

**Notes of Drama.** Janie says that the charcoal gray walls envelop the music room "with wonderful drama." She draped both ends of the room in a sheer charcoal fabric that is the same color as the walls so that "you could close off the windows and the cased opening to the kitchen for that private intimate setting during a dinner party."



# EASY ELEGANCE

European influences meet Southern style in this charming Georgia townhouse.

By Shelby Deering  
Photography by  
Styled by Janie Hirsch

**Perfect Pair.** On each chair, orange throw pillows add just the right amount of color. Janie advises, "don't be afraid of color, whether light or dark. Use a light to medium color throughout your home, and it can become the neutral backdrop to everything else. You can let the fabrics and artwork become the accents."





Upon walking into a distinctively Southern home, there's almost always a sense of ease, warmth and hospitality. Bring that together with classic European design details, and you'll have this timeless Marietta, Georgia-based home.

The interiors were designed by Janie Hirsch, president and interior designer at her firm, J. Hirsch Interior Design. Calling upon her nearly three decades of experience, Janie designed the home from the ground up over the course of a year, personally selecting "every detail and finish, including all of the cabinetry, trim work and lighting, along with furnishings, drapery and artwork."

"It is always fun and exciting when a designer is able to design a complete project," she says. When it comes to the goals of the endeavor, Janie explains that she wanted to

"create a welcoming and comfortable home that displayed the original artwork, had a space for the piano and allowed for entertaining." Working with award winning Atlanta-based builder, Hedgewood Homes, she managed to make room to every item on her wish list.

### ***Romantic Inspiration***

The home incorporates design styles across various eras and regions. Starting with the idea that the home "needed to have mostly light colors to keep the spaces bright, along with a bit of drama," Janie landed on Sweden and France as sources for inspiration and merged them with Southern traditions. "I always think of Swedish and French décor to be similar in some respects, almost as if they are cousins," she says.

**Cozy Gatherings.** A working fireplace adds a touch of warmth to the keeping room. Janie's goal was for the fireplace to look old and well-used, so the brick was covered with a mortar-type product called PastelCote before painting. "This provided a different texture than what you usually see on a brick fireplace," she explains.

**Peace & Quiet.** A soothing spot rendered in gentle tones, pops of pattern are brought in through the throw pillows and rug. Two small metal and wood bunching tables can be easily moved to suit varying needs and get-togethers.



Southern touches are woven into the home through sourced antiques that “add to the authenticity,” wide-plank heart pine floors with a grey gesso wash finish, a free-standing claw foot tub and old-fashioned hand-knotted rugs. But the color palette is true to its Scandinavian roots. “In order to create a Swedish color palette, I wanted light colors that would have that feel of chalk-type paint, but I could not find the perfect colors. So, we experimented with some colors by cutting the pigment in them until we found the

hue that we wanted. The results were the pale yellow and gray colors throughout the home.”

Many of the European-inspired accessories and furnishings are vintage, discovered at local antiques destinations like Scott Antique Markets, Foxglove Antiques & Galleries, The Gables Antiques. Other treasures were found at antique stores in Athens and Charleston. “Every time I vacation in Charleston, I make time to go in as many antique stores as I can,” the designer says. “Especially



**Keep It Fresh.** The kitchen, which Janie calls “the nucleus of the home,” showcases custom cabinets that are both pleasing to the eye and functional. Creamy marble countertops add softness to the space and the mantle-style hood provides a place for an antique French clock discovered at a flea market.



**Good Morning.** The breakfast room beautifully combines Swedish influences, such as painted Gustavian chairs and an old farm table, with modern elements like the gold chandelier and wing-style settee. Janie enjoys the blend of “new and old” in a space.



**Take a Seat.** In a keeping room next to the kitchen, striped linen drapes are hung close to the ceiling to elevate the height of the room. Janie says, “Raising your window treatments up to the crown molding or ceiling gives the appearance of a higher ceiling and the sensation of a larger room.”

**Dine in Style.** The dining room table sits near an area devoted to music. A pair of iron chandeliers add drama and charm, “making the room even more special,” says Janie. The scene is set for a cocktail party complete with the music of a baby grand piano playing in the background.



those on King Street. My favorite is Alexandra Designs, since it specializes in French and Swedish antiques and always has white and blue-hued Gustavian furniture in their shop.”

### ***Timeless Elements***

Focusing on historical décor roots—rather than trends—also gives the interior a timeless elegance. The key, Janie advises, is picking pieces for the long term. Or what she describes as looking for a design “that is inheritable and ages gracefully,” she explains. “My approach is to give clients an interior that will stand the test of time and not be dated only a few years later.”

For Janie, it all begins with the shape and scale. “Select furnishings with simple but elegant lines and keep pieces to the proper size for the room,” she advises, before continuing. “Find lighting that will add beauty to the space and choose the major upholstery pieces in textures or small patterns, with bold patterns as accents.”

Another way to give an interior timeless elegance is to display antiques that seem as though they have a history that tells a story. “I like to incorporate antiques or vintage pieces within a home so that it feels as if the pieces have been collected and have evolved over time.”

To sum up her methodology, Janie says that she “listens a lot,” asking questions that help her understand how her clients want to live in their homes. She describes the process as “collaborative,” reflecting her clients’ lives, personalities and lifestyles. And that is certainly something that will always stand the test of time.

**Restful Respite.** A freestanding claw foot tub stands at the ready for moments of relaxation, along with a linen chair that’s just right for afternoons spent daydreaming. Molding has been added to create panels around the room. Janie says, “I saw details like this in France and wanted to incorporate trim in the same fashion.”

“My style is tailored with an end result that is a design *that is inheritable and ages gracefully.*”

**Suite Retreat.** To provide privacy, the guest room has its own stairwell from the breakfast room, setting it off from the rest of the bedrooms. Unplugging is the theme in this space, featuring a large wing-style upholstered bed, a chaise made for settling in with a good book and a velvet-tufted bench at the foot of the bed.



**Dreamy Bedroom.** Symmetry is the mark of the master bedroom, where Janie brought in matching chests and chandeliers to surround the bed. She created the headboard by having the trim carpenter build a frame out of large, thick gilded picture molding. The inside is upholstered with padding and a heavy solid linen.

