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Manor at the Mill

Thinking big was **Amanda Zorumski's** plan when she decorated a grand home that welcomes multiple generations during holidays.





THIS PAGE: Brilliant red decor makes the children's dining room fun.
OPPOSITE PAGE: A sculptural branch of manzanita in the formal dining room



What was your inspiration? We were asked to select a holiday song as our theme, and I thought of Bing Crosby's "I'll Be Home for Christmas." I envisioned the big family arriving here from wherever they are in the world, to be together. The home is huge and accommodates a large clan. It gave me the opportunity to dedicate spaces for specific occasions.

How did you choose the decor? I decided to go with natural elements. I imagined the family hunting for acorns and cones on their outdoor walks. Since the house has a lot of wood—beams, paneling, furnishings—I wanted to lighten it up, and make it festive and sparkly. Giving the natural décor some metallic shimmer became part of the formula, too.

Tell us about the elements you used. We had 600 blown eggs—hand-gilded in gold, silver and copper leaf—to make one of the more dramatic arrangements in a large gathering space. We also harvested baskets of acorns and dried hydrangea in the fall so that we could then spray them gold and silver and use them throughout the house. Another nature-inspired idea was to fill large bowls with fruit dipped in sugar; this makes the arrangements sparkle.

How about the kids' table? It's really something special. We added modern touches, such as the Louis Ghost chairs, and we made the space colorful with bright red place settings. But again, we used plenty of natural elements. We filled some wooden trucks with buckeye balls that we sprayed gold.

Seems like nature's harvest was the essence of the plan. It's a lesson for everyone; having a big budget isn't necessary. Decorating for the holidays can be as simple as the greens you gather from your own property; just add some sparkle and shine. 



Amanda Zorumski has worked at top residential and commercial design firms in New York, among them Yabu Pushelberg and workshop/apd. She now lives and works in New Canaan, where she runs her own firm.