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decorated for
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ENTERTAINING



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making spirits
..BRIGHT..

The Vancouver condo of up-and-coming designer Emma Comesotti is dressed for the holidays in glitz and glam - a reflection of her home's everyday style.

TEXT LAURA MUIR | PHOTOGRAPHY KIM CHRISTIE



A homemade wreath hung from a wide satin ribbon complements the dining room's sleek, glamorous look. "It was an evening-long craft project made with inexpensive white and silver ornaments, a foam form and my hot-glue gun," says homeowner and designer Emma Comesotti. "I couldn't find one in the right

colours, so I decided to make my own." DESIGN, Philosophy Design, philosophydesign.ca; Silver Fox 2108-50 WALL PAINT (throughout, except bedroom), Benjamin Moore; Romo WALLPAPER, AnneStarr; DINING TABLE, Calligaris; END CHAIRS, PARSONS CHAIRS, MIRROR, Philosophy Design; PENDANT LIGHT, Jonathan Adler; DINNER PLATES, Pottery Barn; Vietri SALAD PLATES, Chintz & Company.

“I’M A WRAPPING FIEND!” ADMITS EMMA COMESOTTI. IN FACT,

design firm Philosophy Design is able to draw from an abundance of expertise and apply an eye for all things elegant, whether she’s putting up decorations, hosting a holiday dinner party or simply wrapping presents (which is done while she’s watching her favourite holiday movies).

Emma’s 1,040-square-foot Yaletown condo in Vancouver, which she shares with her husband, Roy, and their Siamese cat, Mia, showcases a luxurious contemporary classic aesthetic. Straight lines offset curvaceous pieces; intriguing pattern creates interest; a few organic touches add texture; and a palette featuring grey and warm white, with hits of chartreuse, silver and gold, is both glamorous and soft.

Their sophisticated condo (decorated by both Emma and Roy when they moved in almost five years ago) ended up inspiring a new holiday look for Emma. “I’ve always been a big fan of silver at Christmas,” she says. “But when I moved into this place, I added in some gold and white and green.” She mixes sleek, modern →

her gifts are so beautifully wrapped, they often put their recipients into a bit of a predicament. “When I give people their gift, they say ‘It’s so perfect, I don’t want to open it!’” This comes as no surprise. This designer and co-owner of Vancouver



ABOVE Emma (shown here) fell in love with this condo’s open-concept floor plan, which makes for relaxed entertaining.



LEFT Rather than placing a single floral arrangement in the middle of the table, Emma opted for a grouping of vases filled with pink peonies and green berries.



RIGHT A trifle dish serves as a simple punch bowl. A gold-etched Moroccan tea glass used as a tea-light holder adds glitz to the drinks display.



A mix of modern and vintage-look ornaments suits the condo’s contemporary classic style and grey, warm white and chartreuse colour scheme. A couple of faux sheepskins act as a sophisticated tree skirt. “I’ve never liked the way a traditional tree skirt looks, so this is an inexpensive solution, and it adds a lot of texture and interest,” says Emma.

SOFA, OTTOMAN, Philosophy Design; hand-knotted **RUG**, 2nd Century Rug Co.; **DRAPERY**, Shapeshifters Design; ikat **TOSS CUSHION FABRIC**, Dedar; Designers Guild floral **TOSS CUSHION FABRIC**, AnneStarr; **TABLE LAMP**, Kartell; **ARTWORK**, Patricia Larsen; **TRAY**, Shine by S.H.O.; clear glass **ORNAMENTS** (in bowl on tray), 18Karat; faux **SHEEPSKINS** (used as tree skirt), IKEA; pine cone **ORNAMENTS**, The Bay; green and bird **ORNAMENTS**, Liberty.

Because the kitchen is open to the living and dining areas, the island provides a convenient spot to lay out appetizers or, in this case, create a sweets spread for a dinner party (also shown

opposite, centre). "It's nice to have the dessert situated where everyone can see it and look forward to it," says Emma. Along with the drinks and treats (like candy canes, truffles, caramel corn and

pecans), Emma decorates the island with candles, an intriguing shell bowl of ornaments and cymbidium orchids for an inviting, finished look. **ARMCHAIR**, Philosophy Design; **SIDE TABLE**, Brent

Comber; **FLOOR LAMP**, Oly; **TRIFLE DISH**, Cookworks; glittered **ORNAMENTS** (in bowl opposite, centre), Chintz & Company; **CHAMPAGNE BUCKET** (opposite, centre), Liberty.



Small-space living doesn't keep Emma Comesotti from pulling out all the stops during the holidays. Here are her tips for **ENTERTAINING IN A SMALL SPACE.**

•• 1 ••

FORGO THE FORMAL DINNER PARTY.

"Don't worry about attempting to do a sit-down dinner and having a large group of people all crammed into a small dining room. Instead, scatter some nibbles on a kitchen island or dining table and host a casual cocktail party where people can move freely throughout the entire space."

•• 2 ••

DECORATE MORE THAN JUST THE TREE.

"When decorating for a holiday gathering, don't just focus on the main living areas. In a small space, people inevitably catch glimpses into most rooms, so you want to give your whole house a cohesive feel by sprinkling festive elements in the entryway, the bathroom and so on."

•• 3 ••

GO DOUBLE DUTY.

"Having a tray on an ottoman serves as a spot to display items and a place for guests to set down their plates of food and drinks. An ottoman offers extra seating, too."

•• 4 ••

USE ALL YOUR SURFACES.

"Take advantage of extra surfaces. If you put food and drinks on the kitchen island as well as the dining table, you'll draw guests throughout the space rather than create a bottleneck in one area."





A stack of presents in the same colour scheme as the master bedroom says holiday in a subtle yet sophisticated way. A sparkly silver bird clipped to the ribbon references the mirrored nightstand and gold and white wallpaper (shown at left), while acorns hanging from the jewellery tree (shown at right) exemplify Emma's penchant for adding touches of whimsy.

CHAIR, Philosophy Design; **SIDE TABLE, JEWELLERY TREE**, Liberty; acorn **ORNAMENTS**, Walrus.



ornaments with distressed ones that offer a vintage vibe and includes a few from her childhood. "I like to mix old and new," says Emma. "It's important to reflect your personality and the spirit of the holidays – not give it all up just in favour of a certain look."

She keeps this sentiment in mind when hosting holiday gatherings – everything from large cocktail parties to intimate dinners. Instead of using the expected poinsettias or paperwhites, for instance, Emma places bright fuchsia peonies (typically a spring flower) liberally around the condo when preparing for a family dinner. "Both Roy and I love

peonies," says Emma, "and I think it's pretty to have a little pop of this pinky-purple colour with the more neutral palette."

Before guests arrive, Emma ensures that unique Christmassy touches are incorporated throughout the space. A wreath of silver and white ornaments that Emma made herself adds sparkle in the dining room; a couple of faux sheepskins serve as an unexpected tree skirt; and gifts piled on a chair look charming in the master bedroom. It's a setting so perfectly polished and festive, it might create yet another Christmastime quandary: Guests may not want to leave!



Elements like the graphic gold and white wallpaper, tufted headboard, mirrored nightstands and faux fur throw give the master bedroom a luxurious, glamorous aesthetic that's reflective of the rest of the condo.

Nina Campbell **WALLPAPER**, Designers Guild **BOLSTER FABRIC**, AnneStarr; tufted **HEADBOARD**, Philosophy Design; mirrored **NIGHTSTAND**, Urban Barn; **TABLE LAMP**, Arteriors; faux fur **THROW**, HomeSense.