

NOV. 2025



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



GRATITUDE, FAMILY, & A LITTLE TIME AWAY

Hi friends,

November has been a whirlwind, and honestly? It's made me realize that while I've been pouring everything into this business, some of my most important relationships have taken a back seat. The people who've always been there, my family and friends scattered across different places, they deserve more than quick texts, missed phone calls and postponed visits.

So I'm doing something about it.

Maarten & Croix will be closed for staging from December 20th through January 3rd while I spend time with family I haven't seen nearly enough of lately. If you need anything from me: consultations, staging, design work; please reach out now. Let's get ahead of it together.

But here's the thing about November that's really sitting with me: Thanksgiving has given me so much to think about. I am overwhelmingly grateful.

Grateful for the business I've built, yes. For the clients who trust me with their homes and their dreams of what's possible. For the other stagers in this area who could see me as competition but instead offer helping hands and generous spirits. For every single person who's supported a staging project or hired me for design work.

But I'm also grateful for something else, something that doesn't show up on an invoice.

I'm grateful for every person who's said, "Hey, I see you, and what you're doing is amazing." For the people who stop to say, "I can't wait to work with you someday." For the random compliment about a piece of art or a design choice. For everyone who acknowledges this work, this dream, this journey.

That matters more than you know.

WHEN YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DOING (BUT IT WORKS ANYWAY)

CASE IN POINT: THE BUSINESS CONFERENCE I DID THIS MONTH.

This was my second ever business conference or booth or whatever you want to call it. And if I'm being really honest, the first one was an utter failure. It was outside of a small brewery, freezing, and no one knew what my company was because I didn't know how to market it properly. I stood there for hours, watching people walk by, feeling completely invisible.

Only one person that I knew, aside from family, came to show support. You know who you are, and I hope you know that it meant the world to me, to drive all the way to Cary and show up for me in the very beginning... I will always be so grateful to you for that. Thank you.

So when this second conference came up, I really REALLY didn't want to do it. But I'm doing this thing where I don't say no to things that scare me just because I'm scared. So I signed up and hoped for the best.

I still wasn't sure what I was doing, but I came up with a plan: instead of a booth set up with staging stats and information like the first time, I'd create beautiful tablescapes. The idea was that these arrangements would naturally lead into conversations about my staging and design work. *If I can do this for a holiday table, imagine what I can do for your home.* And at the same time, they'd serve as the soft launch for something I'd been dreaming up: DIY holiday decorating kits. Purchasable links, helpful tips and tricks, everything you need to set the vibe for all your chilly holiday events from spooky October through the fall months and into winter. A potential new addition to what Maarten & Croix could offer.

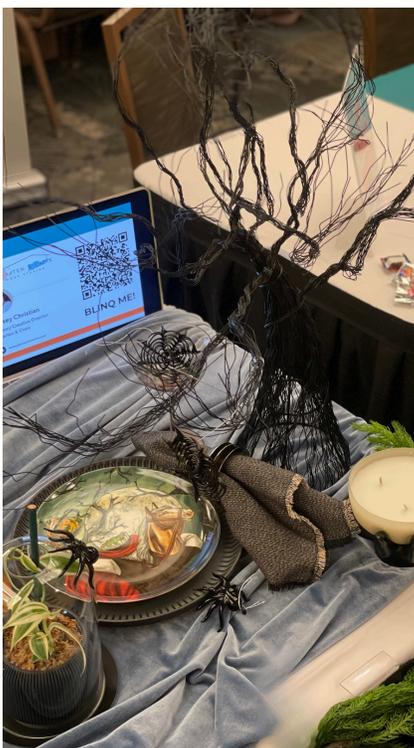
I stayed up until 2 in the morning the night before making everything come together, and then had to be at the event space for 7:30am. I was running on fumes and anxiety, honestly questioning every decision I'd made.

But somehow, miraculously, it all came together beautifully in those last few frantic hours. The decorated tables, the before and after slideshow of my staging work. It worked.

And then something unexpected happened.

The booth attracted a market I wasn't even targeting: business holiday decorating and events. Companies wanting me to do for them what I was showing people how to do themselves. I'm not sure Maarten & Croix will venture down that road, honestly. But what struck me was the doors that opened. The inquiries, the conversations, the new connections and relationships that materialized just from showing up and trying something new, even when I was scared.

Sometimes the best things happen when you're just figuring it out as you go.



THIS MONTH'S STAGING SPOTLIGHT



Speaking of unexpected blessings...I have to tell you about a home I just staged that absolutely captured my heart.

This wasn't just another listing. This was a soft landing spot for a family that needed a little healing. You could feel it the moment you walked in. The kind of home with a patina that whispers stories...stories about all the families it's sheltered over the years, the dinners around that table, the laughter in those rooms, the quiet moments of comfort when comfort was needed most.

When I first walked through, I'll be honest: I wanted to buy it myself. There was this warmth to it, this gentle presence that just wrapped around you.

But here's what made staging it so special: this home was ready. Ready to honor its history while stepping into something new. Ready to show the next family what it could be for them. It had given so much to the family leaving, and now it was time to offer that same promise to someone else.

That's what we do, really. We don't erase a home's story, we prepare it to welcome the next chapter. We honor what it's been while making space for what it will become.

Inspired by origins. Designed for new beginnings.

Literally.



PHOTOGRAPHY: BRAD BUNYEA



A LIL NOVEMBER CHALLENGE:

As we head into the chaos of the holidays, I want to challenge you to create one "soft landing" spot in your home.

A corner, a chair, a reading nook... somewhere that whispers "rest here" when you need it. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Maybe it's just a cozy throw on your favorite chair, a little shaggy rug to warm your feet on while you enjoy your morning tea.

Create a space that shelters you the way that home I staged has sheltered its families over the years. A space with warmth. A space that's yours.

You deserve that.

OR...

If you've already made your home perfectly cozy and perfectly *you* through some of my other challenges over the months, then try this one:

Reach out to one person you've been meaning to connect with but kept postponing. Not just a quick text but a real conversation. Tell them you've been thinking about them. It matters.



THIS YEAR HAS TAUGHT ME THAT BUSINESS AND RELATIONSHIPS AREN'T ALWAYS SEPARATE THINGS, SOMETIMES THEY'RE WOVEN TOGETHER.

AND AS WE HEAD INTO A NEW YEAR, I'M COMMITTED TO HONORING BOTH. TO BUILDING A BUSINESS THAT MAKES SPACE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO MATTER. TO DESIGNING BEAUTIFUL SPACES WHILE PROTECTING TIME FOR THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE MY LIFE BEAUTIFUL.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS. FOR YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT, YOUR TRUST. FOR SEEING ME.

HERE'S TO GRATITUDE, TO FAMILY, AND TO EVERYTHING STILL TO COME.

WITH WARMTH,
KELSEY