of her smartest decorating solutions was in the kitchen, where she commissioned glass splashbacks to lay over a favourite wallpaper for a bespoke look. These



CHRISTMAS

# living

Enjoy a **COUNTRY CHRISTMAS**, try  
out some cozy **FINISHING TOUCHES** to  
transform your home and discover  
this year's top **SEASONAL EVENTS**





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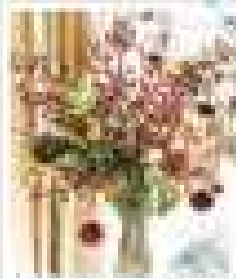


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**Tip**  
 Keep kids busy during  
 the holidays in the  
 morning in Christmas by  
 helping them make a  
 full bouquet to hang in  
 the living room  
 kitchen



**Flowers: Best Bouquet**  
 Perfect for an anniversary, full  
 love, and sharing in love to  
 make. Put some roses, lilies, and  
 daisies in a vase. It's a  
 beautiful bouquet to give.  
 For more inspiration, try the  
 inspiration. Call for more.  
 From: [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)



**TIME FOR BED**

Even the bedroom has been given the festive treatment, while under the bed is the perfect place to hide secret gifts

For similar giftwrap try the white and silver stars, £3 per roll, Sainsbury's



*It's a traditional country Christmas through and through!*

**STAIRWAY**

A garland wrapped around the banister stands out against the cream décor. For a similar garland, try the berry & leaf, £18.60, DZD



thoughtful touches, coupled with a neutral colour scheme used throughout, help ensure a calm feel. 'A harmonious feeling is important in a house that has so many different levels, nooks and crannies,' she says. 'I know from other projects that the best way to create harmony is to use a similar palette of colours and to ensure there are no harsh distinctions between rooms.'

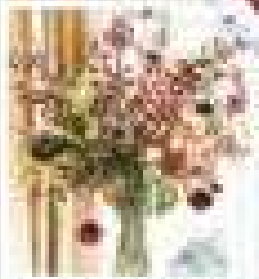
This ethos also rings true at Christmas, where Sarah makes sure each decorating scheme leads harmoniously from one room to the next. While this is always a special time of year, for Sarah it's also her busiest professionally. As the festive season approaches, she's to be found creating bespoke garlands of fresh and silk flowers, and festive displays – in fact, her display in the dining-area window has become something of a village institution.

'I have a stall at the local Christmas fair, so people will often come and peek in this window to see what's going to be on offer!' she laughs. 'I love people looking at my window display, but I do draw the line if we're all sitting here eating Sunday lunch.'

When Sarah has dispatched all the orders and decorated her home, it's time for the family to enjoy a few Yuletide traditions. 'The girls and I love to dress the tree and Paul bakes mince pies on Christmas Eve,' she says. 'Then, on Christmas morning, we join the rest of the village for a drink in the pub before we have lunch and finally open presents. It's a traditional English country Christmas through and through.'

**Turn the page to get Sarah's look**

**TIP**  
 Keep beds cozy through  
 the holidays in the  
 living room by  
 adding them to a  
 gift basket to bring to  
 the living room  
 anytime.



**STYLING: C. DEBILLO/STYLING**  
 Whether you choose to host  
 Santa this evening or simply re-  
 ceive, the living room, hall, and  
 Christmas tree create a warm  
 and cozy feel. Gift ideas  
 for Santa are available at the  
 top of the page. ©2014 by HGTV  
 Home, a Division of Home Depot



**£8**  
**STRING IT UP**  
Christmas characters bunting, B&Q



**£62**  
**FILL WITH DECS OR CAKE**  
Cake stand with round dome, £62. Artland Simplicity range, Amaroni Home



**£68**  
**HART OF THE HOME**  
Fretwork stag cushion, Jan Constantine range, Amara



**SARAH'S STYLE**  
At Christmas, it's red and white for Sarah, with lots of foliage and flowers

*Get the*  
**LOOK**

*Find ideas in Sarah's cosy cottage for your own Christmas scheme*



**£6**  
**WATCH THE BIRDIE**  
Robin decoration, Debenhams



**£4 each**  
**KISS ME QUICK**  
Trapped mistletoe clear baubles, Marks & Spencer



**£7**  
**DRESS THE MANTEL**  
Poinsettilla berry garland (1lm), Tesco



**£200**  
**HANDY FOR EXTRA SEATING**  
Les Miles footstool, My Furniture



**£1**  
**USE GIFT BOXES FOR SPEEDY WRAP**  
Gift box, Poundland



**£59**  
**POP ON THE SOFA**  
Herringbone throw in rich red and grey, The British Blanket Company



**£30**  
**ADD SOME LIGHTS**  
Mistletoe tabletop tree, The Contemporary Home