

CHRISTMAS at the Hall

Our team went out to the gorgeous and aptly-named Christmas Hall at Bildeston to give you ideas and inspirations for creating a winter wonderland in your own home this festive season

Stylist: **Pippa Rolls**
Tree dresser: **Ady White**
Assistant stylist:
Shekha Vyas
Photographer:
Clifford Hicks

Christmas trees from a range priced from £9.25 (2-3ft) £21.50 (6-7ft)
Gold glitter star tree topper £10.80
White clip-on birds £3.60
Red/green Faberge eggs £3.40
Red peacock £4.80
Colourful little metal parcels £2.90
Mini nutcrackers £4.80
Cream stockings £11.99
Wrapping paper from £2.25
Ribbons from £1.20
240 LED lights £33.99
All from Blackthorpe Barns

Velvet throw on chair, £75
Scotty dog cushions by Jan Constantine, £55 each from
Pippa Rolls Ltd

Red telephone, £50, from
House & Garden, Snape Maltings

At Rougham Estate Christmas trees, quality is paramount. Estate owner George Agnew and his team of tree managers carefully nurture each one throughout the growing season. Having won the 'British Christmas Tree Grower of the Year' award and been asked to supply 10 Downing Street on numerous occasions, the estate's trees have developed a great reputation.

ROUGHAM ESTATE'S TOP TIPS ON CHOOSING THE PERFECT TREE

▲ Buy your tree directly from a producer with a reputation for fresh trees. Don't forget to measure your ceiling height before you leave home. When buying the tree, take your tape measure with you to ensure the tree will fit.

▲ Never buy your tree too early, as it will start drying out and shedding its needles around your house.

▲ Always buy an unwrapped tree so you can see exactly what you are getting.

▲ Always buy a locally grown tree as it should be much fresher than an imported one.

▲ The needles should look shiny, green, and fresh, not dry or brown. The heavier a tree feels when you lift it, the more water it still has in it, indicating that it has not dried out. This is the tree to choose even if it is heavier to carry.

▲ Store the tree outside in the cool until you need it. Once inside, do not stand it near a heat source.

▲ If you have bought a cut tree, ensure that you have a tree stand that will take a reservoir of water.

▲ Cut a thin slice off the base of the tree when you get it home. Set it in the stand and fill up with water. Check the water level every day. You will be surprised how much water the tree will take up.

▲ Some trees retain needles better than others.

▲ Firs like Nordman and Fraser hold on to their needles best but they take longer to grow than Norway Spruce and tend to cost more to buy. A properly treated fresh Norway Spruce will perform perfectly well and has a lovely Christmassy fragrance



Our stylist Pippa Rolls offers her top 5 decorating tips

★ Choose colours that suit the room. The black marble fireplace at Christmas Hall provided us with the perfect backdrop to show off the bright jewel colours. Rooms that fill with natural daylight can be decorated using paler colours without getting "lost".

★ Snapping crackers are part of Christmas but for some, wearing a hat throughout lunch can be a little tedious. Try piling crackers on the table and

pulling them when you enjoy pre-lunch drinks and nibbles.

★ Randomly drape strings of lights across shelves and add lots of candles down the centre of a table and across a mantelpiece – twinkling light is as important as a flaming pudding at Christmas!

★ Bring in greenery and foliage from outside – holly and ivy are firm favourites at this time of year and you can often find something in your own back garden.

★ Instead of tinsel, try wide ribbons on the tree instead. I recommend semi-transparent organza ribbon. Tie up four or five long lengths in a bow just below the angel or star at the top and then let them drop down the tree.

★ Each year I buy a special bauble for each of my children – not only does the tree look pretty but as the years go by and the eldest is about to turn 18, our tree is getting quite full and tells a story unique to us.



LIVING ROOM

Mini-multicoloured bell wreaths £4.80; bell balls £5.40; purple/pink baubles £2.40; pillar candles from £1.25

All from Blackthorpe Barns

Fink silver candlestick and candle £120; Scapa Champagne bowl £132; William Yeoward mini Strada globe £130; Scapa fur throw £776

All from Brightwell Interiors

10" brandied traditional fruit cake with marzipan and fondant icing. £40, to order. Other sizes and finishes available on request.

