blackberry visions

ROGER HIGGINS AND ANN SHIPP
BRING HOLIDAY MAGIC TO A BLACKBERRY FARM FAMILY RETREAT
blackberry Farm is downright bucolic year-round, but as the holidays approach, the resort property—located in the foothills of Tennessee's Smoky Mountains—is simply storybook enchanting.

"It's so magical here," Nashville-based designer Roger Higgins says. "You feel like you're in the middle of nowhere, and then you see this white picket fence. The angels start to sing, and someone hands you a pimento cheese sandwich."

The breathtaking setting and Southern hospitality no doubt helped persuade Higgins' clients to build their dream holiday home in these rolling hills. Living in Hong Kong at the time, the homeowners snapped up one of the first lots sold by Blackberry Farm for private residences.

Now living in Nashville and with children in college and high school, the family has established the retreat as their go-to Christmas getaway. Higgins, with his wife and design partner, Ann Shipp, was charged with the home's interior design and also with ensuring that it is in top form for the family's annual Yuletide gatherings.

The holiday headliner—taking advantage of VIP placement next to the living room fireplace—is a 12-foot Douglas fir embellished with a collection of ornaments that have been carefully handpicked over the years.

"They've been collecting ornaments for years, both while living here and in Hong Kong," Shipp says. "Every year the family makes a trip to Bergdorf Goodman in New York and orders a slew of ornaments. I think there must be 1,000 on the tree by now. It takes three of us a full day to take this tree down!"

"I usually believe that the simpler the holiday decorations, the better," Higgins adds. "But this tree is the antithesis of that. It's a piece of glitzy holiday artwork."

Beautiful on the most ordinary of days, the living room at Christmastime becomes an exemplar of holiday cheer. Neutral wool draperies with an oversize paisley pattern frame the towering fir. An unfussy, textural sisal rug and grass shades add warmth and balance to the glitzy extravagance. A quartet of pieces—a pair of

Entry A Biedermeier table feels right at home against limestone floors and steel doors. "Biedermeier pieces transition well to a contemporary interior," designer Ann Shipp says. "They're timeless and clean-lined." Exterior The newly built interpretation of a Tennessee mountain cabin perches on a hilltop overlooking Blackberry Farm's rolling hills. Preceding pages At the ready for chestnut-roasting, outdoor furniture from Niemann Weeks and McKimmon and Harris surrounds a fireplace of native stone punctuated with a simple fir wreath and magnolia leaves.
Modern art pairs perfectly with traditional elements, such as the Clarence House woven paisley draperies and a velvet-clad armchair from Rose Tarlow. Regarding the holiday decorating, designer Nopia Higgins says, "I don't like to use ribbons. Instead, I prefer to keep things natural with garlands incorporating subtle shades of green mixed with pheasants, boughs, and snowball berries."
DESIGN IS A GAME OF PROPORTION, COLOR, AND TEXTURE. SOMETIMES OPPOSITES ATTRACT, AND SOMETIMES YOU PUT LIKE THINGS TOGETHER.” —designer Roger Higgins
suede wing chairs, a velvet armchair, and a subtly patterned sofa—offer cozy seating for unwrapping gifts around the fire.

A sweeping, elaborate garland of ilex berries, magnolia, thyme, and eucalyptus leaves draws the eye to a clean-lined, Federal-style mantel, above which hang six paintings by Marc Chagall.

"They collect contemporary art," Higgins says. "The collection makes such a wonderful contrast to this casual, comfortable mountain setting."

In a dining room designed for fireside feasts, a black-and-white painting by Jean Dubuffet comes into focus against the room's commanding palette, creating a complementary focal point to magnetic views of Blackberry Farm's undulating hills spied through a wall of windows. A uniform shade of smoky-bronze-mets-deep-tobacco (Higgins loves colors that can't be described in just one word) dresses walls and trimwork, including the garland-draped fireplace mantel. A dollop of white, courtesy of amaryllis paired with magnolia leaves, adds holiday flair.

