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SIMPLY CHARMING

Designer Nikie Barfield fashions a light and enchanting scheme within the walls of her vintage Decatur bungalow

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Photographed by Lauren Rubinstein

Guests who enter designer Nikie Barfield's mudroom are greeted by a Swedish-blue numbered cabinet from A. Tyner Antiques, which becomes a convenient drop-off location for personal items. A pale sky-blue paint color looks fresh above the whimsical wainscoting. *opposite* An upholstered ottoman from Acquisitions and custom linen wing chairs by Nikie Barfield Designs provide plenty of places to relax in the cozy family room, where texture is paramount. A beadboard closet door features dark hardware, a feature influenced by the home's 1920s roots, while a Swedish Mora clock from A. Tyner Antiques adds interest to the stairwell. The silk rug is from Fort Street Studio, New York.







Designer Nikie Barfield and her family found Decatur before it was a destination.

And their home, a 1920s charmer in the heart of town, might just be the happiest on the block. After moving to Atlanta from Raleigh in 1999, Barfield wanted nothing more than to find a home with intrinsic character, an attractive yard and, most of all, Tudor-style windows. As luck would have it, a work associate of her husband, Scott, happened upon a bungalow with exactly the features Barfield described. There was also a gorgeous stone fireplace, covered moldings and crystal door hardware installed by previous owners.

After six months of renovations in 2004, the couple had nearly doubled the home's square footage. And Barfield, at the time an immigration attorney, found a new calling in design. Soon, friends became clients, and clients became friends. Describing her style as "neutral and natural," Barfield has infused a light spirit into her own domain. Linen and creamware abound, cowhide swaths the living room floor, and textured surfaces reign paramount. If it's natural, it's included in the mix.

Ample gathering spots provide comfortable places to lounge on a Saturday, greet a guest, enjoy a meal, entertain or just chat on the phone. "My husband loves to sit in the living room and read. And one of my sons always ends up at the game table in the family room.

There are so many little nooks to retreat." The sense of serenity and softness is palpable throughout the space.

The kitchen is equally as welcoming—complete with a farmhouse sink, Roman shades, statuary marble countertops, and a butcher block that, surrounded by galvanized metal Marais chairs, becomes a rugged work space-cum-lunch spot. Meanwhile, a round, marble-topped number commands the breakfast nook. Upstairs, an entire master suite was formed from formerly unusable space, and now features steep, sloping ceilings and a dormer window. The adjacent bath features a winsome original window, clawfoot tub and an old-fashioned take on the vanity table.

Unexpected furnishings catch your eye in every room—a console snuck between a sofa and a wall, a demilune tucked behind a wing chair, a desk flanking the entryway, and a row of dining chairs aligned as a makeshift bench. It's these little surprises that make Barfield's rooms feel so unpretentious and real.

"I think of design as a deconstructive process," she says. "I never start with a floor plan and just plug stuff in. I tell my clients to find something they love, and that's where we'll start." With a finished product this beautiful, it's clearly a method that works.

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The Barfields' eat-in kitchen features statuary marble countertops from Bottega Stone, a porcelain farmhouse sink and simple Roman shades that filter in soft light. Glass-front cabinets provide a glimpse of her favorite china and creamware. *opposite, left to right* The formal living room capitalizes on the one feature Barfield couldn't live without: Tudor-style mullioned windows. Original hardwoods and a distinctive stone mantel add to the room's character. The wing chair is from Williams-Sonoma Home, and the white Bergère chair from Ralph Lauren Home. The equine painting is a Scott Antique Market find. In the dining area, vintage diner chairs, once covered in unsightly linoleum, are now upholstered in lovely linen. Barfield aligned three to craft a makeshift bench. The egg prints were among the first items she purchased for the home, from friend and framer Marie Mealor of Marie Mealor & Associates.





“ One of my big design mantras is balance. I always try to ensure I’m not using too much of one style or another. I think that’s what keeps a home looking fresh and feeling good. It’s also about falling in love with something, whether it’s the design or the way it touches you, and finding a way to incorporate that piece into your house. ”

—Nikie Barfield

The master bath pays tribute to the house's 1920s roots. An Elizabethan Classics clawfoot tub, accented with a Perrin & Rowe fixture, is tucked elegantly under a picture window, while a marble-topped vanity table lends an old-fashioned feel. *opposite, left to right* After an extensive renovation, the Barfields transformed a formerly unused upstairs space into the master bedroom of their dreams. They played up the sloped walls at the peak of the house to create an alcove for a four-poster bed and added a new dormer window by the reading nook. Art Deco fixture from Lamp Arts Inc. Mercury glass lamp from Circa Lighting. Bedding by Ralph Lauren Home. Beadboard paneling and white subway tile add charm and depth to the master bath. A pulley-style pendant from Pottery Barn, accordian-style mirrors from Restoration Hardware and an extended-arm rain shower head from Newport Brass at Ferguson Enterprises add to its sense of airiness. The sinks are Memoirs Classic by Kohler.

