

THE CULTIVATED

# Life

A vase brimming with  
*Viburnum opulus*  
takes center stage.

*entertaining*  
**BEAUTY  
BECKONS**

Event designer Keith Robinson  
hosts an elegant spring fete amid  
an ocean of blooms in Georgia.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS LOOF | WRITTEN BY HILLARY BROWN





**a**t the center of a sun-dappled clearing amid a maze of boxwoods and a riotous arbor of fragrant Cecile Brunner roses, event planner Keith Robinson hosts a resplendent lunch that captures the beauty of the season. The spot is particularly significant as it was the first of several “rooms” he created in the garden after purchasing his historic Georgia plantation. Awash in a symphony of pinks, creams, and greens, it feels especially alive during spring’s prime.

Inspired by the surrounding flora, he gravitated toward a pastel palette for the simple but refined table, like a linen tablecloth in a delicate celadon shade, lavender napkins, moss-green glasses, and a hint of sparkle in gold-rimmed plates. In a sumptuous crowning touch, Robinson pulled plushly upholstered Louis XV-style dining chairs from indoors. “They’re unexpected and sensuous,” he says. “A garden chair wouldn’t say enough.”

A grand bouquet of snowy white viburnum, with its subtly sweet scent, sits at the heart of the table, while smaller vases of dainty purple phlox—a nod to his childhood in the mountains of North Carolina, where they grew wild—top each place setting. “There’s something lovely about the juxtaposition,” he says of the arrangements. “And at an intimate table for six, the dramatic centerpiece is a delightful surprise. But since it’s tall, it doesn’t get in the way of conversation. You’re talking under a canopy of flowers.”

In fact, the element of surprise is key to Robinson’s modus operandi. “I love having our guests explore the garden and then discover the table,” Robinson says. “To turn the corner and suddenly have your sight line filled with this beautiful centerpiece—it takes your breath away.” □



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Keith Robinson. Boxwood-lined paths occupy the front garden. Tablecloth and napkins, Sferra; glassware, TableArt; vintage porcelain and flatware. Robinson served guests Meyer lemon spritzers; for the recipe, go to [veranda.com/spritzer](http://veranda.com/spritzer).