



# Deck the Halls

## Divide and Conquer to Decorate on a Grand Scale

So you're spending your first Christmas in your new home and are ready to break into your boxes of holiday decorations and start decking the halls? But where do you even begin when faced with grand spaces, towering ceilings and more than one entertaining area? How do you tackle Christmas in a spacious custom home?

"If you're dealing with a great room on a grand scale, it's normal to have a 12' to 15' tree,

and when you do, standard-sized ornaments will be dwarfed," explains Marc Acord, Owner and Managing Partner of Seasonal Concepts, a national and online retailer known for its selection of holiday decorations and casual furnishings. "That's why we've seen a move toward 9" wide ribbons, big bows, floral picks and dried merchandise being used on trees," he says. Acord has seen trends come and go in his 25 years in the industry. In 1986, he started his career in Kansas City as a stock boy for the company that would become Seasonal Concepts. He worked his way up to assistant manager, then store manager, then regional manager and in 2007, along with a silent partner, purchased the company. Currently, the company has three physical locations in Tulsa, St. Louis, and Kansas City. The company has recently opened its new online store at [www.seasonalHOMEconcepts.com](http://www.seasonalHOMEconcepts.com).

His ground-up experience has given him a unique, practical perspective on trends, themes and decorating that focuses on keeping the fun and spirit in the season. "Just because it's a tree doesn't mean that you have to decorate it with ornaments," he says, noting that his designers have taken everything from 24" Santa figurines to a reindeer dinner table centerpiece and placed those in the center of a tree to create dramatic focal points. Surround them with other elements and the tree itself seems to fade into the background, letting the theme take center stage.

While trees are still the undisputed stars of the show, they are starting to share billing. "More than trying to match the grandeur and size of homes, people are tending to scale their decorating to multiple rooms. It used to be when I was growing up that you had one Christmas tree in the hearth room or family room that was decorated with ornaments handed down from

little Johnny's kindergarten days. The trend in the past five years has been moving toward multiple trees. You can have one in the family room and another in the bedroom, which may be something very soft and themed," he says. Acord has one customer in St. Louis who has 25 Christmas trees in her home, but they are not what you would typically expect. "The trees themselves come in various shapes, sizes and silhouettes. Trees used to be 7' across and 7' tall, but those silhouettes have come down," he says. Thinner shapes and tabletop sizes make it easy to scale the tree to the space, and allow for multiple trees in the same room to create a forest effect. "A client may place a 9', 7.5' and 6.5' tree in the same room and decorate each in a different yet related theme to create impact," he says.

When it comes to the trees themselves, there's a definite attachment to the style of the primary tree. "Picking out a Christmas tree is a very emotional experience," Acord notes. "People tend to select the type of tree they had when they were growing up or that they saw when they were young – like a Frasier fir or a Scotch pine." Yet secondary trees can be a far cry from the traditional. "We're seeing lime green, pink, chocolate brown, black and red trees that are made of the same types of materials, the needles are just dyed. They are fun, whimsical and a great way to decorate. A small, slim tree tabletop tree in purple, pink or blue is ideal for a kid's room. We've even got trees made of feathers and bubble trees, which have a tubular cylinder in the center with bubbles."

So whether you're looking for a whimsical touch to bring the spirit back to the holidays or an elegant theme for visitors to embrace, let your creativity run wild during the holidays. **T**

### TCH Tip

What are the pros at Seasonal Concepts seeing in holiday décor this year? Softer metallics are all the rage, such as soft pewter for elegant themes, champagne gold for traditional décor and platinum white for contemporary looks.

When it comes to colors, "soft mint green and chocolate tie in very well with an old English theme," Acord notes. Pair the decorations with pheasant feathers and rustic Santas to complete the look.

Among the latest looks are designer swags made to attach to the corner of a mirror or the frame of artwork, making it simple to add a dash of holiday spice to unexpected places.