



A Cottage Christmas



Styled By: Annette Joseph Photographer: Emily Followill Author: Lori Johnston

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The day after Thanksgiving, Adelaide Burton changes her everyday china to the Spode Christmas china she received as wedding gifts 28 years ago, when she and husband Dal moved into their charming farmhouse in Buckhead. Over the years, the holiday tradition has remained as their family has grown up in the now nearly 100-year-old home.

“It’s a very old house. We finally cleared off a part of the cement floor in the basement and uncovered a date scratched into it: Feb. 7, 1913,” she says. “It has been hit by trees and it seems to survive.”

The longtime family home also has survived Burton’s well-meaning attempts to bring it into modern times. She recalls talking to an architect in the ’80s about updating the home, adding marble, chintz, detailed molding and other “terribly grand” features.

“He said, ‘Adelaide, some farmer and his chickens lived in this house. Let’s not make this house something it’s not,’” she said. “It’s the best advice I ever got. Now, I always try to make everything stay true to the farmhouse.”

Although Burton succumbed to some trendy elements along the way—such as, in the ’80s, changing the stacked stone to green marble on one of three original fireplaces—the stockbroker-turned-decorator later realized she had been working against what the farmhouse wanted to be. A few years ago, she took a hammer and started whacking at the marble, which ended up taking a painter three days to remove.

“The minute I got that off, everything fell into place,” she said. “I’m doing what the house wants.”

Now stockings are hung from a fireplace that has a more traditional look. The main tree in the living room is filled with candles and birds—devoid of any glitter and bows—while greenery, holly and

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sugared fruit provide seasonal touches throughout the house.

Through the years, the family has carved more bedrooms out of the existing upstairs, expanded the dining room and added a screened porch to the now five-bedroom, four-bath home. The yellow pine vaulted ceiling in the screened porch has a deliberate connection to the “pickled” heart pine walls in the original library, which opens to the sunroom. Horizontal wide-plank walls in that space add another architectural detail fitting with the farmhouse aesthetic.

Over the years, Burton has learned to let the home’s original style and family focus lead her decor decisions, including what type of lighting to use. “There are nine lanterns in this house,” she says. “It’s not a fancy, Waterford chandelier kind of house.”

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