Staci STYLE

Home | Fashion | Food | Lifestyles



Champagne Taste, Beer Budget Decorating

For anyone who has not quite caught on to me and my ways by now, let me enlighten you a little further … I am late. Like, chronically late. I don't mean to be! It's not that I don't care, that I'm lazy or that I don't plan well. It's just that somehow, time speeds up and the next thing I know, I have two minutes to get where I need to be, the party is the next day and everyone around me is missing a shoe, can't find a sock or has started a new science experiment that needs to be contained before we can even think about leaving the house or hosting a party!

Now, while arriving early to an event is something I will probably never be familiar with, arriving early to the holiday season is something I am a little better at planning for. However, all you people putting up Christmas trees at 12:01 a.m. on Nov. 1 need to get your heads out of the candy bag, come down off your sugar high and relax. You're stressing me out, people! I need a week or two to recuperate and change the tune in my head from "Thriller" to "Fa La La La La La La La."

With the last two holidays of the year fast approaching, and already knowing some of y'all are dragging your Christmas trees down from the attic, I figured now, though I feel highly unqualified, would be a good time to share a few tips and tricks of how I go about decorating for the holidays!

First of all, I am not a "buy it straight off the Pottery Barn page" kind of decorator. I'm more of a "think outside the box" decorator. Looking to Pinterest and Instagram for inspiration is great, but I learned years ago that these people must not be paying the same bills my husband and I are paying, because there was no way I was spending $300 on decorations that I could figure out how to make for a fraction of the cost!

My first real fascination with this idea came several years ago when I saw a glorified porch ghost made out of a sheet and a witch hat on Pinterest. The problem? It was $250.

Now, that didn't stop me from daydreaming about how cute this little porch ghost would look sitting on my front porch. In fact, I tried to justify the purchase for months before I eventually decided I liked being happily married more than I liked buying a $250 ghost. And while my will to have a cute fall porch was great, my husband's will to save the money was greater!

So, all that daydreaming led me to the only solution I knew: figuring out how to copycat this porch ghost on my own.

So, I walked my determined self down to our garage, where all our holiday decorations are stored, to see what I could find. Thirty minutes and a trip to the dollar store later, I had dragged out Nana's 1975 vintage snowman, set it on my front porch, covered it in a white sheet, pinned on eyes and a mouth made from felt and topped it with a witch hat that I have had since my high school years! Another trick to being able to decorate for any event or holiday – never throw things away … but also, I don't recommend this! So do as I say, not as I do.

To the average eye, I might as well have had a $250 porch ghost, when in reality – it cost me nothing but some black felt.

Everyone kept asking me how I thought to do it, and honestly, I have no idea. I've just learned to look at what I already have and try to figure out how to turn it into what I want. Sometimes all it takes is a little imagination, a little paint and the willingness to tear apart something you probably should have left alone.

When it comes to Christmas, I do much of the same. I look on social media for ideas and inspiration, then figure out the cheapest way possible to make them happen. Most people would be surprised to know that about 90% of my decorations have come from the dollar store, Dollar Tree, the craft aisle, Facebook Marketplace or my Nana's attic after she passed away.

Just this past week, even though I refuse to decorate this week or the next, I walked past a little tin Christmas tree at Dollar Tree that I thought would make the perfect addition to my mantel. The only problem was that it didn't quite match the vibe of everything else I've been collecting and using over the last few years.

So naturally, I bought it anyway.

I brought it home with a plan to paint it and make it into exactly what I wanted. After all, I have yet to run into anything that a bottle of paint and a tube of Rub 'n Buff can't fix. Though I haven't started this little project yet, I will be sure to share when I do.



Last year, I was looking at the trees on my front porch, which I picked up free at a rummage sale more than 10 years ago, and decided I really wanted new ones. However, to replace them with anything comparable in size and style, I would have been spending upward of $200. And that just wasn't something I was willing to do a few weeks before Christmas.



So, what did I do?

I asked Ryan to go cut some limbs off our cedar trees out back.

After trimming the limbs down, adding new lights to my old trees and stuffing the cedar branches into them, I suddenly had two brand-new-looking trees that would have made Martha Stewart proud. And the best part? It cost me absolutely nothing! The fresh cedar limbs lasted for weeks without any problems, and I got the look I wanted without spending a dime.

My son's Christmas tree was pretty sparse the first year we purchased it, and I couldn't decide what direction I wanted to go with decorating it. That same year, he had a racing-themed birthday party and was completely obsessed with Hot Wheels.

So, what did I do?

I tied strings around the Hot Wheels cars, stuck racing flags around the top, used the leftover cupcake toppers as ornaments, added some cheap red ornaments from Dollar Tree and, just like that, Ryder had himself a cute little racing-themed Christmas tree.

And honestly, that's one of my favorite things about decorating for the holidays. It doesn't have to be expensive, perfectly coordinated or pulled straight out of a magazine to be special. Sometimes the best decorations are the ones that come together with a little creativity and a whole lot of making do with what you have already.

So, if you're feeling stuck in the middle of all your early decorating and trying to figure out how to save a little money, don't be afraid to think outside the box. You might be surprised at what you can come up with using things you already have.

While y'all are busy preparing your Christmas trees and setting out your Santas, my porch ghost and I will be showing up late and dragging our feet until it's way past time for him to go up and for Nana's snowman to reclaim his rightful spot on the porch as himself!

I hope Thanksgiving finds each and every one of you blessed, rested and ready to take on the Christmas holiday. And remember, just because something looks like it costs $250 doesn't mean you have to spend $250 to make it happen.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have absolutely no intention of decorating anytime soon.

And, as most of you all know, that's just what I'm telling myself. I'll see you all in the Christmas aisle!









