

SIMPLY GLOWING

NATURAL, FRESH, AND FRUITFUL – HOLIDAY MANTELS TO SET THE MOOD

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As we move into the holiday season with barely a chance to prepare, let alone decorate, think about the simple beauty of candles on hand-cut birch logs, the scents of evergreens and hydrangeas, and the warmth of family and friends gathered around the fireplace. That's what distinguished designers and architects did, exclusively for Washington Spaces, when we asked them to share ways to make a fireplace mantel glow for the holidays.

CELEBRATING NATURE

With one daughter's birthday two days before Christmas, Kristin Peake finds her household inundated with gifts and celebrations.



"Because of that, I've always tried to create a warm, cozy, intimate feeling during the holidays because we have a lot of people over and parties going on," says Peake, principal of Kristin Peake Interiors.

To handle the overflow of guests, the Peakes often entertain outside. "Our outside terrace and fireplace are extensions of our living room," she says. "It's another very functional, comfortable space that was designed just for that purpose." With small children at home, Peake likes to keep decorations to a minimum, using simple, fresh materials.

For inspiration and collaboration, Peake enlisted Stephen Chambers, event designer, to help her with this fireplace mantel design. "We share the same philosophy of thinking outside the box," Peake says. She suggests using natural elements instead of the

typical ornaments and tinsel. For instance, Peake and Chambers created candlesticks from river birch logs purchased at Ruppert Nurseries and apple topiaries to flank the fireplace.

Peake also suggests being consistent with your design, both inside and out. If you decorate naturally outside, carry the theme inside with curly willow wrapped around branches of the Christmas tree and multiples of solid ornaments in clear glass, bronze, silver, or gold. Another decorating tip is to use cup hooks screwed in under the mantel or over doorways into wood casing to hang fresh garland, such as the greenery shown from Silvery Moon Farm.



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