



NANTUCKET-BASED DESIGNER

NANCY SERAFINI

GOES SOUTH FOR THE WINTER

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Imagine the movie *Prince of Tides* and the incredible natural beauty of the “Low Country” of South Carolina. The pale mauve sweet grasses sway slowly on a warm spring day. The sky is a cloudless, vivid blue. The sun is beating down on the lime-green marsh at high tide. Multitudes of crisp white herons are squawking in the trees surrounding a pond. Envision driving onto an island that is a 3,500-acre nature preserve. There are no street lights nor sidewalks, but there are two allées lined with 100-year-old Spanish oak trees dripping with moss. One allée guides you to the main house. The other, however, is my heart’s delight. The oak trees are underpinned with hundreds of yellow jonquils and frame the entrance to the Tabby Ruins, the original plantation on the property. Each night you are lulled to sleep by a symphony of nature—the herons, the egrets, and wood storks sing their magnificent songs. There is little wonder why my husband and I started a 15-year-long love affair with Spring Island, where we escape to every winter from New England.

The timing wasn’t quite right when we were first introduced into this amazing world. In the summer of 2015, we made a totally spur-of-the-moment decision to purchase a lot. We were besotted and bewitched by this particular piece of property as it had been owned by the legendary golfer Arnold Palmer, and enjoyed a view of the 18th hole of the community’s course, but, more importantly, a spectacular 180-degree view of the Callawassie River and marsh.

The sunrise is truly indescribable, and the parcel afforded us the opportunity to build a true “Low Country” home. We enlisted an architect from Beaufort, Joel Newman, who was recognized for his distinctive ability to design a home that fit right in with the environment. The tin roof, dark brown cedar shingles, and old tabby brick combined with huge windows to accent the view were the perfect components for our dream cottage. Three bedrooms and baths were artfully designed to capture views from every vantage point. People often remark that our home reminds them of an old Adirondack-style house; I personally think it looks like a tree house nestled in among the pines.





Never have I enjoyed building a home more. The contractor had an amazing sense of humor, and the crews, although they could not speak a word of English, were able to communicate with us in a perfect way. Their attention to detail and perfection made it a joyful and memorable experience. The South has such a distinctive culture that takes some adjustment for us Bostonians. Often labeled the “slow country,” we learned to be patient; and it was well worth the wait.

As I began to think of the interior spaces and how they would be designed, my prerequisite was to choose colors from the outdoors so that there would be a seamless flow from inside to out. Rich browns, coppers, muddled yellow, and aged green formed the basis of the color palette. Accents of blue were thrown into the potpourri along with my trademark mixture of patterns and texture.

The living room is low country traditional with a contemporary twist. Shiplap walls throughout the entire house were coupled with square ceiling coffers lined with shiplap and simple moldings. An old Lee Jofa hand-blocked linen was the core of the fabric scheme. Beautiful pheasants are partnered with a lovely forest scene. Colefax and Fowler and Jane Churchill provided the rest of the fabrics. Antiques are intermixed with new furniture and the room is finished with both exotic orchids and a multitude of green plants, as well as books and my low country treasures mixed with my beloved China collections.

Decorating has always been my passion, but our home on Spring Island has captured our souls. It is a place of tranquility, an opportunity to commune with nature, to coexist with Elvis our neighborhood alligator, to forge new friendships, learn new skills, and improve old ones. Most of all, it is a place called home.

