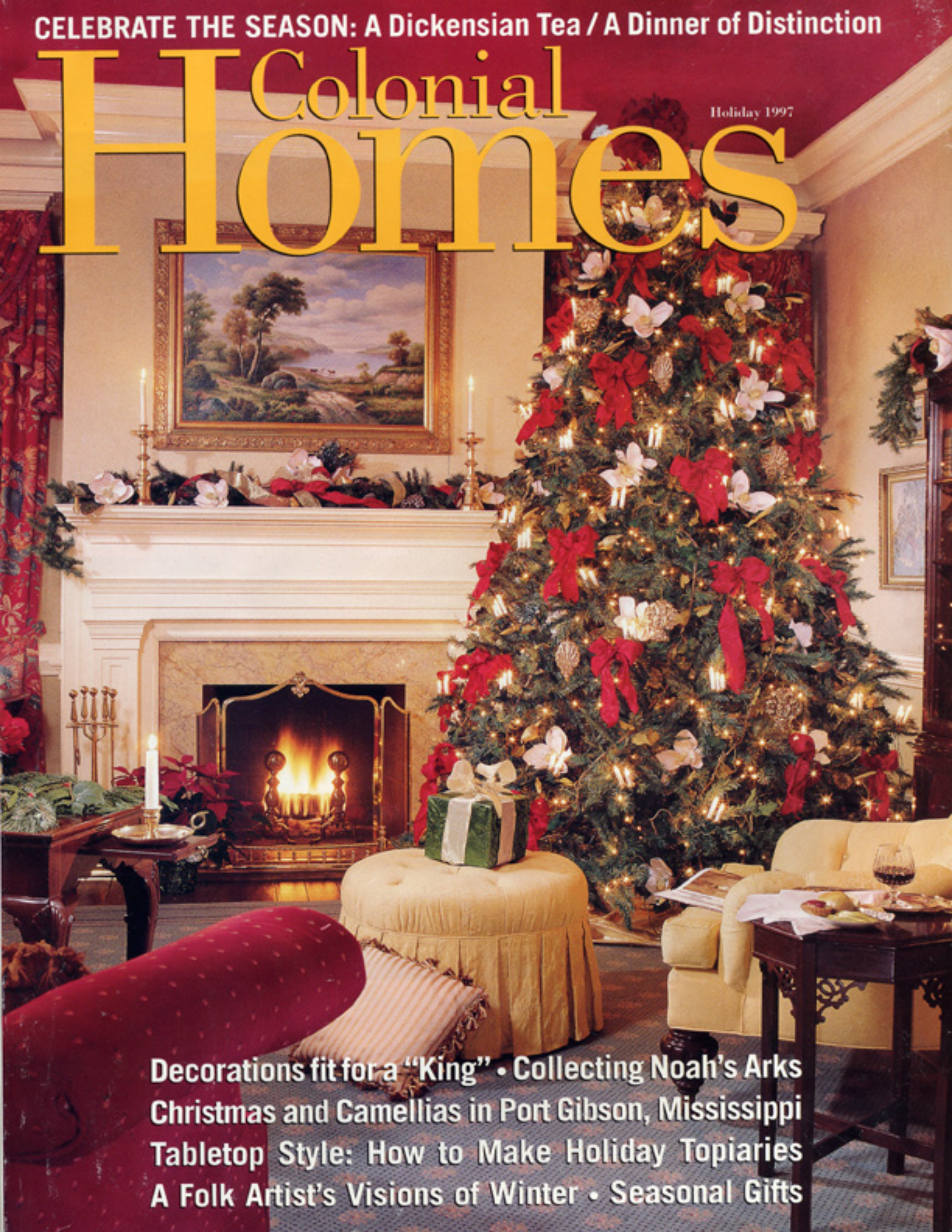


CELEBRATE THE SEASON: A Dickensian Tea / A Dinner of Distinction

Colonial Homes

Holiday 1997



Decorations fit for a "King" • Collecting Noah's Arks
Christmas and Camellias in Port Gibson, Mississippi
Tabletop Style: How to Make Holiday Topiaries
A Folk Artist's Visions of Winter • Seasonal Gifts

During the holiday season, fir garlands, made by aptly named local landscaper Marshall Garland, are decorated and draped on the staircase in the foyer, the library balcony, and most of the fireplace mantels. "Holiday decorations allow for the introduction of new colors to the house, such as the burgundy velvet bows in the garlands," explains Nilsson. Topiaries and bowls filled with glass ornaments decorate many tables throughout the house. For holiday meals, the dining room table is trimmed with silver-and-gold roping and beaded ornaments. There is no tablecloth; the table has a wonderful shine, and the ornaments have a gem-like quality. "My goal was to continue the elegant style of the home," says Kathy McLennan, an associate with Nilsson's company who worked with the designer and the owners to decorate for Christmas.

