

A COLLECTION CONVERGES IN SAVANNAH

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Photographed by Siobhan Egan



Alison Seeger uses white fabric to bring a fresh foil to upholstered furniture. Her recent move into a Savannah space allowed her to layer on interesting textiles, antiques and art. Many of these pieces she had collected over twenty years; some were recent Low Country finds.

The downtown apartment of Alison Seeger tells the tale of a lady rooted in two cities, and how the current chapter of her story has written Savannah as her home. Her interiors have an inviting atmosphere encompassing qualities of their Savannah Historic District setting, their eclectic décor and their gracious owner. Alison has furnished her home with a fetching blend of collected antiques, textiles, and art. Of course, fresh-feeling slipcovered furnishings, signature to her style and an exemplification of her business, Alison Seeger Slipcovers, make up a significant part of her design point-of-view.

Alison recently moved from a smaller Savannah apartment, which she occupied part-time, in her building to her current larger space, right down the hall. For a few years, she has lived in both her hometown of Covington, Louisiana and Savannah, Georgia creating custom-tailored slipcovers for clients in both places. So, for a while, the smaller apartment was the perfect fit as a part-time home. But as her business grew in Savannah, and as Alison was more and more drawn in by The Hostess City, she felt that making Savannah a more permanent home base was right for her. And, when the bigger digs became available, she snapped up the space. Savannah became her official full-time address when she sold her house in Louisiana.



The salon-feeling of the living and dining room combination room recalls something of a European pied-à-terre, with its balcony overlooking the city. Alison can entertain a large group here or just one or two friends.

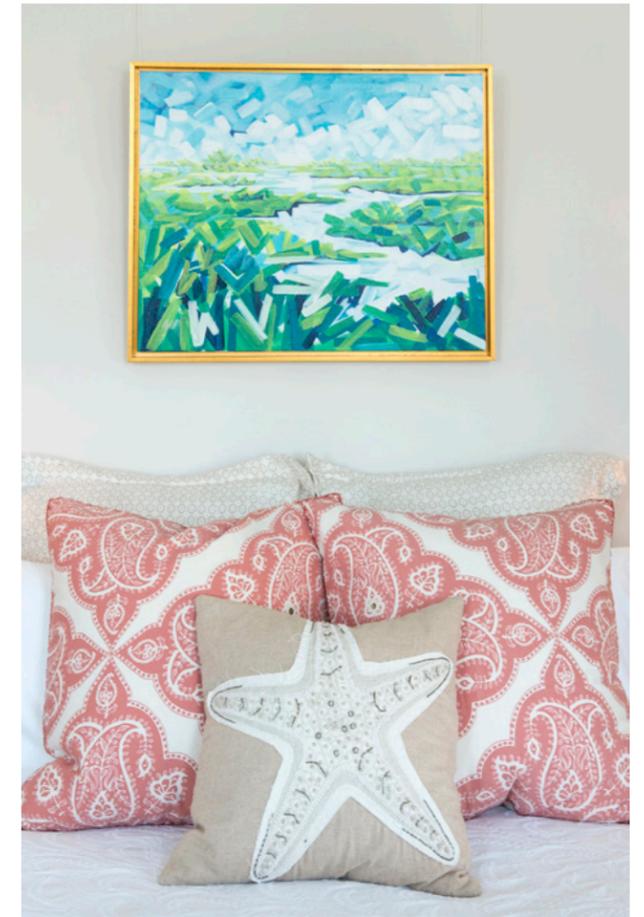
Once the larger apartment was hers, Alison went to work layering a graceful mix of the treasures she has collected over the years. In addition to once living in Covington, she also spent time living in downtown New Orleans, and has collected enchanting pieces along the way from both places. In the past few years, she has added to her collection from Savannah sources. She has unearthed special furnishings from local stores such as Clutter and Sherry's Honey-pot Fabrics. Alison notes, "If you buy what you love, it will work with everything you already own."

This advice resonates in her home. One can see that Alison has been true to herself in selecting elements for her interiors. It doesn't hurt that she is talented in mixing components with balance and variation that create a warm and inviting design. Her living room sitting area beckons with a pair of Century Chippendale white lacquered arm chairs, a kilim-covered ottoman from New Orleans and an original Shea Slemmer oversized painting (pictured

previous page). This is just an example of how she has artfully combined many of the treasures she has gathered over the past twenty years with new finds.

The largest room, the living and dining room combination, is kept from becoming too stuffy by grounding it with two seagrass rugs, which also help to define each room, since the area is large and open. The rugs also keep elements like her crystal chandelier from seeming overly formal. All white walls, reaching in height, lend an ethereal feeling to the space. Also, helpful in keeping things relaxed yet stylish, are many slipcovered upholstery pieces of furniture.

Alison comes from a talented family and learned her skills in sewing from her grandmother and mother. Her grandparents owned an upholstery shop in Florida. Her mother, who was in the airline industry, also sews beautifully. Her sister, Elizabeth Jolly, is owner of Satchel, a retail store creating original handbags and leather goods. Friends long ago asked Alison to



Above: Coastal touches such as this Bellamy Murphy original painting and seashell grouping reflect Alison's life in the Low-country. / The bedroom has a light and airy feel and a coastal vibe thanks to lively art and fresh linens.

