



BY ALYSSA J. OON

# A stroke of Christmas

> Little ways to draw out the festive cheer in modest-sized home interiors

**C**HRISTMAS decorations tend to be lavish and extravagant, usually made for bigger homes. However, as we are now in an era where living spaces have shrunk tremendously and homeowners – especially the millennials – have a minimalist outlook on life, we share some tips on how simple adjustments and alterations, that do not require huge spending, can add a little festive sunshine to smaller living spaces.

The trick is to work with what is already available in the home, focusing on areas that have been unattended to for some time.

## DRESSING WALLS

The walls of our homes are like reusable canvases; where decorations can be put up and taken down, as and when. With Christmas just around the corner, dig up those old Christmas cards that have been kept aside over the years as here's a way to finally put them to good use.

Christmas cards can be hung up in so many creative ways and these can add to the festive feel in the home. Some well-loved ways to put up old cards as decor include via rustic photo frames twined loosely across the inner frame; using wood pegs to hold the cards; displaying them on boards in the shape of Christmas trees; hanging them along a strip of festive red ribbon attached to doors or the ceiling; or simply clipped on wreaths.

For a modern take, put the cards up on a bare wall and hold them up using bright-coloured washi (Japanese paper) tape. Neon colours are great to give a pop of bright colour in an otherwise warm red and gold Christmas feel. Besides, washi tape can also be used to create geometrical wintry shapes on a wall. With some planning and a lot of confidence, create a sharp outline of a deer head, gift boxes or even galloping reindeer.

Here's another fun idea: if you have a floating shelf, use washi tape to create a "fireplace" and hang stockings from the shelf as in the glowing fireplaces seen in movies that emanate a warm and fuzzy feeling of a cosy home.

## CHRISTMAS TREE

If having a Christmas tree in the home is a must, then opt for a small- or medium-sized one that can fit on a tabletop. By elevating the tree to a higher area, an illusion of height similar to that of a large-sized tree, is achieved. Moreover, the elevated tree won't take up floor space, providing more room. Additionally, presents won't be accidentally stepped on or kicked around by children running wild!

Another tip – instead of the usual tree skirt, place the compact tree in a wicker basket for a rustic look. If you're handy with the needle, use



embroidery thread to create colourful patterns on the basket for a pop of colour. The tree can also be placed in metal baskets, tin buckets or wooden boxes – whichever that complements your home design style. Ribbons and bows in festive hues can also be stuck on if sewing is not your thing.

For a more unconventional tree, try *Enjoy Your Home* blogger Ludmila's idea. She recommends using loose fir tree branches, placing them in a clear glass vase, then decorating the branches with Christmas ornaments, as one would do with a conventional tree. These quirky-looking trees will make a perfect tabletop or shelf decoration. And they can be quite stylish too.

## EVERY WHICH WAY DECOR

So you can go without trees, but you LOVE the glitter and shine of baubles and lights and simply must have these around the house at Christmas. So, what's the big deal? Just pop them randomly around the house! You can also spruce up the dining area with a DIY-ed ornament "chandelier". Simply suspend Christmas ornaments on long lengths of ribbon attached from a ceiling hook. Use glittery chiffon ribbons for extra sparkle and vary the lengths of the ribbons, preferably the longer ones in the



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centre, the shorter on the outer layers. If a whole cluster feels too messy, then consider using a wire wreath frame and space out the ribbons along the frame. If you use pendant lighting, you can suspend the ornaments from it instead.

Even scraps of old Christmas wrapping paper can be used in decorating. Fold and cut the scraps of paper into triangular shapes or as a flag, and glue them along a thin cord, then string them across the windows, below shelves or under the doorway. Cuttings in the shape of trees, reindeer and lightbulbs are other popular Christmas options.

## UNCONVENTIONAL PLACES

Take a good, hard look at your home and find spots that are easily overlooked and under-used, those long, lost and forgotten deserted corners. These are great places to put decorations up and given a refreshing, new look. Some suggestions to dress these little nooks and crannies include using books from your home library, and stacking them up to look like little reindeer, Santa Claus or tree