

# Vintage

# HOLIDAY

10 DIYs  
TO RECREATE THE  
CHRISTMAS PAST

## Colorful Collectibles

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ELVES,  
REINDEER  
AND  
MORE!

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# Merry Vintage Christmas!



Christmas is the prime time of year for nostalgia. We sing Christmas carols we learned in our childhood, bake dishes that remind us of our grandparents and unpack ornaments that each have a story. For those of us who love vintage décor, the Christmas season not only allows us to treasure our own past, but helps us preserve history by rescuing and displaying vintage holiday items in our homes.

This season, get inspiration from a variety of vintage holiday styles. Have yourself a midcentury Christmas with aluminum trees and vinyl records (pages 26 and 86), a kitschy Christmas with velveteen reindeer and finial tree toppers (pages 36 and 58) or a pastel Christmas with handmade touches and Shiny Brite ornaments (pages 72 and 100). DIY with the best of them to create vintage-inspired pieces (pages 114, 116, 118 and 120), and even learn about the collectibles you can find at your next Christmas flea market (pages 14, 16, 20 and 22).

In the midst of your gift shopping, flea market scouring and Christmas decorating, remember to take a deep breath, enjoy the season and create memories with family and friends so you have your own stories to pass down in the years to come.

Cheers,

Victoria Van Vlear – editor

#vintageholidaymag

## Vintage HOLIDAY

Fall 2017

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# A VERY Vintage CHRISTMAS



CHRISTMAS COLLECTIBLES AND MIDCENTURY FURNISHINGS  
RECREATE THE '50S AND '60S IN HOLIDAY SPIRIT.

BY Kristin Dowding  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Bret Gum

You don't need a large home to go vintage. Blogger Janey Ellis of Atomic Redhead and her husband Patrick Arlt are all about the retro Christmas vibe. Stepping into their apartment in Orange, California, you'd think you've taken a time machine back to the '50s. "My dad was into classic midcentury hot rods, so we would go to car shows, listen to the oldies station and watch old TV shows," she says. "Growing up, I saw the imagery so often that it became appealing." With aluminum trees, retro signs and Heywood-Wakefield furnishings, this home provides the ultimate midcentury holiday experience.

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(opposite) **ALUMINUM TREES IN VARIOUS COLORS** are scattered throughout the home, adding to the midcentury vibe. "Colored trees are rare, so when I found this big one at the antiques show in Portland, I had to get it," says Janey. All the ornaments on the aluminum trees throughout the home have a space theme to complement the '50s/'60s furniture and decor. "Aluminum trees and space went together," she says.



**CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS** and midcentury furniture recreate the spirit of the holidays in the '50s and '60s. Dream Pets velveteen reindeer, aluminum trees and retro Putz houses make this space unique to Janey and Patrick's personality.





### MIDCENTURY SPIRIT

The key to any successful Christmas theme is the home's non-seasonal foundation. As Janey's furniture is all by Heywood-Wakefield, a midcentury theme was a must. "My parents were in the antiques business, so I've always loved vintage," she says. With her midcentury dining room table and chairs, coffee table, credenzas and bedroom vanity, the stage was set for a '50s wonderland; all she had to do was add her personal touch.

### CHRISTMAS COLLECTIBLES

Aside from its retro vibe, Janey's collections are what truly makes this house unique. "I started collecting in high school, so for the past 13 years," she says. Her father inspired most of her early collections with his enthusiasm for the season.

"My dad is obsessed with these Santa Clauses with their velveteen suits and rubber bodies," says Janey. "They were really popular in the '40s and '50s and became a staple of my childhood." After taking a couple from her dad's collection, she began to collect them on her own, placing them on tulip chairs, couches and shelves as a reminder of her childhood. But that's not the only thing she and her dad share during the holidays.