Below: The dark and light contrast of Alison's galley kitchen keeps is simple and lively. It becomes a nice contrast to the light walls throughout the rest of the space in almost a jewel box fashion. / When the walls are white (as well as the slipcovers), one has the freedom to rearrange the vignettes and the furnishings, and that is what Alison likes to do from time to time in her interiors. / Natural elements lend an informality and freshness to the space.

create custom furniture slipcovers and from that, her business was born. After many years of making expertly tailored slipcovers in Louisiana and in Georgia, she now works almost exclusively from her studio space located inside Satchel's Liberty Street location.

White slipcovers for furniture are Alison's preference, but she creates them in any textile desired by her clients. Her apartment features many seating pieces in the heavy white fabric which she stocks in her studio, due to its durability and popularity. It's the perfect backdrop for a variety of pillows and it pairs classically with the pieces of dark wood furniture as well as the white painted pieces in her apartment. Alison admits that she's always "changing things around in my interiors," and the flexibility of the all-white slipcover allows her to do so.

The pied-à-terre feeling of her apartment comes from the collected feel of her décor, but also from the balconies with two of Savannah's iconic views, the Talmadge Bridge and the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. Nestled in the hub of the downtown historic district and elevated enough for sweeping views, her home presents her with postcard vistas at all times of the day. Alison, of course, has maximized her small balconies as extensions of her apartment with seating, rugs, plants and accessories, making these spaces a great place to enjoy coffee in moments of reflection or to toast with bubbly while entertaining friends. She notes that "sunsets and summer storms are spectacular to view from the balconies' vantage points."

A true southern hospitality exudes from Alison's interiors, be it from her skirted dining table with antique Queen Anne chairs (one of her earliest furniture purchases), her furnished balconies or her open, salon-style living room. All areas are inviting and ripe for conversation with a guest or a fête with friends. She has brought style into her small galley kitchen with painted dark walls, off white pottery and a woodblock style print of an octopus, keeping it a lively place to prep for company.

Alison finds the entire layout of her home is suitable for her hosting style, no matter the occasion. Low-fuss entertaining with practiced polish is her inclination. Tapas on lovely platters, champagne in good stemware

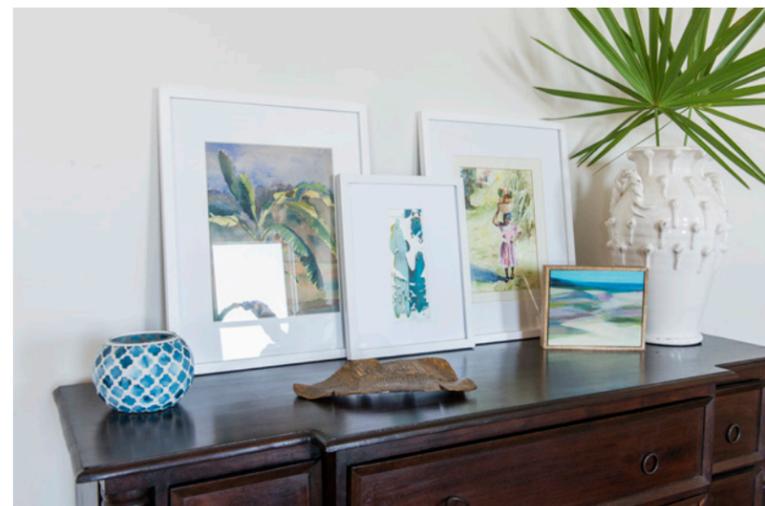


Only good can come from time spent perched above The Hostess City on this quaint balcony. Some spaces and places are for renewal and musing.

and linen napkins are offered to her guests. Be it a girls' night or a dinner party with friends, the space is accommodating. Guests have commented that they feel like they're in a much bigger city when they come over for drinks or dinner and see the sparkling lights of Savannah below and the bridge illuminated in the distance.

Both Louisiana and Low Country artists are represented throughout Alison's interiors. Two large-scale Shea Slemmer paintings anchor seating areas in the living and dining combination room. The buffet brings in a coastal element with an original marsh scene by Bellamy Murphy, paired with a charmingly presented collection of sea shells. Perched above the moss-draped oaks of busy downtown streets, is Alison's light and airy bedroom, where a Jessica O'Neill painting is pronounced with color amid light walls and bedding. Other works by Georgia artists Ester Deen and Kalin Asenov, as well as pieces by Louisiana artists Peggy Hesse, John Preble, John Hodge, and Ann Morvant complete Alison's collection.

Alison's design advice is to purchase what speaks to your heart and to "wait for something you truly love". She understands the value of saving for a special purchase that won't ever be replaced with something better, because it was meaningful from the beginning. Her past residences have offered style and culture, parts of which she has captured in her furnishings and art, to reflect her authentic self. The result is a home that is inspiring and uplifting to her and one that gives juncture to her love of two cities.



Above: The coastal elegance of Alison's living room can only come from items collected over time and chosen for their meaningfulness to their owner. Authentic interiors take time to evolve, but the end result is always striking. Middle: Sculptural white tulips pair perfectly with the walls and furniture. Alison's abode has a way of expressing her southern upbringing in its welcoming feel. / The all-white decorating sensibility extends from Alison's use of white for slipcovers to the white painted walls and furniture in her home, exuding calm and respite. Below: A constantly changing arrangement of furniture and accessories allows Alison's to manifest a steady lineup of new inspirations.