



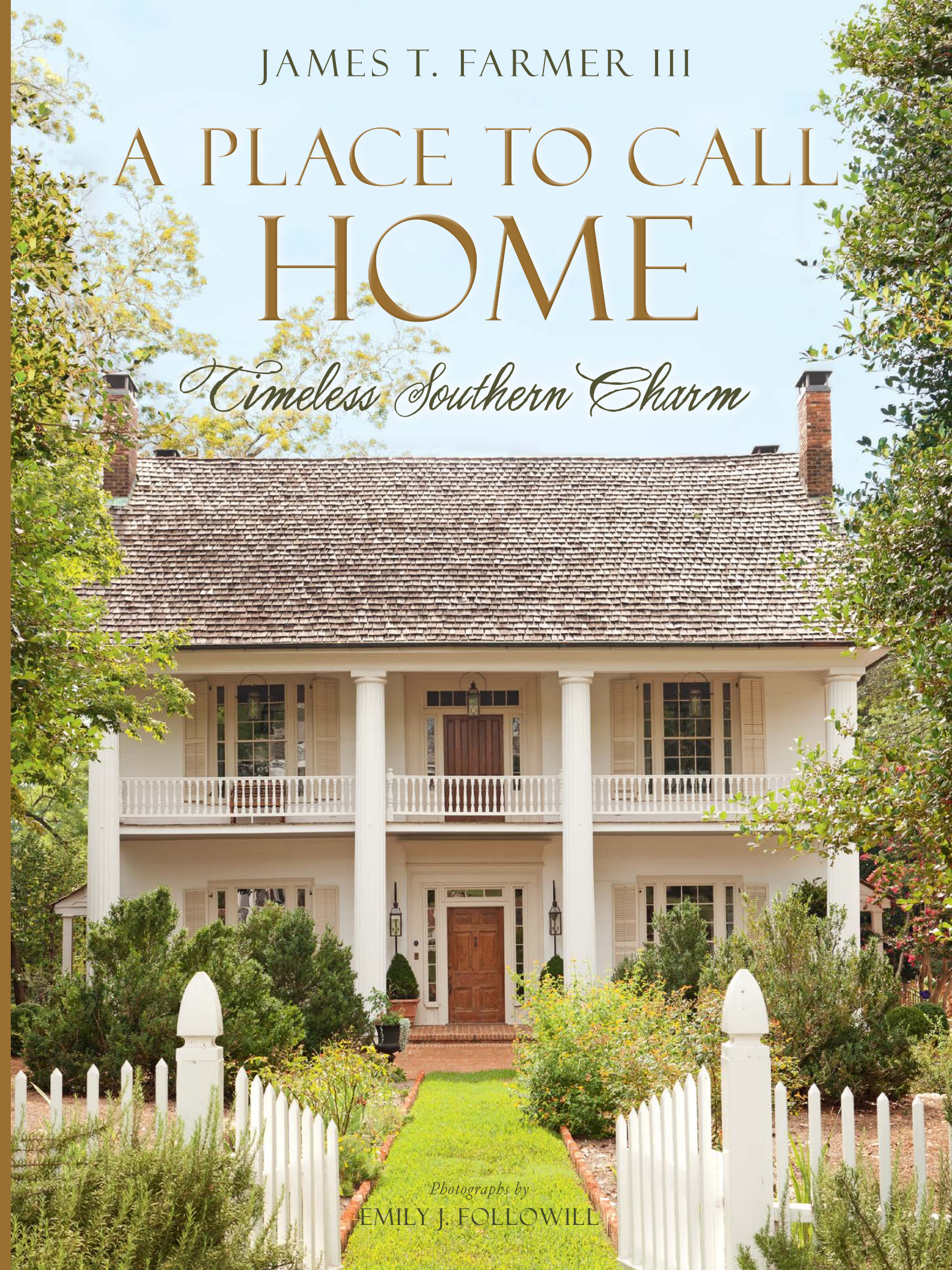
A PLACE TO CALL HOME

FARMER

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JAMES T. FARMER III

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Timeless Southern Charm

Photographs by
EMILY J. FOLLOWILL

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Four diverse homes in the deep South—remodels, makeovers, and new construction—as James Farmer brings together a cultivated mix of high and low, storied and new, collected and found. Farmer, an unabashedly Southern gentleman, shows what it means to be grounded to one’s locale and geography. This, he believes, is a quick ticket to the metamorphosis of “house” to “home.”

Here are homes that have Farmer’s unmistakable design touch. From a home with antebellum roots, to a Georgian-style house in a suburb, to a country farmhouse, a second home on Sea Island, a camp house, and his own home on family land, Farmer’s interiors respect Southern heritage and also freshen the look for today. The result is effortless elegance, comfort, and harmony. Classic with a twist is Farmer’s style, with sumptuous fabrics, warm colors, traditional furnishings and inspired accessories engendering gracious Southern living .

Woven alongside beautiful photography are personal stories Farmer shares about living in the South and how he fell in love with a career of making houses into homes.



