

cottage white

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Detail Oriented

A historic cottage ages well with the right attention to color, texture and accents.

BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL LEE

COZY AND CLUTTER have always been bedfellows, like at the ancient auntie's holiday party, where guests thump into a gridlock of furniture... and not because they've had one too many cocktails.

To achieve cozy and clean, designer Jennifer Palumbo recommends staying true to a home's origin while updating for a more modern feel.

In this historic Annisquam beach cottage located in the coastal village of Cape Ann, Massachusetts, white walls with colorful accents create a welcoming, radiant atmosphere—regardless of the weather's mood.



“We carefully updated this house to make it appealing and functional for a modern day family while maintaining its character and understated cottage feel.”



Summery linens. Blue, green and turquoise linens—juxtaposed with the white, wood-paneled walls—give the feeling of a forever summer getaway.

The sea inside.

The home's proximity to the sea is noted throughout the home in hues of aqua, sand and white, as well as with sea-inspired textiles and shells.



“The homeowners love the charm of old buildings, patina and imperfection,” Jennifer says. “We carefully updated this house to make it appealing and functional for a modern day family while maintaining its character and understated cottage feel.”

Originally a quaint fishing cottage, the home showed its age in dated materials and a cramped layout. To maintain the home's character, Jennifer matched the style of the original, weathered beadboard in a room with an addition.

The design's great equalizer is the color white, which was used intentionally for two reasons. First,



Pops of color. Fresh sunflowers, a chartreuse serving tray and colorful abstract art provide the perfect pops of color in the white kitchen.



Secret space. Built-in cabinetry, including this nook by the kitchen, allows the homeowner to keep clutter hidden away and the home looking crisp and clean.

white achieves the light and crisp feeling the homeowners requested. Second, the color white concealed the surface-level imperfections of the original, worn beadboard.

“It also neutralizes the architectural focal points,” says Jennifer. “There is a lot of interest in this house with the wooden ceiling beams, etc. So the white grounds the other elements and enabled us to have a focused and succinct overall aesthetic.”

Art, accessories and colorful additions make spaces pop and add interest and personality. Says Jennifer, “Art was critical on this project because of our mostly white palette. Our color strategy was to have neutral backdrop with pops of fun and vibrant colors. The art added to the effect and gave the house energy.”



A warm kitchen. The wood-beamed ceilings and hardwood floors bring warmth to the white kitchen, which is highlighted by an island that appears bleached by the sea weather.

“We also wanted the whole house to feel casual and summery so we chose fabrics that create that feeling, such as cottons and linens.”



Unique additions. A repurposed barn door creates a fun and interesting entry point without too much effort.



Warming up white. Denim, black and white warm up the white, wood-paneled retreat.



Lighten up. Interesting lighting—such as a star-shaped hanging light or a large nautical piece—lends visual interest without disturbing the cool colors of the home.

Similar to the effect of art, painted pieces and walls—or a barn door—create intrigue. Colorful statement pieces like accessories and textiles add to the room's style. Says Jennifer, "We sourced neutrals for the duvet covers that allowed us to really create impact with the pillows and color or pattern on the sheets. Being focused and directed with color makes a bigger impact visually. We also wanted the whole house to feel casual and summery so we chose fabrics that create that feeling, such as cottons and linens." &w



The sea inside. The home's proximity to the sea is noted throughout the home in hues of aqua, sand and white, as well as with sea-inspired textiles and shells.



MAKING THE CUT

Jennifer Palumbo's tips on how to choose the right pieces to create a design theme

- Furnishings with clean lines were a way for us to make this historic cottage feel architecturally authentic, while at the same time stylizing a fresh vibe for this young family.
- Accessories were chosen based upon the client's preferences, the style of the home and its location. They are cohesive elements that can really bring a space from being a house to being a home.

Space in the shade. Even the outdoor spaces parallel the home's summery vibe with fresh flowers, light wood and sea-inspired textiles.



MAKING SPACE

Jennifer's simple additions to create space kept cottage clutter at bay

- Built-in cabinetry—such as beds with storage drawers, nightstands and window seats—makes up for limited room and closet space (such as in the third-floor teen's room), and leaves a limited footprint.
- Design is all about editing. Sticking to a design concept in every space helps maintain focus and impact.
- Decorating with personal possessions keeps interiors from becoming sterile or soulless. However, it is important to exercise rationale when decorating with one's belongings. Add knickknacks and special objects intentionally, to avoid compromising a room's aesthetic!