"My dad and I made an agreement that we would buy any and all aluminum trees that we found at \$65 and under," says Janey. "We owned 24 at the height of our collection. I kept [the tradition] going, but lowered the price to \$40, because I have so many." Whether big or small, colored or neutral, these trees are in almost every room of Janey's home—decorated with space-themed ornaments for a period-accurate touch.



**A VINTAGE RADIO/RECORD PLAYER** plays Christmas music that was traditional for Janey's family growing up. "I love weird Christmas music," she says. "My dad would always play the Dr. Demento Christmas Novelty CD, so when I saw the Bonanza Christmas album, I had to get my hands on it."

*(opposite)* **ABANDONED AT AN ESTATE SALE**, this Heywood-Wakefield vanity was a great addition to Janey's midcentury-inspired home. "It was missing its second shelf, but it fits my records without it, so it's perfect," she says. A mini aluminum tree with turquoise ornaments adds Christmas flair to the space, and a knock-off tulip chair from the Portland Expo Center Antiques Show holds a plush Santa Claus. "I took one or two from my dad's collection and then bought some myself," says Janey.

*The key* TO ANY SUCCESSFUL  
CHRISTMAS THEME IS THE HOME'S  
NON-SEASONAL FOUNDATION.



**JANEY REPURPOSED SHELVING** from the midcentury credenza and created a stand-alone bookshelf for her vintage reindeer collection and other special items.

*(opposite)* **JANEY SEPARATED FOUR HEYWOOD-WAKEFIELD** dresser desks to use the chairs for her dining room set. She had them upholstered in a turquoise fabric to match the color palette of her home.

## REPURPOSED TREASURES

When it comes to vintage items, sometimes it's necessary to get creative to make it work for your desired purpose, and reinventing these pieces allowed Janey to better display her Christmas collections. She found a Heywood-Wakefield vanity at an estate sale that was missing a shelf, but that didn't stop her from making the purchase. "Without the second shelf, it fit my records," she says. The old "Bonanza" Christmas album is one of her favorites, as she grew up listening to non-traditional Christmas music with her family.

After searching for years, Janey also found a rare Heywood-Wakefield room divider. Instead of using it for its original purpose, she removed the shelves and turned the bottom half into a credenza. "In the '50s and '60s, they didn't have entertainment centers like we do," she says, "so finding a midcentury piece to hold your TV is difficult." The bottom half now holds her TV as well as various Christmas décor pieces, and the shelving unit holds her velveteen reindeer collection.

## HOLIDAY HUNTING

It took several years and numerous antiques-store trips to procure the collection Janey has today. Though she has her favorite places to go, she suggests not being picky right before Christmas. "There are some antiques stores I don't go to as often, but in November, I will go to any and every antiques store," she says. "You never know what's going to crop up during the holiday season."

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 128.



*Tip:* Mix your holiday collectibles into your everyday decor, so you don't have to completely redecorate after Christmas.



## Dream Pets Deluge

THESE OBSCURE CHRISTMAS FIGURES ADD '50S APPEAL TO THIS MIDCENTURY-INSPIRED HOME.

**Made popular in 1957**, velveteen reindeer are part of the Dream Pets collection and were manufactured in Japan for Dakin, Inc. The toys are filled with Willow sawdust and come in over 2,000 different characters. "I thought they were the weirdest, creepiest things ever," says Janey. But as she spotted them at different flea markets, she began to see their midcentury appeal. "I decided they were amazing and started to buy every one I saw. I now have over 60 of them."

The company that bought Dakin, Inc. no longer manufactures Dream Pets, so they've become rarer, and therefore more popular, in recent years. Janey found most of her reindeer at antiques shows and malls, but you can also find them on eBay, Etsy and at flea markets. Their average price is between \$10 and \$50, but you may get a bundle deal if you find a group of them at a flea market.

