

Showstopping Holidays

When someone tells you they've attended an event or party that Showstoppers designed, their eyes light up. And, if you have ever seen their work, you smile knowingly. Their designs have pizzazz, like the Southwest Holiday Decor at the Whittaker residence. Recently, *Sedona Home & Garden* magazine had the opportunity to go behind the scenes as they were creating their magic.

SHG: Jim and Ken, tell us about the wreath you just installed. What is it made of?

JIM: The wreath is a very popular design here in the Southwest. It is made from serape fabric, and we've added cholla cactus wood, chili peppers and yucca pods. It's garlanded with Christmas greens, red ilex berries, and then it's tied together with silver conchos. We've also used young nopal cactus leaves called nopalitas. This is a special variety of cactus, without the stickers. We import them from Texas. The nopalitas indigenous to this area just don't last long enough. Next, we added a few pine cones. We have regular door size wreaths and can make them match, so you can put them on double doors. It's all really custom.

SHG: The wreath looks spectacular. But, that Cactus Christmas Tree is an eye-catcher.

KEN: We get a lot of compliments on the Cactus Christmas Tree. They're also made with the nopalitas prickly pear pods. Then they're topped with the chili peppers and wrapped with a leather, concho belt.

The mantle piece has a garland made with Christmas greens and Juniper Pine, complete with berries. We also added nopalitas cactus in the



Photo by Grant Evans

garland with the chili peppers and ilex berries for color and texture. Yucca pods add a nice touch as well. When we're done, the whole room comes together with a creative theme. So if you want a certain look in your house, it's all coordinated.

SHG: What brought you to Sedona?

JIM: We had been in business in Houston for 27 years. We started traveling all over the country doing corporate parties and a lot of trade shows in Las Vegas. We even designed projects for *Viacom* and *MGM* for the *National Association of Television Program Executives* exhibits in New Orleans. We realized that since we traveled so much anyway, we could live anywhere. We discovered Sedona going back and

forth to Las Vegas so much over the years, and decided this would be a great place to be. Now, we custom decorate parties and create theme events. We also co-ordinate with the resorts and local caterers. People in Sedona love to entertain with style, especially during the holidays.

SHG: You recently opened a retail store in Sedona.

JIM: Yes. We always had a retail store in Houston and when we came to Sedona, we missed the retail business. So now we have a store called *Nectar* in Tlaquepaque. *Nectar* is a fun, home décor store with a lot of natural elements and our own unique style. You can find very unusual, cutting-edge creative ideas for decorating. †