Dining room A medley of neutrals creates a space that begs for holiday gatherings. An Oushak rug and Great Plains' nubby linen on chairs amp up the cozy factor. Kitchen Antique tole lanterns, subway tile, and a walnut island with Calacatta Gold countertop highlight the best of farmhouse style. Myrtle topiaries and a simple fir wreath illustrate Higgins' less-is-more holiday decor mantra.
"There were two things here that we couldn’t compete with: that view and the art collection," Higgins says. "I didn’t want to distract from either, so we took our color cues from nature to create a background that highlights both."

In the master bedroom, distractions disappear altogether. A wool fabric in a smoky-gray hue is upholstered on the walls and highlighted by cream-tuq woodwork and a wormy chestnut ceiling. A tufted headboard, Fortuny pillows, and Bergamo bedding elaborate on a luxurious theme that feels equal to any four-star hotel yet still manages to remain full-on homey.

"Blackberry Farm has an identity that isn’t polished and lacquered," Higgins says. "We wanted this house to reflect that. There is a push and pull here that just feels warm and inviting." 

Interior designers: Roger Higgins & Ann Ship

For more information, see sources on page 117

Master bedroom A chandelier from Niemann Weeks and a large French armoire address the wormy chestnut ceiling’s lofty proportions. Valances in a Zoffany fabric camouflage blackout shades. Dressing area A Barbara Barry Realized by Herndon desk exudes elegance against grass-cloth-clad walls. The floor is Calacatta Gold marble. Bunk room A small-scale deer print on a Roman shade flanked by wool flannel curtains adds a cheery touch to sleeping quarters.
PAGES 92–101
BLACKBERRY VISIONS

**Architect:** Scott Harrop, formerly with Johnson Architecture, Knoxville, Tennessee; now with C.S. Harrop Architects, Knoxville, Tennessee; 865/363-6930; csharrop.com.

**Interior designers:** Ann Shipp and Roger Higgins, R. Higgins Interiors, Nashville; 615/297-9632; rhigginsinteriors.com.

**Builder:** Hickory Construction, Alcoa, Tennessee; 865/983-7856; hickoryconstruction.com.

**Landscape architect:** Ben Page, Page | Duke Landscape Architects, Nashville; 615/320-0220; pageduke.com.

**PAGES 92–93. PORCH—Sofas**
“Pavilion X Sofa”: McKinnon and Harris; mckinnonharris.com.

**Chairs** “Italian Dining Arm Chair”, **coffee tables** “Italian Coffee Table”: Niermann Weeks; niermannweeks.com.

**PAGES 94–95. ENTRY—Wall paint**

**Fabric for sheers** “Scrim” in Natural: Schumacher; fschumacher.com. **Biedermeier table:** homeowners’ collection.

**Mirror custom:** Herndon & Merry; herndonmerry.com. **EXTERIOR—**

**Architecture:** Johnson Architecture; jainc.com. **Construction:** Hickory Construction; hickoryconstruction.com.

**Landscape:** Page | Duke Landscape Architects; pageduke.com.


**Ceiling paint** “Teardrop”: PPG Porter Paints; ppgporterpaints.com.


**Sisal rug** custom: Designer Carpets; designer-carpets.net. **Chandelier** customized “Duveaux Chandelier”: Dessin Fournir; dessinfournir.com.


**Picture light** “Cabinet Maker’s Picture Light” in Bronze by E.F. Chapman for Visual Comfort: Circa Lighting; circalighting.com. **Dining table** “Early Georgian Dining Table”: Holland MacRae; hollandmacrae.com.

**Chairs** similar available: Dessin Fournir; dessinfournir.com. **Drapery panels** “Mulberry Home Crewel Linen”: Lee Jofa; leejofa.com.

**Chandelier custom:** Dessin Fournir; dessinfournir.com. **Framed artwork** by Jean DeBuffet: homeowners’ collection.

**KITCHEN—Cabinet hardware:** Rocky Mountain Hardware; rockymountainhardware.com.


**Island lanterns** antique “Italian Tole Lantern,” **floor runner** antique “Oushak”: homeowners’ collection.
Barstools discontinued, similar available as “Crescent”: Holly Hunt; hollyhunt.com.

PAGES 100-101. MASTER BEDROOM—
Cocktail tables discontinued, similar available as “Maci”: Interlude Home; interludehome.com. Sofa custom: Ferrell Mittman; ef-lm.com.
