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HOW TO
Arrange
a Room
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*Simple
Style*

Soft-and-Easy Decorating
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The Surprise Inside

A young family lovingly restores a century-old cottage. But it's their modern way of life that gives the house style.

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STYLING ANNETTE JOSEPH

The front hall's arched doorways, opposite, set the tone for period renovations in the newer part of this 1800s home. Sons Jackson and Dallas love the new peek-a-boo windows in the stairway.

Continuous threads of color—primarily red and shades of chocolate brown—give the old home a modern vibe. The living room, *this page*, which is first to greet visitors, uses bold color sparingly to keep the look classic.



“People come into our cottage and expect a traditional look,” says Christy McCain. “But what they see is unexpected and refreshing.”

After Christy and Todd McCain bought their 1890s cottage in Chattanooga, Tennessee, they figured they would simply paint the walls and move in. They loved the home’s historic charm and previous updates that provided them with a modern kitchen and master suite.

Then Todd’s inner preservationist came out of hiding. Inspired by the home’s architectural details, Todd went on a hunt to find period fixtures. He also dreamed up renovation ideas—replacing the exterior’s vinyl siding

Once the McCains removed vinyl siding and repaired the original wood cladding, they discovered the sweet cottage character, *above*. They inherited a remodeled kitchen with stainless-steel appliances. The central island is the hub for casual family meals. “Most nights, the food goes from the stove to the island, which works really well with two little ones,” Christy says.

with new wood siding, texturing new drywall to match old plaster, and replacing a clunky 1980s stair railing with a more streamlined version.

Replacing or refinishing wood floors, walls, and doors took 18 months, but the wait to move in was worth it. The renovations restored the architectural charm of the cottage. Now it was time for Christy and designer Beverly Baribault to furnish rooms, and they took a modern-day twist to Todd’s true-to-period updates. Cottage style needn’t dictate decades-old furniture, says Christy. “If you’re not comfortable with the furniture of a certain period, then why not do what you like?” she says.

The look is warm and sophisticated, yet unfussy. Much of the warmth comes from red and chocolate-brown accents. A few strikes of cool blue keep the rooms lively.

Because the McCains saved only a few sentimental pieces of furniture and antiques from their previous home, they started with a mostly clean slate.

“It was really exciting,” Christy says. “In the beginning the process is so fun because you are really free to find great pieces to build your rooms around.”

A saved, but newly covered, slipper chair provided design inspiration in the master bedroom, for instance, while the living room was built around a new angular leather sofa.

“I guess that sums up our style,” Christy says. “We like mixing it up and keeping it alive.”



A fiery red slipper chair, *left*, mingles with an espresso-hue chest in the master bedroom. A lack of hardware on the chest reinforces designer Beverly Baribault’s credo of simplicity. In the guest bedroom, *below left*, a new lamp sits atop an old fern stand that belonged to Christy’s grandmother. Todd and Christy use the sun room, *below*, for reading and playing games with the kids. A striking table lamp is all the ornament the room’s sculptural seating pieces need. Cozy wicker furniture makes the front porch, *right*, the perfect place to begin and end the day.





A fiery red slipper chair, left, mingles with an espresso-hue chest in the master bedroom. A lack of hardware on the chest reinforces designer Beverly Baribault's credo of simplicity. In the guest bedroom, below left, a new lamp sits atop an old fern stand that belonged to Christy's grandmother. Todd and Christy use the sun room, below, for reading and playing games with the kids. A striking table lamp is all the ornament the room's sculptural seating pieces need. Cozy wicker furniture makes the front porch, right, the perfect place to begin and end the day.



Know What You Want

To guide their decisions, the McCains wrote a mission statement with details down to the color scheme. "Having a clear idea saved us time and money," Christy says. Their mission focused on three key elements.

RESPECT THE ARCHITECTURE Rewired antiques and reproduction lights enhance the home's vintage character. "If you want to make an old home look in context, or a new home look historical, lamps are critical," Christy says.

CREATE AN EASY FLOW Neutral colors on all walls, with red, brown, and blue accents helped the home feel warm from room to room.

LINK INDOORS AND OUT "The front porch is the first room of our home," Christy says. She set the tone with indoor-like elements: brown velvet cushions on wicker furniture, a jute rug, and a table lamp with an antique ceiling-globe shade.

For buying information see page 297.