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Tradition with a Twist

In the suburban sprawl of Atlanta, neighborhoods and communities have made small towns like Marietta and Alpharetta into large towns brimming with great stores, shopping, schools and restaurants. These incredible developments are hardly fathomable to a kid from a small town like Perry—let alone for a couple from Perry who find themselves moving to one of these lovely neighborhoods in a bustling community. The couple, who have been friends for years and their extended family clients of mine too, experienced a story not unique to many Georgians: the husband's work and amazing career opportunity led them Atlanta and a new, large home completely different from their house in Perry.

The wife called me to help with window treatments in the living room—which led to a complete redecoration of the room, a terrace-level renovation, further first-floor furnishing and dressing up an outdoor space that makes their home a resort they never have to leave. The husband always tells me, "This is the last project," and then we move on to something else in the home, because the wife's reply is, "You moved me to Atlanta, so I'm just trying to make it feel like home." Ha!

In the dining room, we pulled the sherbet orange from the Lee Jofa linen on the windows, which gives the room fresh glow and sets off artwork and pressed feathers. The gray-washed table and chairs were upholstered in a faint aqua cheetah print for pizzazz.

MODERNIZING HISTORIC ROOMS

The floor plan of this home is not unique to Southern cottages and mansions alike. A long, wide center hall, four rooms off the hall (parlors, study and dining room) and expanded wings for more family with bedrooms off the sides and back is a pretty standard arrangement for this style of home. When a home has two stories, then the rooms above are bedrooms as well.

One design challenge when decorating older, historically planned homes, is to not make formal rooms too stuffy, fancy or uncomfortable. For the front parlors of this home, we took a cue from the historic ladies and gentlemen segregated parlors, making one room a touch more masculine and the other a tad daintier. Yet nothing in the masculine room is too sacred or precious to prevent anyone from enjoying it room for reading, a piano concert, a cigar or delightful conversation.

For the ladies parlor—a modern-day formal living room, really—we placed the baby grand with its curved side out and keyboard perpendicular to the wall. This exposes the “sexy” curve of the piano. A Schumacher hand-blocked and colored linen depicting quail dresses the windows—a masculine scene with feminine colors for a Southern-style mix. Pops of aqua in contemporary art, upholstery and garden stools adds pizzazz alongside the blue and white and antique porcelains displayed in the breakfront and around the room.

The seagrass rug covering the floor is accented with a smaller Oushak that pulls out the handsome colors in the window fabric and wing chair, while the coffee table warms the space and keeps it from being too delicate of a room. The chandelier is from New Orleans—a Southern tradition I love of “finding a chandelier in New Orleans.” This one is not original to the home, but I made sure it was of the same time period. Glass and crystal hurricanes are filled with polished Southern pecans.





In the master bedroom, the original fireplace became the focal and the vaulted ceiling was accented with reclaimed beams. Just beyond the heart pine door is the new master bathroom. This door and two closet doors were the only “new” doors added to the home; older homes like this rarely lack in door quantities! Soft greens, dashes of citrine, monograms, plaid and a rice planter-style four-poster bed all blend together to create a tranquil room.

On my trips to St. Louis, I found myself rearranging the living room of my friends' home and hanging mirrors and paintings in different locales. We hunted for treasures at antique malls and stores, and eventually made a game plan for the house's redecoration. Family pieces from Mississippi, an antique chinoiserie screen, classic fabrics in fresh colorways all became inspirational elements for the project. For the foyer, I envisioned a scenic paper as often seen in Southern homes. Whether a Lowcountry plantation, a South Georgia hunting lodge, a West Paces Ferry mansion or a Savannah town house, murals and scenic papers have been Southern hallmarks since our ancestors brought the notion across the pond. A pattern by de Gournay on custom-colored, painted silk panels changes with the light from blue to gray to green.

The handrail, painted in Pratt and Lambert "Obsidian," is a nod to English town houses and serves as an elegant architectural movement upwards along the stairwell. A diamond and trellis-pattern needlepoint runs upwards with the stairwell.





In the kitchen, the duck-egg blue island with its antique heart pine countertop anchor the space. Painted white shiplap serves as the wall treatment and backsplash. A mix of bar stools awaits grandchildren here in Grandmama's kitchen. Clean white walls allow for a tinted ceiling, fun island color and artwork to "pop" and work in harmony.



JAMES FARMER is a professional designer, cook, author, and lifestyle expert. In addition, he is an editor-at-large for *Southern Living* and a frequent guest on television and radio. He is the author of seven previous books, including *Dinner on the Grounds*, *A Time to Plant*, *A Time to Cook*, *A Time to Celebrate*, and *Porch Living*. A highly sought-after speaker, he is truly a young and fresh voice for his generation.

EMILY J. FOLLOWILL is the author of *Southern Rustic Cabin*. Her photographs have been featured in previous James Farmer books as well as magazines, including *Veranda* and *Garden & Gun*.