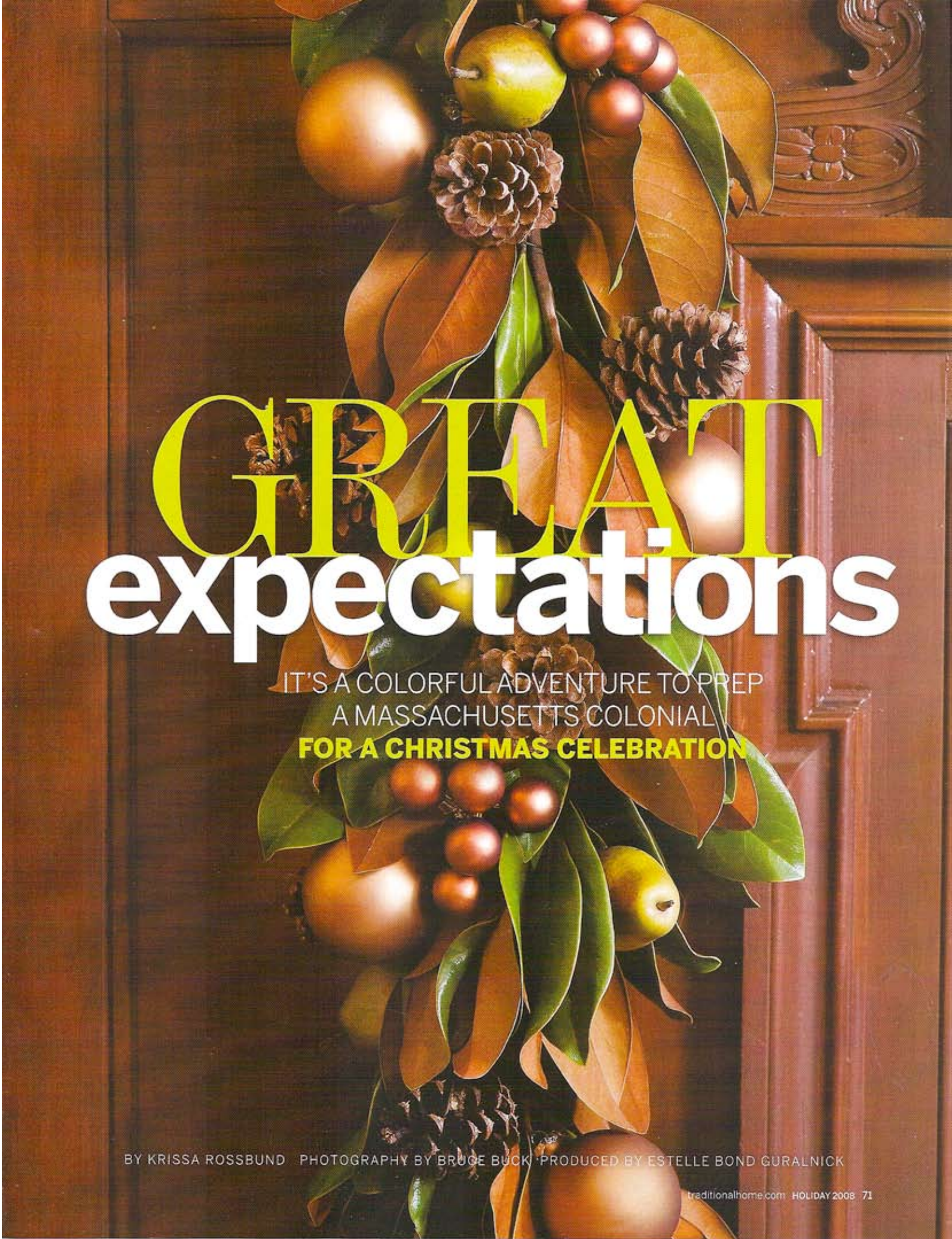

GREAT expectations

IT'S A COLORFUL ADVENTURE TO PREP A MASSACHUSETTS COLONIAL **FOR A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

BY KRISSA ROSSBUND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE BUCK PRODUCED BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK

The classic library, complete with built-in bookcases, exhibits a striking, dark-hued holiday garland on the mantel. **Opposite:** Peter and Catherine Malone with daughter Charlie, 15, and son Ian, 13. **Preceding page:** Magnolia leaves, pears, and copper-colored glass balls create the masculine library garland.

When Catherine "Cat" and Peter Malone bought a classic 1910 Colonial Revival house in Milton, Massachusetts, in 2005, they made the transaction with the understanding that grand festivities to celebrate the holiday season would be part of their almost 100-year-old new home's tradition.

