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A Home for the Holidays

...and every season in between. Here's how a top-to-bottom redo turned a 1912 summer cottage into a year-round gathering spot for the whole family



By Deborah Baldwin
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Produced by Colette Scanlon
Styling by Christine Clark





DRAMATIC COMEBACK

The existing house was a forlorn lakeside cottage with sagging shed dormers. A graceful redo in the Shingle style gave it architectural interest to spare.

a Inspired by New England seaside cottages in the Shingle style, the warmed-up facade greets friends and family with arched windows, a foliage-filled window box, stately porch columns, and "weathered" cedar shingles.

b The living room was treated to a makeover that included custom built-ins for a more finished look.

c Raising the roof for a proper second story meant adding support. The coffered ceiling hides two new steel beams.

d The new knotty alder mantel and paneling and Santa Rita soapstone surround provide a focal point for the room and a warm backdrop for holiday trimmings.

SOMETIMES TO SAVE AN OLD HOUSE you have to take it apart and put it back together in a brand-new way. After three years of wondering how to update their 1912 lakeside cottage in Mound, Minnesota, Michael and Andrea Kerrison decided to forgo tinkering around the edges in favor of a whole-house redo. The result, from the new gambrel roof and columned front porch to the marble tile in the master bath, paradoxically looks older than the house they started out with.

The couple—newlyweds living in a place that Michael had acquired a few years earlier—appreciated the cottage’s compact footprint and had no desire to replace it with one of the red-brick McMansions that had sprouted in the area, a former summer colony outside Minneapolis. Still, the kitchen dated to the early 1980s, and the upstairs was half attic, with no real bunk space for Michael’s three young grandchildren. The house lacked insulation and air-conditioning, its boiler was wheezing, and architecturally it was neither here nor there. “We didn’t want to tear it down; we wanted to gently morph it,” says Andrea, an interior designer with a passion for weathered gray shingles, lazy front porches, and painstaking renovations.

As the couple dipped into her idea file, crammed with magazine clips and photographs that she took whenever they spotted a house they liked, one picture kept drawing them back. It showed a Shingle-style dwelling in Newport, Rhode Island, with a stately air and wide gambrel roofline. “It was a very clean aesthetic but without feeling cold,” Andrea says.

That was the look she wanted to bring to her new home, along with a decor that would convey the couple’s grown-up tastes and comfy-casual lifestyle. The raw ingredients: “Your typical lakefront home that had had a series of updates over the years, with shed dormers front and back, a 1950s picture window with crank-out windows on each side in one room and double-hungs in another,” says Andrea. “It lacked continuity—none of it made sense.”

But how to add a little design logic while preserving the home’s traditional warren of first-floor rooms? No. 1: “We took the plunge and tore off the roof,” says Andrea, allowing the house to gain a new facade—and master suite—without expanding out. And No. 2, “instead of completely demolishing interior walls, we decided to widen the passageways between rooms,” she says.

Armed with a detailed plan, the couple went to a local design-build firm, Lake

READY FOR COMPANY

Rather than demolish interior walls and lose the feel of the original house, the owners widened passageways for more light and better flow.

f
The opening between the kitchen and dining room went from 32 to 58 inches.

g
To preserve the existing red-oak floor and create a seamless transition from the kitchen, old and new planks were interlaced and finished with a walnut stain.

