

WINTER WHITE

A former restaurant designer's own three-storey in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood puts a soft spin on holiday decor.

by JACQUIE MOORE // photographs by JANIS NICOLAY





That's a Wrap
Even the gift wrap takes its cues from designer Tanya Krpan's cool, nature-inspired design theme, utilizing white kraft paper, fresh fir sprigs and twine.

If your seasonal modus operandi involves going down a rabbit hole of intensive decorating, well, we can't stop you. We can, however, present an alternative, courtesy of a Vancouver designer whose take on the season is as simple and natural as a frosty fir.

A former design director at Earls Kitchen and Bar, Tanya Krpan knows ambiance. Her talent for combining modern and traditional furnishings and textural elements to create widely appealing restaurants took her across Canada and through the U.S. over the course of more than a decade. Krpan's travels fuelled and refined her penchant

for deceptively simple, richly layered neutral backdrops and, a couple of years ago, informed her personal decision to design her family's modern-day brownstone in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

"I'd been inspired by all the brick I saw in Chicago and Boston, and I wanted that timeless feel," says Krpan. She and husband Jure Krpan (a builder with Dakota Homes) nabbed a lot between Cambie and Main; over the course of a year and a half, they built a brick three-storey, which they promptly painted white to give it a modern twist.

Inside, white dominates as well, but, as Krpan puts it,



Going Green Greenery is key to keep Krpan's "White Christmas" look from feeling sparse: you'll spot it peeking out from under a fresh Bundt cake and lining the windows (above) and table (right).



Gold and Glory

A lush garland is draped over the dining table, interspersed with jars of twinkling string lights and glittering gold candle holders.



“it’s not a typical ‘white-kitchen’ home.” Indeed, warmth and originality quash any chance for starkness to creep in. White oak, creamy-white walls, textured plaster, a herringbone pattern on porcelain tile flooring and smoky blue-grey undertones in the kitchen and living room granite add richness to the neutral palette.

As well, some unexpected arched doorways and windows add interest and softness. Krpan says their inclusion in the home was not only her response to the design world’s “many years of very hard, modern lines” but also a throwback to a childhood love of Spanish Colonial

architecture. “When I was a kid, my family travelled to California quite a lot and, from a young age, I was influenced by that style,” she says.

Such an understated backdrop could easily be overwhelmed by Christmas colours and ornaments. In Krpan’s hands, the holidays are an opportunity to create a beguiling *feeling* rather than a performance in decorating. “To me, the focus is the winter season,” she says. “I wanted to create a festive, natural feel that incorporated what I love in my life year-round.” Krpan plays up the warmth of wood tones, brass and gold accents, soft grey fabric and caramel leather

Perfectly Playful

In the bedrooms, the more colourful decor pieces are out in full force—think strings of pompom lights (top middle), miniature sledders (top right) or snowglobes galore (bottom right).



furniture with cushions, fur and throws in cream, tan and fawn brown. (Visitors who toured the house last year when it was spotlighted at Kids' Help Phone Homes for the Holidays are to be congratulated on not curling up for a nap.) A white-flocked tree, olive branches and fluffy eucalyptus garlands are fittingly subtle and soft; frosted gingerbread houses look more like cozy hunter cabins than fairy-tale settings (think *hygge* versus Hansel and Gretel).

Still, Krpan's style is not without whimsy—far from it. "We kept the common areas warm and fuzzy, and I saved the colour and energetic, playful stuff for the bedrooms," she

says. "The kids played a big part in my wanting to bring fun into the decor in the playroom and bedrooms." Plaid bedding, lit-up strings of pompoms, multiple snow globes, randomly placed stars and angels' wings, and a gold-tree shower curtain delight Krpan's young children and adult guests alike. As is true throughout the main floor, all of it could easily remain through to spring without looking out of place.

What Krpan calls, with signature restraint, "a nod to Christmas" is, to us, a great big bear hug to winter. **///**

For more on this year's Homes for the Holidays tour, visit kidshelpphone.ca/homes-for-the-holidays.