Delighted to inherit a residence with such a gold standard, the Malones embraced the challenge of hosting a great celebration with gusto. Three years into their occupancy, the family's Christmas open house has become an eagerly awaited event among their family and friends. "We have about 150 guests," says Cat. "Some are friends from our new neighborhood, and others travel from Maine and Cape Cod."

Anticipating a design makeover—as most new occupants do—Cat and Peter recognized that whatever colors, fabrics, and furnishings were selected to beautify their home, ultimately jovial guests would be the final accessory, so comfort was essential. The structure itself, with generous rooms around a large central hall, already encouraged free movement from room to room.

The Malones called on Boston-area designer Gerald Pomeroy, who focused on aesthetic trimmings since the skeleton of the house was already packed with interesting architectural details and was in great shape. "The children plus a busy social life demanded

an unfussy, livable decor," says Pomeroy. "But I also wanted to reflect the couple's interest in antiques, art, and culture."

Recognizing that his plan should be youthful and sophisticated for the Malones—while tantalizing their guests with cheerful surprises—Pomeroy saturated the rooms with explosions of vibrant color that are intensified at Christmastime by fragrant greenery, sparkling ornaments, and bundles of fresh flowers. Local floral designers Daniel Lopez-Ospina and Jeb Taylor created decorations that are traditional, festive, and color-keyed to each individual room.

The living room palette gets straight to the point with intensely colored fabrics that pop against yellow walls. Linen in gold and coral follows the graceful curves of the window cornice. In front of the fireplace, facing loveseats are covered in an elaborate coral wool embroidered with a chinoiserie floral motif, and a pair of English Regency chairs are cushioned with silk stripes. The seating pieces share a cream-colored tufted ottoman, and an English carpet underscores the room's cheery warmth. The room's colors blend beautifully with the Christmas tree and with the neoclassical mantel that's dressed with fresh greenery, bowls of persimmons, and ruby-glass ornaments in crystal bowls.

The architectural envelope of original wainscoting, crown molding, fireplace surround, and crystal chandelier in the dining

The living room's rich palette reflects Cat Malone's affinity for fabric and color. The whole house showcases her vivid taste. **Opposite top:** In the sunroom, a pair of damask-covered ottomans slide underneath a bamboo console table when not in use. **Opposite bottom:** The sunny mudroom, with its brick floor, is softened by a Windsor bench with a plaid seat.

In the dining room, shiny gold raw silk descends in simple gathered panels at the windows, a lavish accent against vibrant coral walls. **Opposite top:** Fresh flowers are a colorful surprise in the dining room. Orchids fashioned into topiaries stand high on the mantel; other flowers are tucked among glass ornaments on the Christmas tree. **Opposite bottom:** The wide central hallway, with its pretty sofa and elaborate window treatments, provides additional seating during convivial holiday gatherings.

An array of patterns and textures keeps the master bedroom warm and cozy even though the blue-and-white color scheme leans toward the cool side. On the walls, subtle stripes in two shades of white offer a contrast to the fluid chinoiserie linen bedskirt and draperies. The mantel features greenery, pinecones, and glass balls that are casually interrupted by silver finials in varying heights.

Opposite top: A chair and ottoman at the window are upholstered in white-and-beige crewel and topped with a bright indigo mohair throw.

Opposite bottom: The Malones' 1910 Colonial Revival home is always on standby for a gathering.

room guided Pomeroy's choice of vivid color for the walls. The chinoiserie silk-on-paper in bright coral with lavender accents is positioned against moldings painted a warm beige. "The dining room is one of the most important rooms during the holidays," says Pomeroy. "Guests come here right after they've arrived, and the dramatic room communicates a sense of excitement." It's also in the dining room where guests are greeted by the Malone's biggest Christmas tree, one that is wrapped in tiny white lights and studded with small clusters of coral glass balls, larger gold balls, and fresh coral and gold Dendrobium orchids. The same flowers glow in an extravagant mantel decoration: a lush garland of the orchids interwoven with magnolia leaves.

The master bedroom's palette takes a quiet departure from the bold, warm tones of the public spaces. The bedroom Christmas tree, decorated with mercury glass and blue silk balls, stands in a white cast-iron garden urn.

Although they've only lived in the house a short time, Cat and Peter have created many memories. "I want my family to feel warmth, joy, and beauty with family and friends during the holidays but also in those moments with just the four of us."

Interior designer: Gerald Pomeroy

Floral designers: Daniel Lopez-Ospina and Jeb Taylor

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