Guests begin to feel the gentle interplay of refinement and warmth as they make their way along the elliptical driveway to the residence. In front of the house, landscape architect John Broadbooks of Asheville devised an elegant circular garden anchored by a large urn topped by an armillary. During the holidays, the façade of the house is accented with lights and windows are adorned with wreaths. Guests are warmly greeted by the owners who love to entertain and believe that being with family and friends is the perfect way to celebrate the holidays. ❧



ABOVE: In a guest bedroom, a Bailey & Griffin fabric adorns the canopy bed from Baker and is used for the window treatment as well. A Mottahedeh lamp base accented with a shade custom designed by Susan Nilsson stands atop a French ormolu-decorated table.

LEFT: The design of the master bedroom reflects its role as a refuge for the owners. Draperies are in a fabric from Bailey & Griffin. Schumacher fabrics cover the sofa and chairs. The painting is by Tucker Cooke, head of the art department at the University of North Carolina, Asheville.

FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES





stant interplay between me and my clients," explains Nilsson, who has been friends with the wife since the early 1980s. "The wife loves crystal and beautiful things, but the designer has to know how and when to edit. This was the key element in our working relationship." The two women made many trips to High Point, North Carolina, and Atlanta, as well as other cities with design centers, to select furnishings. Antique rugs and grand chandeliers in the dining room, master bedroom, and foyer are opulent, but family heirlooms and collectibles add warm personal touches. A series of 18th-century English architectural prints, from the book *Vitruvius Britannicus*, covers the wall above the staircase in the foyer. "We chose them to create a focus for that large blank wall," says Nilsson. They also are a sign of the owners' great love for architecture.

Inspiration for the house's color scheme came from a wallpaper sample the designer showed her clients. One result is the pale yellows of the foyer and living room. "I convinced the owners to introduce yellow into their home because it's timeless," says Nilsson. Soft blues are found in the kitchen, master bedroom, and a guest bedroom. Pale blue vines trail through the wallpaper in the dining room. "The paper has a traditional feeling, with Oriental flair. That's always a good look for Georgian-style interiors," says Nilsson.

ABOVE: A wall of windows in the library is embellished with wrought-iron details. Woodform of Hendersonville, North Carolina, crafted the mahogany paneling. Draping the balcony is a garland of Fraser fir. The sofa, chair and ottoman, and coffee table are from Baker. A Stroheim & Roman damask covers the Queen Anne wing chair. The rug is a Turkish Hereke.

RIGHT: The kitchen features cabinetry custom crafted by Woodform and countertops of Dupont Corian. The 11-foot-long work island has a granite top, a Jenn-Air grill, and a Dacor cooktop. The light fixtures are from World Imports.





THESE PAGES: Open to the living room, the dining room is set for Christmas dinner with Royal Worcester's "Holly Ribbons" china, Wallace silver in the "Kings" pattern, and Lenox crystal. A holiday gift wrapped in silver paper awaits each dinner guest. Queen Anne chairs with Scalamandré damask-upholstered seats ring the mahogany dining table by Stickley. The flowers are from Clements of Asheville, North Carolina. Decorations on the table include silver and cobalt blue glass balls, gold-and-silver roping, strings of pearls, and beaded Christmas ornaments placed in silver-painted terra-cotta candle holders. A crystal chandelier by Schonbek shimmers above the setting. Fluted pilasters grace the walls, which are covered in a floral wallpaper from Brunschwig & Fils. Above an antique Empire chest is a mirror with a gilded Greek-key design frame. On top of the chest are pieces from the owners' antique silver collection. The windows have been left unadorned to allow natural light into the room.



torically correct way," says the wife. "He even created his own tools to make the molding around the front door." Lighting was installed to cast soft spotlights on the owners' collections, which include silver, glass paperweights, and leather-bound books.

In the midst of all these details were the owners' requirements for comfort. The master bedroom, for example, had to accommodate a large seating area. "They spend a lot of time there," says Nilsson. "It's where the wife relaxes to read the paper, and it's where the couple gather strength for the next holiday party."

The owners have always been partial to traditional design and the grand scale of the house allows them to include the furnishings and art they have always admired. A native of Charleston, South Carolina, the wife grew up surrounded by elegant antebellum homes, making it easy to understand her love of plantation-house styles. The husband, a private investor, acquired many antiques from his grandmother and great aunt. The couple's travels in the United States and abroad also influenced their tastes. During a visit to the Frick Museum in New York City, they admired a particular ornamented ceiling, which they then had copied for their living room. Nilsson adds that she and her clients gathered many ideas from visits to the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina.

