

Retro Style

A COZY COTTAGE FROM
FLEA MARKET FINDS

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Previous page: A collection of barbeque trays from the 1950s and 1960s are hung along the wall next to a painted hutch housing vintage glasses and dishware. The chrome dining table, discovered at a flea market in Rowley, adds to the feeling of a fun and funky beach house.

Above: Vintage glasses and an old lemonade canister bring back memories of summer vacations and roadside stands. The mouse and cheese salt and pepper shaker set adds a touch of humor and plenty of character. In the background, a collection of lobster drink stirrers from Anthony's Pier 4 in Boston wait to be put to use.

Right: An old bookcase, painted a bright poppy red is the perfect backdrop for a collection of board games and Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries.

Page 33: The nautical theme continues in the living room. Above the wingback chair is a painting of Perkins Cove from 1952. An original painting, it came with the cottage and was likely painted by a previous tenant.



Summer along the coast of Maine. The very idea brings to mind cookouts, sandy beaches, rocky shorelines, fishermen, and fresh lobster. It evokes memories of summer vacations filled with old board games, slightly damp swimsuits, salty skin, and sandy feet. That is exactly what Travis Parent and David Burgess found when they rented—and later purchased—a little summer cottage in Ogunquit.

“I spent summers in Ogunquit as a child,” Travis says. “The cottage is perfect. It sits in the middle of the woods but it’s right near the ocean and you can hear the lifeguard station. Yet if you don’t feel like being a part of everything going on in town, it’s nice and quiet.”

While the location is ideal, the cottage wasn’t exactly move-in ready. “When we first found the place ten years ago, it was in kind of rough shape,” Travis explains. “It hadn’t been used in years. The stove didn’t work, there was 1970s paneling everywhere, and there was green Astroturf in the kitchen.” In spite of the 1970s décor, including a macramé owl on the wall, Travis and David decided to rent it for the summer. By the end of that first season, they had become friends with the owners and knew that they wanted to spend another summer in the cottage.

For the next eight years, Travis and David rented the little cottage, adding a few touches here and there and retreating to the cottage whenever they needed to get away from New York City. The cottage quickly became a home base. When they moved back to the area to be closer to family and friends, Travis and David approached the owners of the cottage and asked if they would consider selling. “They let us save the money we needed to make a down payment,” Travis says. “Then we sat at their dining room table and worked out a deal.” But when Travis and David made their best offer, it was rejected.

“At that point I thought we wouldn’t be able to buy the place—we were really stretching to make it happen,” Travis says. “But the owners of the house thought our offer was too high! They came back with a price that we just could not refuse.”

Over the next few years, Travis and David didn’t do much to change the cottage. They bought a new stove and started collecting fun pieces from antiques shops and flea markets in the area. “The house came fully furnished,” Travis says. “It was definitely stuck in the 1970s. Over time, we just replaced pieces so it was a better fit for us.”

Some of the furniture and accessories were kept and incorporated into the new décor. Those original pieces helped Travis and David get a better understanding of the history of the house. “When we bought the cottage, there was a painting on the wall that I really thought was awful,” Travis



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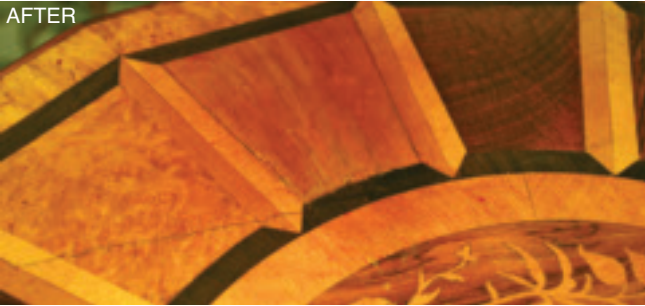
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says. "For a while, I just took it off the wall and stuffed it under the bed. David had it professionally cleaned, and lo and behold it was an original, signed painting of Perkins Cove from 1952!"

