

Winter Wonderland: CHRISTMAS IN JACKSON HOLE

# TRADITIONAL HOME<sup>®</sup>

Winter  
2019

**Food  
& Fun**

HOST A  
SPARKLING  
HOLIDAY  
GET-TOGETHER

## Holiday Magic

CELEBRATE THE  
SEASON IN STYLE

**RASCAL FLATTS'  
NEW RIFF** PEEK INSIDE  
A NASHVILLE STAR'S  
RENOVATED KITCHEN



# Home *for Christmas*

A FAMILY WITH  
FAR-RANGING ROOTS  
FINDS A FOREVER  
HOME IN ATLANTA

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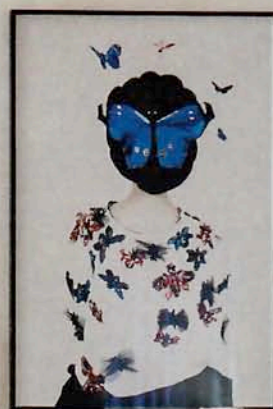






DEBBIE LOVES  
BRINGING THINGS  
INTO THE DESIGN  
THAT ARE  
IMPORTANT TO  
HER FAMILY.”

—designer Susan Jamieson





**C**hristmas means family for many people. For Debbie and Todd House, Christmas will always be the season their family became complete.

“We traveled to Japan in February 2003 to adopt our daughter, Kanna, who’s now 17. Then we returned in December to adopt our son, William, who’s now 16,” Debbie says.

The trip to Japan formed their family and set them on another journey—to a forever home.

A self-proclaimed Army brat who’s lived all over the world, Debbie wanted to give her children the sense of permanence she never knew growing up. “That was our intention when we built this house,” she says. “The children were just 3 and 4 years old at the time, and they’ve never known any other home.”

The stately French-style stucco structure in Atlanta’s Buckhead area truly is a forever home. “Todd and I met in Richmond, then lived in South Africa and D.C. I’ve lived in this house longer than I’ve ever lived in any other home,” Debbie says.

Set on a lot across the street from Chastain Park, the house owes much of its architectural sensibility to the surrounding foliage. Architect Peter Block framed the verdant outdoors through expansive windows and French doors in every room.

“Trees were very important to him,” Debbie says. “There is a window in my dressing room and closet, and the window in our bedroom is so big that I can stand in my closet and see the top of the tree in the backyard.”

“Peter is a master at capturing natural light,” interior designer Susan Jamieson of Bridget Beari Designs says. A tall window at the staircase landing pushes sunlight down the stair wall “and light plays off the wonderful old-world-style white Venetian plaster throughout the house,” she says.

The white stucco finish also sprang from the focal-point trees. “As we were debating which direction to go with color, our builder suggested that just keeping it white would look so amazing with the surrounding greenery,” Debbie says. “That’s what makes this house so marvelous to decorate for the holidays. I love decorating with natural greens.”

**Gathering area** Graced by light from French doors opening to the loggia, this space known as the long room, outfitted with a sectional and armchairs, is the family’s go-to spot to watch TV, snuggle up to a fire, and enjoy views of the sunken garden. **Exterior** Holiday decorating consists of natural greens against white backgrounds, starting at the entry of the white stucco, French-style house. **Preceding pages** A 20-foot tree is decorated with treasured ornaments that convey the family’s heritage and memories.





**Dining room** A crystal chandelier drips down from the second story to set a glamorous mood for formal dinners. A metallic sheen in the Art Deco-style rug amplifies the chandelier's shimmer.



Holiday decor begins outside at the dramatic front entry, a series of three pairs of tall French doors, each topped with arched windows. The center French doors, flanked with sconces, are given a shout-out as the preferred entry with a wreath crown and swags of greenery that flow from the sconces to the steps. A pair of Christmas trees stand sentinel in front of the other two sets of French doors.

The doors open to the living and dining areas through a narrow portico. Its towering triple arches direct the eye straight to the dining room table.

“Debbie and Todd wanted drama,” Jamieson says. And they got it from this floor plan, anchored by a soaring multifunctional room that’s geared toward entertaining. While the dining area is the focal point, an adjoining conversation area is “a place you can sit on the sofa and chairs around the fireplace after dinner,” Jamieson says.

“I took my cues from the architecture, going for a style that’s a little formal but comfortable for a family,” she says. The area’s custom-made sofa fits into a 10-foot niche next to the large rectangular dining table. Jamieson designed the table and had it crafted from a single piece of walnut. Old-world touches include a smoky antiqued mirror surrounding the

dining room fireplace. It adds shimmer and reflectivity to the space as it serves a simple complement to holiday greens laced with bronze ribbon.

Asian influences, such as butterfly-infused artwork in the gathering area known as the long room, thread through the home. “Debbie loves bringing things into the design that are important to her family,” Jamieson says.

The Christmas tree, decorated with origami and glimmering metallic ornaments cherished by the family, takes center stage in the long room, where iron-framed glass doors lead to a loggia that overlooks a sunken garden. “I told Peter I wanted a French house in the front and a California house in the back,” Debbie says with a laugh.

Each yuletide celebrates the family’s blend of heritages. Debbie’s own Asian roots include a Thai mother. “She’s a fabulous cook and always prepares Thai dumplings and a Thai noodle

**Office** African baskets and bowls in homeowner Todd House’s office are reminders of the couple’s experience living in South Africa. A sectional ensures livability for the entire family. **Kitchen** Todd (middle) and Debbie (right) enjoying spending time with children Kanna and William—and Debbie’s parents—during the holidays, when gingerbread houses are a tradition. **Breakfast area** A fireplace in the cozy eating area off the kitchen is perfect for family meals and casual entertaining.







dish at our house Christmas Eve. We honor Japan by decorating with origami Christmas trees and cranes,” Debbie says.

In addition to decorating the tree, holiday time includes the tradition of “brenner”—breakfast for dinner. “It’s a group of about 50 moms who come over in their pajamas,” Debbie says. “We started this when our kids were in first grade. We drink wine and lots of holiday punch.”

The season also wouldn’t be complete without celebrating Debbie’s dad’s birthday on December 26. “It’s always seafood with champagne and a cake,” she says. The kids further the festive mood by baking gingerbread houses with Debbie’s mom. It all adds up to a wealth of diverse family traditions that create the quintessential all-American Christmas. 🍷

**Interior designer:** Susan Jamieson

**Architect:** Peter Block

**For more information, see sources on page 94**

**Master bedroom** Natural greens and bronze ribbon underscore the canopy bed’s sculptural shape. **Staircase** Natural light beautifully filters onto the stairwell wall from the landing. **Master bath** Tile walls provide a simple backdrop for dollops of holiday greens at the window and on the floor. **Powder room** A spray of greenery outlines the mirror, creating a focal point amid the gracious marble vanity and pink wallpaper.