Coloured almond macarons with flavoured fillings. £15 per dozen, minimum order 24. Colours and flavours on request, or see website for details. Display cone to order.

**All from Susi's Kitchen
Melton, Woodbridge**

Arctic dessert plate £4.25; Pip medallion crockery from £7.95 for a mug; Pip khaki tray cloth khaki, £9.50; velvet cushion floral purple ribbon, £18.95; red floral velvet cushion, £17.50; pink and turquoise cushions, £11.95

**All from House & Garden, Snape
Maltings**



A feast for the eyes

Holly Nicholls of Brightwell Interiors offers advice on creating the perfect place setting

Dressing the table for Christmas day is one of the most lovely 'chores'. Whether you are planning to have your festive meal at lunch or in the evening you will want it to look very special and create an effect that is full of warmth.

All too often people have beautiful china and glassware that is crammed into cupboards and never shown the light of day. This is the time to enjoy it! So don't be shy, bring out the china, crystal, silver and candles.

Use table runners to define each place setting. Place two wine glasses – one each for red and white – a water glass, water jugs, wine bottles/decanter in the space in between.



“At Christmas, don't be shy. Bring out the china, crystal, silver and candles”

For a touch of festive colour, twist a piece of wide ribbon around each napkin in your chosen colour theme – traditional red and green, cool blues and silver or more glamorous gold. Instead of crackers, give guests a beautifully-wrapped small present.

Crystal is a glorious medium for enhancing the sparkle of candlelight. It also picks up surrounding colours in a subtle way. Crystal candelabras and glasses, together with an oversized silver candelabra and smaller silverware, will give your table a contemporary edge and yet retain that classic elegant style.

The table wouldn't be complete without flowers. Try putting several small vases along the length of the table filled with clusters of flowers in the palette you have chosen, or use two large, lavish and sophisticated flower arrangements in crystal vases to tower over your guests. Sprigs of holly and ivy always look just right against a crisp white table cloth.

The ideal number of guests at the table is eight to 10. Try, if you can, to keep everyone at one table – there's nothing worse than being on the 'boring' table and having to listen to the roar of laughter coming from the best table.

Have a happy Christmas feast!

DINING ROOM

Gold mini-crackers £4.25; bird cage tealight holder £7.70; star burst decorations £1.35; taper candles from £0.85; cone balls £3.99; robins £1.55; twinkle lights £17.99

All from Blackthorpe Barns

Pip dining crockery from £4.25 for a dessert plate

Piano wine glass; £5.50; piano water glass, £5.50; piano champagne flute, £5.50

Candelabras £95 each

All from House & Garden, Snape Maltings

KITCHEN

Frozen party snacks and capaes from £2.25 per box

Taste the Difference sausage and bacon rolls x10, £3;

parsnips 500g, £1; ready prepared carrot batons 400g, £1;

Brussels sprouts 500g, £1.30

Oven to tableware: red and white xmas divided dish, £10;

ceramic bowl, £6; red art deco charger plate, £3; Tu glitter

reindeer, £4.66. Tu 3 star red candle, £4.66; Tu large red

metallic pillar, £2.49

Tu small gold pillar, £1.16

All from J Sainsbury

Chapter 9 English Whisky £39.99

Boxed and available at supermarkets or online direct from the distillery shop www.englishwhisky.co.uk







KITCHEN

Wreath £20.45; hessian sack £6.60; wrapping paper from £2.25; snow £4.80 per bag; doormats £16.80

All from Blackthorpe Barns

Fink large storm lantern £79.95 (also available in medium and small) from **Brightwell Interiors**

BEDROOM

Felt white reindeer stockings £20.40; patchwork stockings £21.50; paper chain £3.60; white doves £4.20; white/red gingham bird £3.65; pixies range from £10.15; cuddly reindeer £21.60; red berries tree £27.95

All from Blackthorpe Barns

Scapa Butler's table £452 from **Brightwell Interiors**

Wool and felt cushion on chair "Je t'aime" by Jan Constantine £65 from **Pippa Rolls Ltd**

Orleans red bedspread, £115; Biggie Best large red cushion cover, £15; small rectangular cushions complete £13.95; linen red stripe cushion; £16.95. Colonial cream tray, £30; bee carafe £39.95; red Quad alarm clock, £27.50

All from House & Garden at Snape Maltings