The interiors created by Nilsson and the owners complement the architectural details. "There was con-



the second. A lower level includes an office, second kitchen, recreation room, and storage areas.

The house plan is a Georgian Revival design with elaborate decorative elements. The stucco-and-brick façade is accented with a portico supported by Corinthian columns. In the foyer, Ionic columns support a semi-circular balcony overlooking the front door. The Honduran mahogany-paneled library features a wall of windows and a reading balcony. The dining room also has a barrel ceiling. Crown moldings, ornamented ceilings, and decorative fireplace mantels throughout the house enhance the opulent traditional look. "My main passion is woodwork. And I wanted every room to be a little different," says the wife.

The original house plans, which took about a year to complete, were constantly refined by a team that included the homeowners, the architect, interior designer Susan Nilsson, and contractor C. Ronald Wilson. "We met every Tuesday and hammered out details like the millwork, flooring, and lighting," says Nilsson, who also created the interiors for the owners' previous home. Several patterns of wood flooring were designed so that each room would have a distinctive look. A solid-oak lattice-patterned floor decorates the foyer. In the living room, the floor is accented with teak inlays, while the floor in the hall features a herringbone pattern. The hand-turned balusters of the stairway in the foyer were made by craftsman Timothy Johnson of Franklin, North Carolina, who also created some of the millwork in the rest of the house. "He designs in a his-



ABOVE: Sunlight streams into the living room and adds brightness to pale yellow walls. The dentiled cornice molding and ornamental ceiling are two of the wife's favorite architectural details in the house. The black granite fireplace surround is highlighted by a mantel painted with "Dove White" from Benjamin Moore. The mantelshelf features an array of gilded pinecones, gold beads and roping, gold and burgundy balls, and velvet ribbons. The oil painting of waves breaking on the sea is signed by A. Beaumont. The sofas are from TRS Furniture. A pair of Chapman lamps rests on end tables from Baker. Draperies in a Stroheim & Roman yellow damask fabric are suspended from ebonized and gilded rods from Manor House. **OPPOSITE ABOVE:** Atop the coffee table from La Barge are antique leather-bound books from the husband's collection, sterling silver goblets, and a Steuben glass compote dish resplendent with gold balls.



*Photography by Gordon Beall
Produced by Docetta S. Sperduto
By Diane DiPiero*

Deck the Halls in High Style

The holiday season is a busy time at this Georgian Revival-style house in the mountains of western North Carolina. A large party for the owners' family and friends is held prior to Christmas. Dinner for the immediate family on Christmas Eve is followed by brunch the next day with relatives. Finally, a gala on December 31 rings in the New Year.

This custom-designed three-year-old house is perfect for such gracious gatherings. A 24-foot ceiling in the entrance foyer extends an elegant welcome to visitors. The library, with its equally high ceiling, accommodates a 13-foot-tall tree decorated with ornaments the couple have collected during their 22 years of marriage. A circular traffic pattern from living room to dining room to kitchen provides easy orienta-

tion for guests and easy access for the host and hostess. "There's no place where you can get a bottleneck," says the very pleased wife. A commodious kitchen with an 11-foot-long work island facilitates food preparation.

Spaciousness, openness, and elegance were three of the owners' top requirements when they met with their architect, Mike Freeman, of Padgett & Freeman in Asheville, North Carolina. "We started to feel claustrophobic in our old house," says the wife. "It seemed that the bigger our kids got, the smaller the house got." (The couple has two children, ages 16 and 19.) Freeman's plan for the 9,000-square-foot house includes a foyer, living room, dining room, solarium, library, kitchen with walk-in pantry, and guest bedroom on the first floor; with children's rooms, a master bedroom with his-and-her dressing rooms, and an exercise area on

OPPOSITE: Modified Ionic columns and a patterned red oak floor establish a stately look in the foyer. Garlands of fir, magnolia blossoms, gold balls, beads, and rope adorn the staircase with its mahogany banister and hand-turned balustrade. Antique Turkish rugs run along the stairs. An arrangement of 18th-century architectural prints decorates the stair wall. A pair of 18th-century Chippendale chairs creates a seating area below the staircase. Antique trays decorate the wall. The motorized chandelier lowers for cleaning.

ABOVE: The triple fanlight over the entrance permits more natural light into the foyer. The black paving stones of the porch and walk intersecting the elliptical driveway are brick bordered.