



# House of Tranquility



Elegant but practical, this Atlanta home makes sheltering a busy young family look effortless.

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Homeowner Nikie Barfield collects antique ironstone and Wedgwood, *left*, for its graceful lines and creamy sheen. Slipcovers in light solid-color fabrics, natural textures, and plenty of plant life, *this page*, are the elements of Nikie's laid-back look.



If anyone could use a good rest, it's Nikie Barfield. She's a lawyer, wife, mother of two energetic young boys, and part-time interior decorator. At the end of a hectic day, calm is what she craves. Luckily, her house delivers.

Friends call the 1920s Tudor-style cottage that she and her husband, Scott, recently renovated “the house of tranquility,” and they're right-on. Inside its airy framework of pale-color walls, crisp white trim, and honeyed wood floors, Nikie mixes shapely antique furniture with comfortable slipcovered sofas and chairs in rooms that say “sit down, rest, and breathe.”

Slipcovers—besides being a must for civilized living with kids—are the centerpiece of Nikie's easy, elegant look, allowing her to wrap the traditional-style pieces she loves—wing chairs, chaises, club chairs—in a layer of casualness that's right for how her family lives. (“If they get dirty, I just wash them,” Nikie says.) Having a custom cover made is less expensive than replacing upholstery or buying new furniture, she reasons. Flaxy linen, ivory matelassé, and off-white cotton duck are her fabric picks for their affordability, durability, and unfussy look.

Equally down-to-earth are Nikie's favorite accessories: house plants. Ferns and palms add life, texture, and a wallop of



green to every tabletop and corner. Nikie tucks them in antique crocks, ironstone tureens, even a giant clamshell. Something about the contrast of ruffly green with smooth white strikes a harmonious chord for Nikie, and tending the plants is a pleasure, not a chore. “I don't think I could deal with not having my plants,” she says.

In fact, everything about the house encourages living things to thrive. A two-story addition orients the family room, kitchen, and breakfast room toward the backyard, where sons Everest and Rainier have their tree house. The family room walls—broken up by French doors and banks of windows left undraped—aren't so much walls as membranes for the free flow of air, light, and kids.

Nikie is known to throw open those doors in the midst of a crazy day and just stare at the green. “I would live outside if I could,” she muses. In this bright and sunny house, full of comfortable places to sit, easy-breathing fabrics, and pockets of green, it seems she has the next best thing.

1. The distinctive diamond-paned windows of this cottage in Decatur, Georgia, caught Nikie's eye.
2. Nikie and Scott Barfield in their backyard with 8-year-old Everest and 4-year-old Rainier.
3. Country, Swedish, and French provincial—Nikie's favorite styles—are represented in the dining room furniture.
4. Statuary marble countertops and glass-front cabinets backed in robin's egg blue make the new kitchen gleam.
5. Nikie likes the versatility of benches and stools. She uses a pair as a coffee table.



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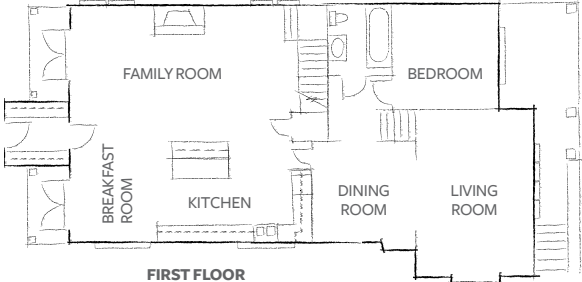
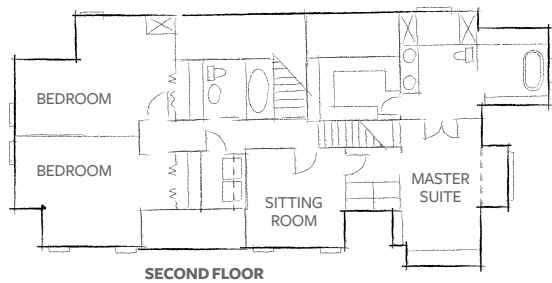
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“When I close my eyes and think of my house,  
I think of a fern in a big ironstone bowl.  
The green and white is so beautiful to me.”

Nikie Barfield



Warm yellow walls and generous seating make the large open family room feel cozy. Nikie has turned the narrow wall behind the sofa, *right*, into a snapshot of her style: neutral colors, hints of brown and metallic, and plants.



A two-story addition at the back of the house doubled its square footage and gave the Barfields a new family room, kitchen, and breakfast room—all in one large space divided only by a 5 1/2-foot-wide wall. They also relocated the master bedroom upstairs, added a bathroom, and tucked twin bedrooms for their sons under the eaves.



“I like color, but not bold color. Color evokes strong emotions, and I want my house to feel calm.”

Nikie Barfield



1. A pair of French doors and a bumped-out mudroom connect the breakfast nook and family room to the outdoors. Nikie found the farm table while browsing Atlanta's popular Scott Antique Market. "Buy what you love and you'll find a place for it," she advises.

2. The master bathroom, with its steeply pitched ceiling, beaded board walls, and vintage-style fixtures, shares the look

of the original house.

3. "I love the versatility that slipcovers add to a room," Nikie says. She uses them to unify, relax, and soften all the upholstered furniture.

4. Remodeling—during which the whole family shared a single bedroom and went without a kitchen—netted Nikie and Scott a new upstairs master suite. Nikie adds a touch of red in a pillow and rug to kick up the neutral scheme.

