

Saturday Meanderings



Our “fall” is now

What a week! Slowly the decorations are coming out and we will get our fresh tree this weekend. It’s a family tradition to get our main tree on or near my husband’s birthday. The goal is to have the tree up and decorated no later than next Tuesday. I know I am way behind other bloggers, but it doesn’t really matter because this is how we celebrate here at Bella Terra.

The Annual Christmas Painting



Our cat, Donovan

As you may recall, I started painting about five years ago (see post [here](#)). Each year I attempt a new holiday painting. Based on a wonderful photo, I painted our cat, Donovan. He is a stray Maine coon cat the girls found in the yard years ago and he is currently our only cat. After losing our very first cat, Tippy this year, I have an increased desire to capture our pets on canvas. If you follow me on Instagram (I hope you do!), you may have already seen this.

Two New Recipes

Chocolate Sourdough Babka Bread



Every Christmas, I replay the previous Christmases and holidays in my head. I feel blessed to have had many happy and joyous holidays from my childhood to now. Naturally there have been a few where loved ones are not there and occasionally my heart feels heavy from their loss. Lately, I have been

thinking of my Mom and Dad, who both passed away rather unexpectedly 5 years ago, 5 months apart.

But they were very good parents and they made our holidays extra special every year. Being of Polish decent, I recall some of the traditions and foods surrounding the holidays. With fond memories of babka bread, I realize that I have never made one.



Babka is a dense cake, although it looks a little like a bread. It's a sweet yeast dough filled with fudgy chocolate or cinnamon in layers and baked. It also sometimes has a streusel on top.



Rising in front of the fireplace

Since I am always looking for ways to use my sourdough starter discard, this recipe is a Chocolate Sourdough Babka with Streusel de Coco from Artisan Brian is perfect. You can see the recipe [here](#).



A 2-day recipe, but well worth the effort. Also, I have never braided bread before but this is a fun learning recipe with excellent results!

Aged Egg Nog



Have you ever heard of aged egg nog? I certainly haven't, yet my son brought up the idea at Thanksgiving.

Although most Americans think of eggnog as something they get out of a milk carton during the two-week period leading up to December 25, eggnog actually descends from sack posset, a strong, thick English beverage built upon eggs, milk, and either a fortified wine (like Madeira) or ale.



In this recipe, you must age it for a minimum of 2 weeks, but they say a month or two would be even better. We made this on November 24 and will drink it later this month. Made with eggs, sugar, fresh nutmeg, half-and-half, whole milk, heavy cream, Jamaican rum, cognac, bourbon and a bit of kosher salt, let's not count the calories!

It looks like it has lost a bit of volume (where would it

go?). We all tasted it before it went into the refrigerator and it is delicious. Should be interesting to see how it tastes 6 weeks later. Click [here](#) for the link to the recipe.

An Easy DIY Holiday Decorating Idea



As you know, plaids are all the rage this year. During a recent trip to Michaels, they had buy one and get one free rolls of wrapping paper. So I grabbed all the plaid ones and did this simple, easy and fast DIY.

Here is the chest in my family room, before.



And look how festive it looks now with minimal effort!



I simply wrapped the books with the plaid wrapping paper, changed out the wooden beads for silver ones (a necklace of mine) and added faux greens.



In setting up a small tree at the other end of the chest, I added small wrapped packages underneath too.



I hope to show you more of our holiday decorations (if I can get my act together) next week with a holiday home tour.

Thanks for the help



If you don't follow me on Instagram stories (I hope you do), I want to thank you for all the fabulous feedback on how to

improve upon my dining room mantel. My friend, Jeanne suggested adding fairy lights and that did the trick! Most voted against adding ribbon and I think that was the right choice.



So far, no fresh garland this year

Every year I order a 75 foot roll of fresh cedar garland. Unfortunately, this year none was available from my resource. So I am hoping when we pick up the live tree this weekend, there will be fresh garland to purchase. Important areas of the house are draped in garland and this may be a year that we go without.

Enjoy your Saturday and weekend. We had our first big rain here the other day and I am hoping and praying for more. If you missed any posts this week, see how I [clean our crystal chandeliers](#) and how to make [bleached pinecones](#).

Thank you so much for joining me today!

Mary