By the 1950s Ogunquit was an established artist colony. Charles Woodbury had started an art school in the late 1800s and later, along with Henry Strater, he was one of the founding members of the Ogunquit Art Association. In 1953, Henry Strater founded the Ogunquit Museum of American Art, which is right down the street from the cottage. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, visiting artists frequently spent the summer in small, inexpensive cottages in Ogunquit—just like the one Travis and David had just purchased. "Apparently, when the former owners purchased the place there were mattresses on the floor," Travis says. "There was an old corner sink in the bathroom and people's names were written on the walls. It was probably a flophouse."

The cottage was built in 1921, when the artist colony was thriving. In the 1930s, the Ogunquit Playhouse was built and small theatrical groups and repertory companies flourished—as did Ogunquit's social scene. "The rumor is that the cottage used to be a bordello," Travis says. "A lot of theater people were housed in this area and there was certainly a lot of drinking. Out in the woods, we'll come across an old compact from the 1920s and we've found dozens of old liquor bottles." In many artist colonies, alcohol flowed freely even during prohibition.

Not long after Travis and David purchased the cottage, a large limb from one of the surrounding pine trees crashed through the roof. "We decided to fully restore the cottage," Travis says. "We had some of the floors redone, put up some wainscoting, and added a new bathroom and a patio in the front. But we kept the original footprint. We wanted to keep it a simple summer cottage."

The floor plan of the cottage is simple. An eat-in kitchen, small living room, bathroom, two bedrooms, and screened-in porch provide about 700 square feet of living space. Walking into the cottage immediately transports you to a 1950s or 1960s beach house. The white walls create a bright, airy feel that nicely sets off the strong reds, greens, and blues of the accessories. In the bedrooms, the unfinished floors were simply painted—a less-fussy alternative that allows for the sand that inevitably gets tracked into any house near the beach.

The décor is retro-chic-meets-design-on-a-dime trendy. Painted furniture, vintage glassware, and nautical throw pillows bring to mind childhood summer vacations. "I wanted the house to look like everything had always been there," Travis says. "I wanted it to look like it had been handed down from generation to generation."

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Almost all of the furnishings and accessories were purchased at flea markets, estate sales, and thrift shops. “There is nothing expensive in this house,” Travis says. “When we were first introduced to Todd Farm, this huge flea market in Rowley, we started going on a weekly basis. It has anything you could imagine!”

The eat-in kitchen features a vintage chrome dining table from Todd Farm. A collection of barbecue trays from the 1950s and 1960s are hung along the wall, and a white painted hutch houses vintage glasses and dishware found at the Arundel flea market. “We even found shelf paper from the 1940s,” Travis says. “It’s white paper with huge strawberries printed on it.”

In the living room, there is a collection of old Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew mysteries and vintage games—including Scrabble, Operation, Battleship, Monopoly, Parcheesi, and Clue. “We found all of the games and books at the flea market,” Travis says. “David was just entranced with the graphics on the games. So we bought them, painted an old bookcase poppy red, and now they look like they’ve always been there.”

Over the course of a few years, Travis and David were able to fully furnish the cottage. “We’d get up early and be the first ones at the flea market in the morning,” Travis says. “There were a lot of Sundays devoted to all this stuff!”

Of course, not all of the pieces were discovered at flea markets. Decorating the cottage was a collaborative effort that involved friends and family. After a close friend’s grandmother passed away, Travis and David came home to find a pair of fishermen lamps on their doorstep along with a handwritten note. Had it not been for the collection of nautical items in the cottage, the lamps would have been thrown out. Instead, they were saved and incorporated into the design. The lamps perfectly complement the lobster throw pillows in the bedrooms.

“What I like about the cottage is that there is a kitschy side to it,” Travis says. “There’s nowhere else you could have all those lobsters!” ■

FOR A LIST OF SOURCES, SEE PAGE 119



Above: Within walking distance of downtown Ogunquit, yet surrounded by woods, the summer cottage is in the perfect location for both fun and relaxation. The color scheme of traditional white paired with forest green shutters was inspired by the Kennedy compound. | Below: Painted wooden floors, cozy quilts, and nautical accessories set a casual theme for guests. The old fisherman lamp, which had been left on the front doorstep, strengthens the illusion of a cottage having been passed down from generation to generation.