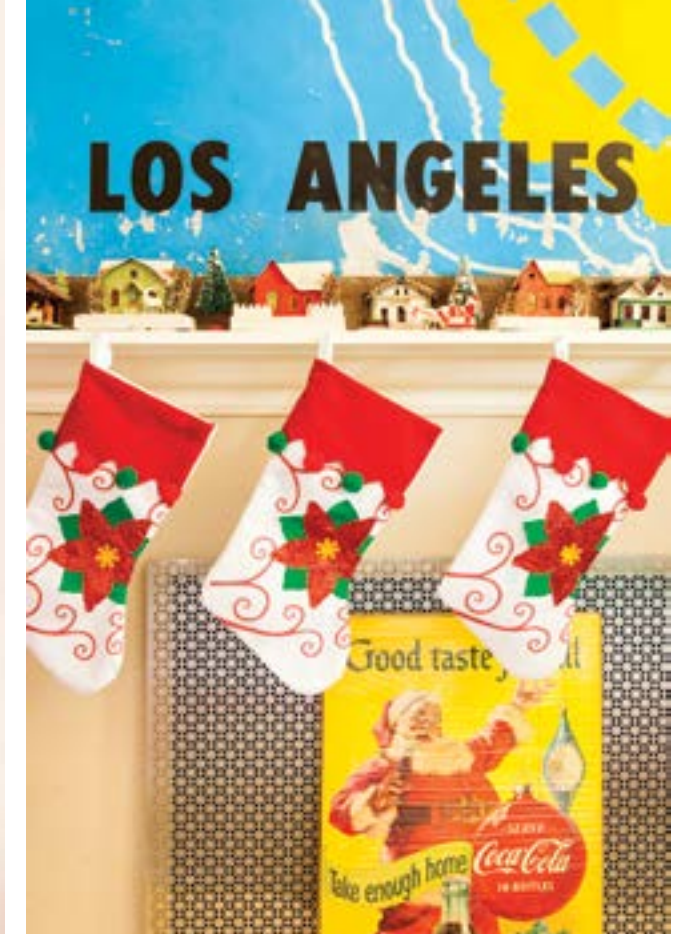


### EVERY GOOD MIDCENTURY HOME

has to have a bar cart, even if it's a repurposed book case, like this one. Janey has infused hers with Christmas spirit with a bottlebrush tree and vintage '50s illustration art. Half an aluminum tree hangs on the wall above.

### (right, top) ALUMINUM SHEET METAL

hangs in front of the fireplace to cover the empty hole and act as an indoor breeze way wall. The collection of Putz houses on the mantel belonged to Janey's grandmother and are made of cardboard, paint and glitter. Janey took one of her favorite Coca Cola Santa signs from her dad's vintage collection and hung it on the fireplace.





**JANEY'S BLOG, ATOMIC REDHEAD**, features not only her home, but her vintage wardrobe as well. She's collected several Christmas fashion pieces for hosting during the holidays. "I found the Santa and holly print dress at an antiques store, and I've worn it for every Christmas photo since," says Janey.

*(opposite)* **A HEYWOOD-WAKEFIELD VANITY** acts as a main furniture piece in the master bedroom. "I found it on Craigslist, and it was pretty rough," says Janey. "We stripped and refinished the top portion and had the pouf reupholstered."







## How Lovely are Your Handles

DON'T HAVE A TREE? RECREATE THIS TAKE ON A RETRO CHRISTMAS TREE WITH VINTAGE SUITCASES.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Vintage suitcases in various sizes
- Garland or string lights
- Bottlebrush trees or ornaments

### WHAT YOU'LL DO:

1. Start with your largest suitcase on the floor and place the other suitcases on top in descending size order. Fill them with weighted objects if you don't want them to slip.
2. Wrap your garland or string lights around the base of the tower and have it ascend the suitcases until it reaches the top. You can fasten the end to the back of the top suitcase or continue the string to hang on a nearby furniture piece.
3. Add bottlebrush trees or ornaments to the exposed surfaces of the suitcases until it's decorated to your liking.



*"In November, I will go to any and every antiques store, BECAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO CROP UP DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON."*