

Design

The Pet Project

Warm and Furry Holiday Theme Fills Mrs. Bush's White House

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Each December, blizzard or not, the White House is transformed into a holiday wonderland through the miracles of greenery, gingerbread and the dedication of staff elves. And each year, the profusion of ornaments, choice of color and official theme reveal something about the woman in charge. Holiday gloss remains a task assigned to the first lady.

This year the decor provides essential clues to the enigma that is Laura Bush. In her second Christmas at the White House, she has transformed not only the State Rooms but her own image. Last year's Texas Snow Queen—every tree and ornament was dusted with fake frost—has become the Nation's Nurturing Mom.

On Thursday Mrs. Bush wore a red suit to introduce her holiday theme, "All Creatures Great and Small." Right on cue, the clatter of paws sounded on the polished East Room floor. Barney and Spotty, the Bush family dogs, padded in to meet the press.

Spotty, an English springer spaniel descended from former first dog Millie, quickly crossed under the rope to sidle up to reporters. Barney, a 2-year-old black Scottish terrier, nuzzled a red velvet tree skirt before burrowing into a garland of pine cone-studded greenery

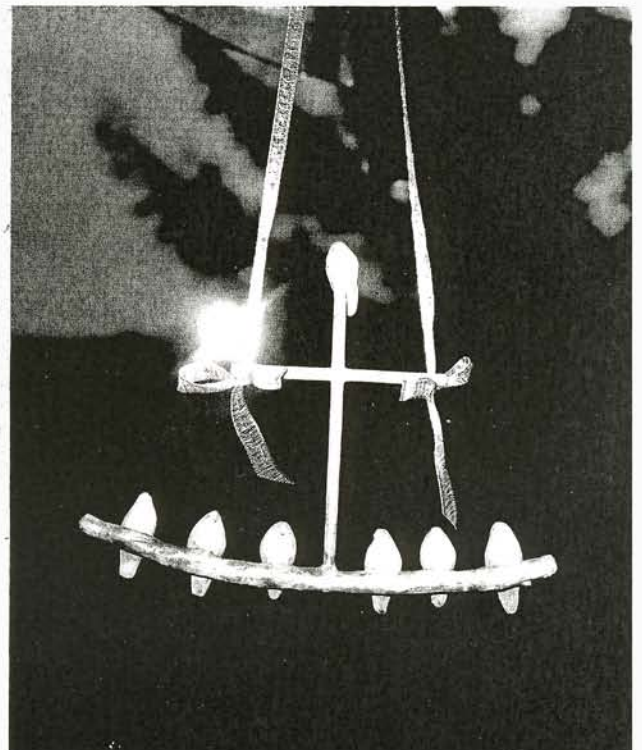


In her second Christmas at the White House, Laura Bush has transformed the mansion's holiday decor with the theme "All Creatures Great and Small."

trailing onto the floor. Come next week, Barney will don a minicam to provide a dog's-eye view of the decorations for the Web.

All traces of last year's chilly forest (49 spruce trees were decorated and dusted with 800 pounds of artificial snow) have been banished. In their

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With best wishes,

Laura Buel