

# HOUSE & GARDEN<sup>®</sup>

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SETTING THE SCENE... TWINKLING *tablescapes*,  
GLITTERING *winter gardens*  
and DAZZLING *decor*



ADVENTURES AWAIT

68 pages of travel inspiration from Paris to Peru





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# Season's eatings

Food writer MIMI THORISSON relishes the prospect of festive celebrations in her Turin home, where food and family come together

**B**ehind the tall doors of an 1870s palazzo in an elegant corner of Turin, French-Chinese cookbook author Mimi Thorisson has found what she calls her 'true home', which she shares with her Icelandic husband Oddur, her eight children and two dogs. Her bond with the city began unexpectedly when she was working on the book *Old World Italian\**, published in 2020.

'We were living in France but I needed a base in Italy, so we began taking road trips all over the country,' she recalls. 'One day, when I had flown back with the little ones, Oddur took a different route and ended up in Turin almost by accident. He called to say, "This city is incredible, we're coming back."' Within two weeks they returned, beguiled by its discreet charm and hint of French flavour.

After six years in a rented flat, the Thorissons decided to buy a permanent home there. The search was remarkably smooth. 'It was the first place we saw and I knew it was the one as soon as I set foot inside,' Mimi says. Overlooking a tree-lined boulevard, the sprawling flat offers distant views of the Alps and generous proportions ideal for family life and entertaining. 'It is large and bright, but what is >



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT The street view from the flat. Henri (left) and Vita by a 'Rivoli' daybed, from Square Garden Conservatories. One Vintage Christmas stockings, bought from Permanent Resident in Hong Kong. OPPOSITE Mimi with her children Gaïa and Lucian. The Mimi portrait is by Andrea Ferolla



\*OLD WORLD ITALIAN: RECIPES & SECRETS FROM OUR TRAVELS IN ITALY (PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE)



ABOVE FROM LEFT In the dining room with Henri; the vintage chairs are Gio Ponti's 'Superleggera' and the 19th-century print is French. Mimi in her custom-made Homewood kitchen. GRID CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW LEFT A Christmas red salad. *La torta di natale*. Mimi with Audrey. Roast partridges with persimmons



so wonderful is that nothing has been modernised. It feels lost in time and we feel so lucky to live here.'

The decoration unites the couple's sensibilities in a mix of antiques, flea-market finds and mid-century pieces that let the architecture speak for itself. 'Our inspirations are shaped by where we come from. I'm romantic and drawn to the gentle forms of period furniture, while Oddur loves the simplicity of Nordic minimalism,' says Mimi with a smile. 'I always joke there's a little conflict, but it's like a marriage – we find balance somewhere in the middle.'

At Christmas, the apartment fills with cooking aromas. 'We're a large family, which makes the season special. It's all about sharing and blending the traditions we come from.' In addition to France and Iceland, other places have left their mark. 'I grew up in Hong Kong and I have kept many of the British touches popular there. And now I'm so happy to have added Italian to the mix – there's nothing better than *tortellini in brodo* for a Christmas meal.'

The kitchen is Mimi's realm. 'I love a big table and feel quite at ease cooking for 16. But while I enjoy entertaining in the dining room, food somehow tastes better in the kitchen.' Her Christmas menu is distinctly French, and includes dishes tied to childhood memories, like a chestnut cake. 'When I was at school, I had a tube of chestnut and vanilla paste that looked like toothpaste. I'd squeeze it onto little buns and eat them after class.'

For Mimi, food and family are inseparable. 'My father adored food,' she says. 'He taught me to find the best flavours – the perfect duck, the best tripe – always as an expression of love. Cooking is how I express my affection and my memories. It all comes from the heart' □ Mimi's latest book, *A Kitchen in Italy: A Year of Family Meals and Celebrations from our Home*, is published by Penguin Random House, £30

SCAN HERE FOR MORE OF MIMI'S HOME, PLUS HER RECIPES FOR THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS FEAST