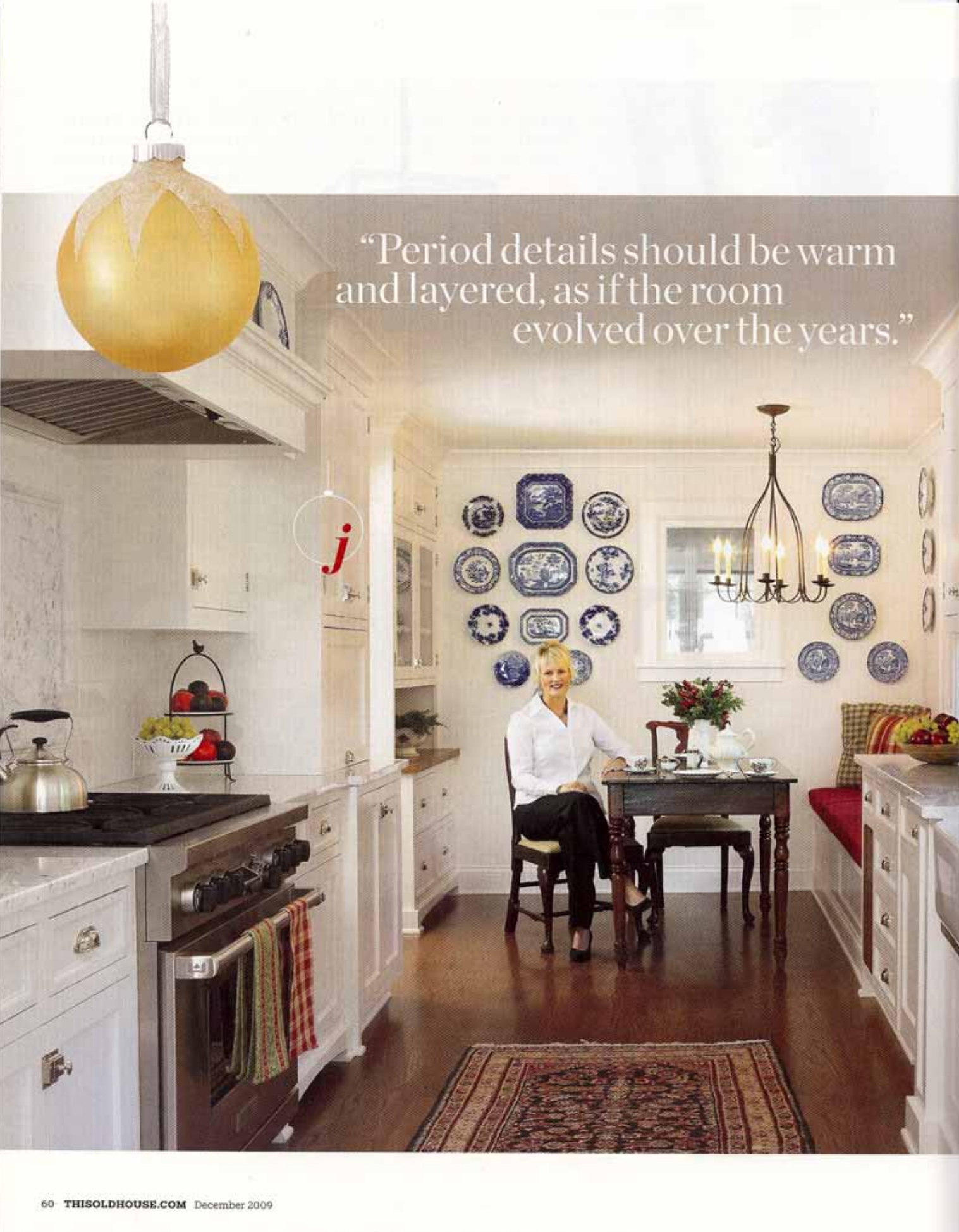
h
Flat-panel wainscoting adds a semiformal touch to a room with comfy-traditional furniture and a show-stopping pendant.

FLOOR PLANS

To preserve the traditional layout of the first floor while bringing in light and air, the homeowners cut wider passageways between rooms and opened them to new outdoor spaces. They also opted to build up instead of out, lopping off an attic and adding 500 square feet on the second floor. The upstairs expansion made room for a new guest bedroom, walk-in closets, and a master suite with a tiny balcony accessible through French doors.







“Period details should be warm and layered, as if the room evolved over the years.”

j



SHIPSHAPE
The galley kitchen gained fresh style with period details.

j Painted maple cabinets have beefy brass cup pulls with a warm nickel finish.

k Easy-to-clean glossy white subway tile adds vintage style.

l Nearly white Bianco Venetino marble counters reflect light from the room's two sets of windows.

m Vintage plates, including a couple of family heirlooms, personalize the space.

n A window seat carves out compact seating in the narrow room. A special niche in a nearby cabinet keeps party trays close at hand.

Country Builders, which helped translate it into renderings and work schedules. The goal was to bring light and spaciousness and easy-going decor into the formerly dark house, making it as comfortable and inviting as an old New England inn.

