

# cottage style

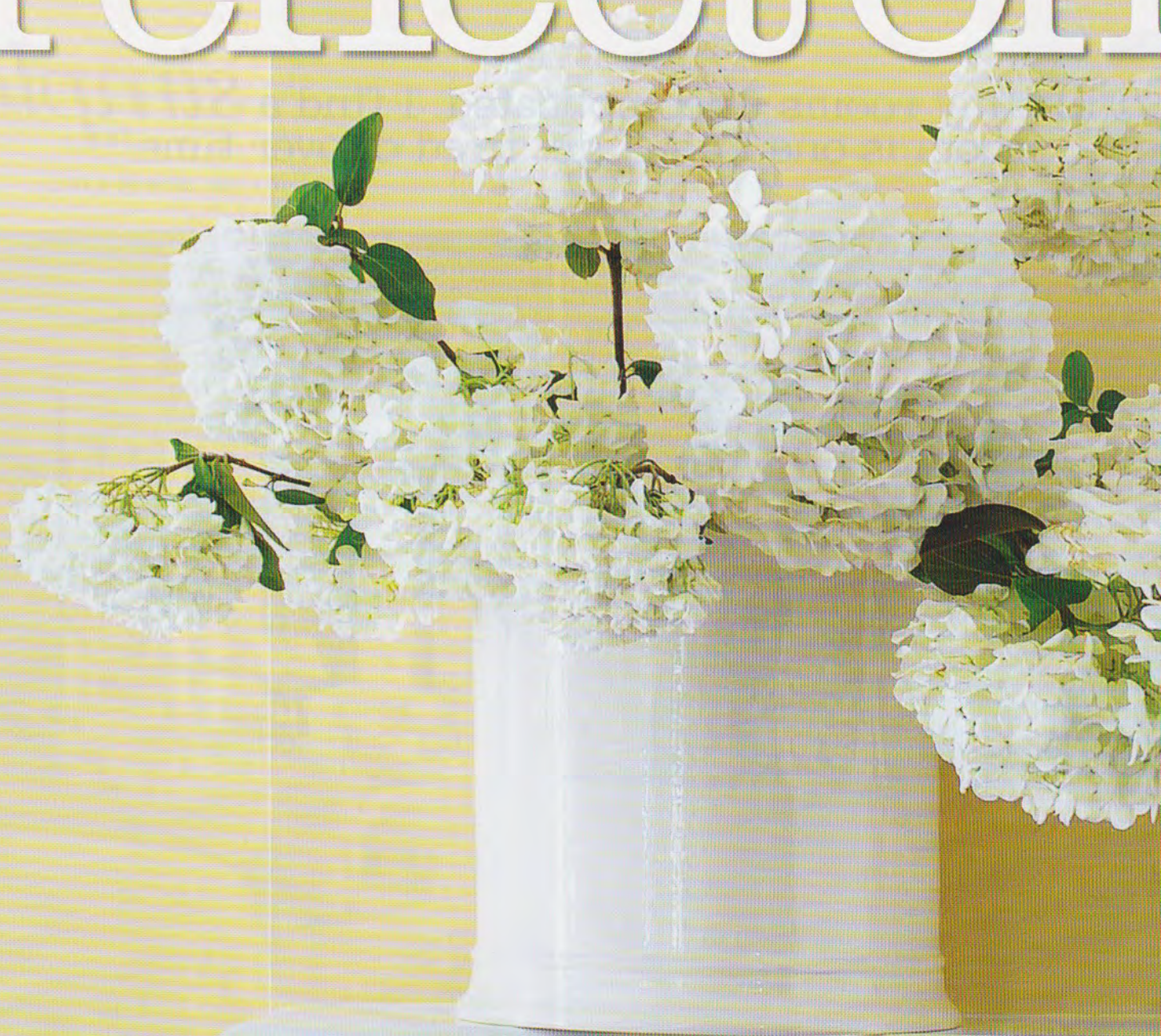
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# romance

Your surroundings—sweet, sensuous, or sublime—can thrill your heart and soothe your soul. Emulate these alluring havens and fall in love with your home all over again.





OPPOSITE: An eclectic mix of Swedish, country, and French provincial furniture in soothing white calms the casual dining area that connects kitchen and family room.

# serene scene

Soft color and a relaxed decorating style endow a family-friendly bungalow with easy elegance and tranquillity.

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## *From the outside, this*

Decatur, Georgia, home is as picturesque as a storybook cottage, with its steeply pitched and curved rooflines, brick walls, and diamond-pane windows. Inside, the beautifully renovated house envelops Nikie and Scott Barfield and their two young sons in a sea of calm. Friends call it the house of tranquillity. The key to the home's soft, romantic interiors—designed by Nikie, a lawyer and part-time interior decorator—is a serene mix of pale colors, natural textures, and lots of leafy green plants.

Arched doorways, pillared fireplace surrounds, and distinctive windows give the 1920s Tudor-style house character and provide the framework for the decorating style. Abundant wood moldings and trim are painted a crisp, unifying white that gently contrasts with the honey-color wood floors. Nikie painted the walls soft shades of cream, white, and buttery yellow. "I like color, but not bold color," she says. "Color evokes strong emotions, and I want my house to feel calm."

The well-proportioned rooms are furnished with antique furniture. Light, solid-color slipcovers wrap elegant wing chairs and chaises, relaxing and softening the traditional upholstered shapes. The result is an air of ease and unfussy practicality. "I love the versatility that slipcovers add to a room," Nikie says. She chose flaxen white linen, ivory matelassé, and off-white cotton duck for their good looks and durability.

Against this soothing, neutral backdrop, Nikie layered subtle color and texture with accents of seashells, woven rugs, carved wood, flowers, and her collections of pottery and plants. "When I close my eyes and think of my house, I think of a fern in a big ironstone bowl," she says. "The green and white are so beautiful to me." Nikie tucks plants into every room, containing them in antique crocks, ironstone tureens, and even a giant clamshell. She says tending the plants is a pleasure, not a chore.

The whole family takes pleasure in the way the house relates to the larger green space of the landscaped yard. A two-story addition, with banks of windows and French doors, connects the indoors to the outdoors and orients the main living spaces toward the backyard. There, 8-year-old Everest and 4-year-old Rainier play in a tree house while Nikie revels in the sunshine and fresh air. "I would live outside if I could," she says. Her home's fresh decorating style is the next best thing.

The spacious family room opens to the outdoors, while sunshine warms the soft yellow walls and crisp white slipcovered furniture.





“Buy what you *love*, and you’ll  
find a place for it.” —NIKIE BARFIELD, HOMEOWNER







OPPOSITE LEFT: The renovated kitchen, with white-painted cabinets and statuary marble countertops, is in keeping with the age of the house. Painting the backs of the glass-front cabinets robin's-egg blue highlights the dishware displayed within. OPPOSITE RIGHT: Mix-and-match white and cream tableware from Nokie's extensive collection combines for a charming tabletop. ABOVE LEFT: A chandelier casts romantic light in the master bedroom. The four-poster's rich wood stands out against light walls and linens. ABOVE RIGHT: The bathroom's vintage-style pedestal sinks and light fixtures fit the look of the original house, built in the 1920s. Beaded board covers the walls and steeply pitched ceilings.