

Southern Living®

DECEMBER 2011

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE!

THE ULTIMATE HOLIDAY COOKBOOK

128 *New Recipes
To Celebrate
the Season*

"I try to see every day as a celebration ... and to laugh as much as possible."
—Maya Angelou, page 20



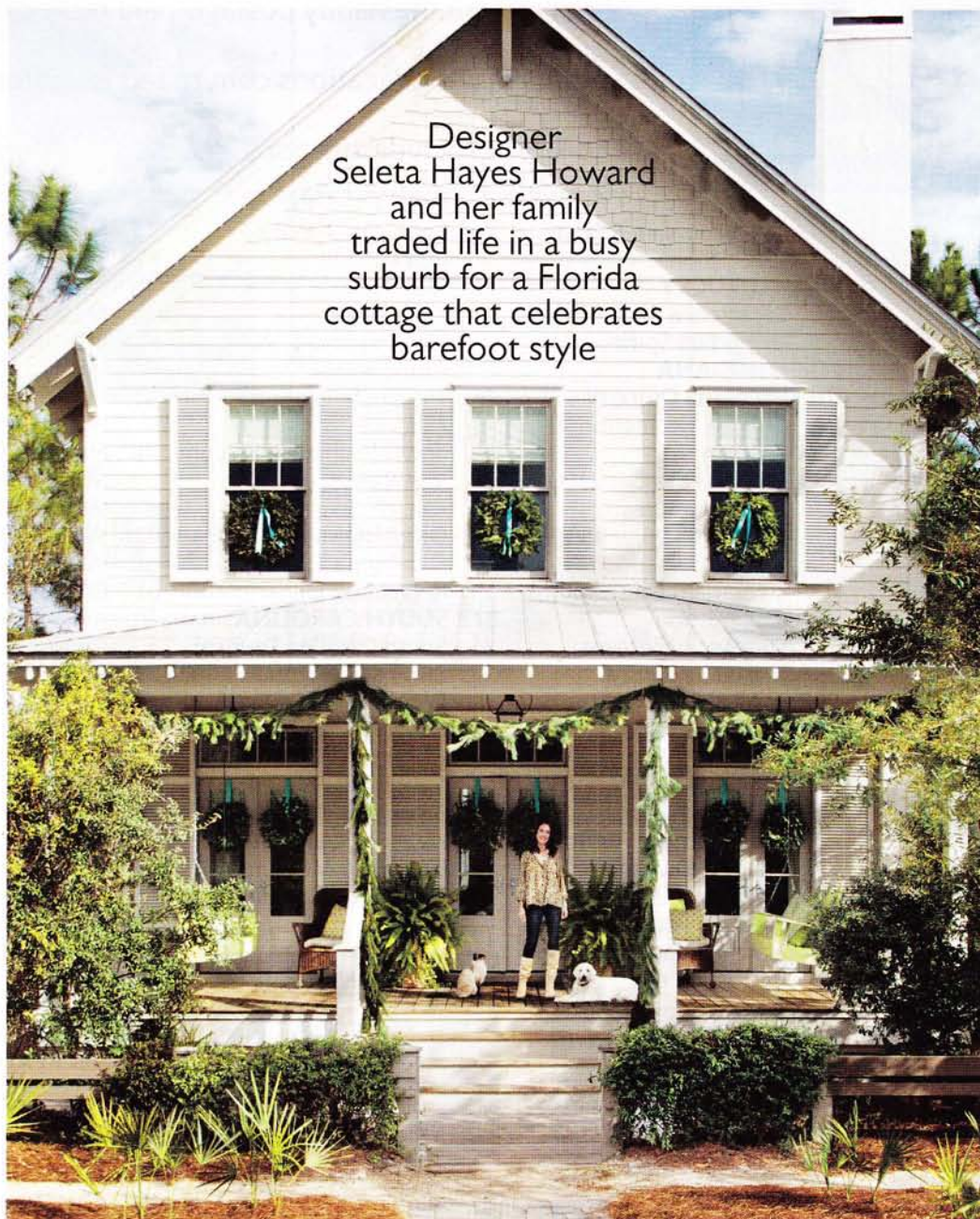
OUR WHITE CAKE
CONTEST WINNER!

LYNN BROWN'S
CHOCOLATE-
GINGERBREAD-
TOFFEE CAKE

SHOW YOUR HOSPITALITY!

- * UPGRADE YOUR CHRISTMAS TABLE
- * DRESS UP A STORE-BOUGHT WREATH
- * GET CREATIVE WITH CASSEROLES

Christmas



Designer
Seleta Hayes Howard
and her family
traded life in a busy
suburb for a Florida
cottage that celebrates
barefoot style

Staycation



For lifestyle blogger Seleta Hayes Howard (whose popular blog is *simplyseleta.com*), less really is more. She and her husband, Peter, ditched their 6,000-square-foot suburban Atlanta home and drove south for a life at the beach. “Being here has really stimulated my imagination,” Seleta says. Living near the Gulf in the small community of WaterColor in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, gave her the courage to decorate with shades of white, turquoise, and apple green. The smaller cottage size inspired pared-down furnishings and rooms that accommodate grown-up entertaining as well as family play space. Here’s her advice for maximizing life in a smaller space on the coast.

Remember Your Location

Before the Howards moved in, this coastal cottage with gray paint, dark furniture, and dark brown floors wasn’t exactly beachy. “It was blah and boring,” says Seleta. Ready

to embrace the laid-back living she had come for, Seleta let her new surroundings guide her decorating choices. The light, airy palette and decorative accents, such as bamboo blinds and the shell chandelier in the dining room, all hint to the sand and sea, but she didn’t want to be too over the top with coastal motifs. “I thought the chandelier was subtle and elegant,” she says. Adding horizontal tongue-and-groove boarding on the whole main level brought in a casual feel that worked for the family’s new lifestyle. She even let the children in on the fun. “I showed my son a paint deck and let him choose the color of the bunk room,” she says.

Create Multitasking Spaces

The closer quarters that came with downsizing have been what this family ⇨

■ TOP: A striped rug in pale blue and brown adds graphic punch in the living room.

■ ABOVE: Seleta Hayes Howard with husband Peter; cat Pom Pom; dog Pippi; and children (left to right) Blake, Sterling, Pierce, and Blair