Another goal was to recycle and refurbish when possible. After the couple rented the house next door to get out from under the work crew's feet, Andrea made a stockpile of the hardware, a mishmash of brass hinges, glass knobs, and painted miscellany. "I had it all replated—even the screws—with an oil-rubbed bronze finish and reinstalled it to tie together the old and new rooms upstairs."

Most of the old radiators still worked, even if the 50-year-old boiler didn't, and sturdy red-oak flooring was hidden under a protective layer of carpet, awaiting a second life. Veteran floor doctor Roy Reichow salvaged boards from a bedroom to patch holes downstairs and alternated old and new boards in staggered lengths elsewhere. His surgery, along with a walnut stain topped by satin polyurethane, means "the naked eye will never see the change," he says.

To get the new rooms they wanted upstairs, where two and a half makeshift bedrooms and a bath sat alongside the attic, the couple had to underwrite major structural work below. Footings were repaired, and walls opened up to add studs. Channels for new wiring, ductwork, and plumbing had to be found, too. Lead carpenter Pieter Maas says a drainpipe found its way down inside a column, one of a pair designed to set off the opening between the dining and living rooms.

The crew added two steel beams over the living room, boxing them out and

SUITE MATES

Dark wood tones and crisp blues and whites unite the master bedroom and bath.

O Arched windows suggest the Palladian windows associated with the Shingle style.

P A black-stained acorn-post bed grounds feminine fabrics and wallpaper.

Q Calacatta gold marble sink tops brighten the dark wood vanities.

R A paneled door with frosted panes hides the WC.

▶ Shingle- minded?

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“We wanted a comfortable, clean aesthetic but without feeling cold—just cozy.”

adding a grid of false beams to create a coffered ceiling. They also dispatched an existing fireplace faced in crumbling pink-red brick. "The hearth didn't meet code; it was just sitting on the floor, so eventually it would have cracked," Maas says. They pulled down the brick, slipped a beam underneath a new firebox, and rebuilt the hearth with a surround designed to reinforce Andrea's deep-blue, crisp-white, and stained-wood decor.

Despite the heavy lifting, the layout downstairs stayed virtually as it was. To reinforce the galley kitchen's vintage bones, Andrea took out the fussy wallpaper, blond cabinets, and laminate counters and added pale marble work surfaces, painted recessed-panel cabinets, bin pulls, and subway tile.

Building a house from scratch might have been easier. "Walls were totally out of plumb," says Maas, referring to the challenges of ironing out floors, hanging cabinets, and replacing windows and doors when nothing wants to sit right. "We did a lot of reframing and readjusting," he says simply—and ordered cabinets with extrawide stiles to fill unavoidable gaps.

Seven months later, the Kerrisons had their new old house, with cedar shingles replacing the painted ones and a front-facing gambrel roof over a foliage-filled window box. With its extra space, the house now easily handles Andrea's home office and visits by an extended family that includes four grown children and three grandkids under the age of 5. "Over the holidays, it's chaos," Andrea says happily.

One part early-20th-century summer cottage, one part 19th-century seaside New England, and one part contemporary flow and function, the house has warm, comfortably furnished rooms tucked inside a brand new shell, augmented by front and side porches and a deck in back to maximize outdoor living. "Yes, it does look like it's always been here," says Andrea, who is credited with having the vision to see the project through, right down to the custom stain on the faux-weathered shingles. "Friends walk in and think all I did was redecorate!" ■



behind the design

The biggest inspiration for the redo was time spent in New England, where Michael and Andrea, an interior designer, were drawn to houses on the water with barn-style roofs, deep front porches, and shingles pickled by the salt air. Here are some of the items Andrea put together in her idea file.

exterior style

Photographs of spacious yet comfy seaside houses in the Shingle style inspired the front-facing gambrel roof, arched windows, curved window box, and wide, white-columned front porch.

color palette

A favorite book, *Blue and White Living* by Stephanie Hoppen, reminded Andrea how much she loved her grandmother's blue-and-white plates, with patterns similar to ones she found on a pair of china balls. Fabrics in those colors and warm beige round out the palette.

fixed finishes

Samples of subway tile and pale marble fed the design of the vintage-style kitchen and baths. Existing hardware was salvaged, given an antiqued-bronze finish, and reused to provide a link to the house's past.

