

life at

Dear Friend,

It's the holiday season, and I am especially pleased with this issue. Why? Not only is it beautiful, but I will also personally use many of the topics we are covering.

Each year in midsummer I get excited to see how Recipe Development Director Mary Allen Perry and the Test Kitchens group plan to continue our tradition of presenting a wonderful cake in the December issue. Around the office, we call it "the big white cake." Selected from 15 or so ideas, this



The long table in our Test Kitchens is covered with delicious cake options for our december issue.

year's cake is different from the ones in the past. It is a velvety chocolate cake with a decorative white frosting. The most unique twist, though, is this: Mary Allen shows how to take this one cake and use it to produce 12 different looks and tastes. Following her ideas, you can make everything from coffee cake to turtle cake to cupcakes. Be sure to try several. Pam, my wife, can't wait to make these recipes at home. The story "Twelve Cakes for Christmas" begins on page 136.

I guess the article entitled "Collecting Holiday Villages" (page 90) started with a cry for help from me because Pam adds new pieces every year. Our collection has expanded to the point that the small scene we started out with has outgrown its space. I think Lifestyle Editor Majella Chube Hamilton's story--especially her "Tips To Start a Village Display"--will help Pam and me as we begin to decorate. I hope the information helps you too.

Now holiday sweets and decorations are not the only things in this issue. In gardens we explore the long-lasting beauty that orchids can bring to the home on page 50. Our "Southerners" column (page 66) features Liz Coursen and Phil Neigh, who preserve and sell the images from old postcards as art. We have one of their framed creations hanging in our home, and I can tell you that the prints are terrific.

Perhaps one of the most unusual stories in our magazine is Associate Travel Editor Cassandra Vanhooser's about communities of faith in Savannah (page 76). It is a travel story that has the spiritual side of this season in mind. To all of you who read and enjoy Southern Living, thanks for allowing us to take part in planning your seasonal events. We wish you happy holidays.

Best regards,

John Alex Floyd, Jr., Editor

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 523, Birmingham, AL 35201

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