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* *Brilliant* entertaining ideas!



Text by **LISA MOWRY**
Photography by **LAUREN RUBINSTEIN**
Styling by **ANNETTE JOSEPH**



Birds made of silver or weathered stone are year-round accessories that also fit nicely with a holiday look at the Barfield house. The moss wreath over the limestone fireplace can be reused year after year.

All is Calm

A Decatur family celebrates the holidays with understated elegance.



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Sitting Pretty

Nikka, who does some interior decorating on the side, is a fan of bench seating for dining rooms. "Not only can a bench be tucked under a table for a clutter-free room, but it just gives a more interesting look than all matching chairs," she says. An oversized clamshell, a splurge at the Scott Antique Market, spurs creativity in plant combinations. (To fill, Nikka lines the shell with plastic wrap, then adds dirt and plants.)



NIKIE BARFIELD HAS NOTHING AGAINST big red bows or holiday ornaments in psychedelic colors, but they're just not her style. Ever since college, she's preferred neutrals. For her, furnishings, accessories, and art in soft tones of cream, white, and taupe are a perfect backdrop for holiday decorating that's more about nature than lots of bling.


"I'm always looking for contrast," says Barfield, who loves the look of crisp green against her white furnishings.

This immigration lawyer and mother of two leads a busy life, making a tranquil house all the more necessary. She and her husband Scott were attracted to the 1920s Tudor-style cottage in Decatur



Nikie talked Boxwoods Gardens & Gifts into selling the marble-topped table, above, which was not for sale. "Some pieces just speak to me," she says. "I joke that I'm like the 'furniture whisperer.'" Above left, Nikie displays a mismatched collection of paper buildings and trees on a platter.





Deck the Halls

Nikie and Scott hang garlands along the stairway that leads to the bedrooms. The sunny walls in the family room are a cheerful contrast to the Swedish-style clock and slip-covered furniture. A demi-lune table holds a large ceramic vessel that Nikie often uses as a planter.

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because of its architectural charms, the diamond-pane windows, arched doorways, and a limestone fireplace. Once sons Everest and Rainier came along, the Barfields built a two-story addition off the back and filled it with more of Nikie’s favorite things: slip-covered furniture, classic antiques, and her trademark plants. (“I’m obsessed with planters and plants,” Nikie confesses.)

Her white slip-covered furniture often leads to questions, since she has two boys. Nikie insists that, if anything, she’s more on top of smudges and stains because she can see them against the white, then wash them immediately.

Juniper garlands and more than a hundred paperwhite plants placed in antique containers provide the backdrop for Christmas decorating at the Barfield house. For the tree in the family room, Nikie selected ornaments in silvery tones. “I try to pick things that are timeless,” she says, going for stars and snowflakes, as well as vintage-looking balls. Birds made of silver or weathered stone are year-round accessories that also fit nicely with a holiday look that is as peaceful as it is charming. H

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Family Quarters

Nike recommends noble fir for Christmas trees. "This one was dense and seemed to last forever," she says of last year's tree in her family room. The cozy retreat opens space with her open kitchen. Old-fashioned touches like marble counters and glass-front cabinets, painted pale blue inside, add vintage charm. Opposite, an antique scale adds a fitting touch.