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RENOVATION STYLE

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LAKESIDE
COTTAGE
LAKE MINNETONKA
MINNESOTA



This Photo Andrea Kerrison tends her front-yard flowers. Shake shingles and a muted color scheme give the lakeside home a distinctly New England feel. *Opposite* An open porch lends a welcoming air to the front of the Kerrison home.



Seaworthy

A Midwestern couple channel a love of all things New England into a restrained redo of a waterfront cottage.

BY KELLY ROBERSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN GILMORE PRODUCED BY ALECIA STEVENS STYLING BY DAVID ANGER





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Beyond Andrea and Mike Kerrison's living room windows, quiet has settled over the snow- and ice-covered shores of Lake Minnetonka. The Kerrisons' screen porch is hushed, too, its comfy couch and chairs covered to guard against the cold Minnesota winter. But inside, the home exudes a cheerful comfort in stark contrast with the outside world: Sunlight streams through plentiful windows and French doors, a kettle hums, and the comforting smell of soup drifts from the stove.

One hundred years ago, Lake Minnetonka—unique for its patchwork of bays and status as the biggest body of water in Minnesota—was home to throngs of summer-only dwellers. But by the end of the 20th century, the easy commute and revitalized lakeshores had drawn year-round dwellers from nearby Minneapolis and St. Paul. When the Kerrisons first saw their lakefront property in 2003, its seclusion charmed; beyond a picket fence, there are few clues to indicate a home is on the property. "There's a deep setback of at least 100 feet, and you can't even see neighbors' homes through the trees," Andrea says. "Mike just pinched himself when he saw the for-sale sign."



Above Even though Andrea, a designer, mostly stayed true to her home's main-level layout, she had the interior spaces almost completely rebuilt, including a new fireplace surround. **Opposite** Pretty antiques and reproductions, such as this mahogany cabinet and 18th-century Chinese jar, complement the home's classic elements, such as new columns and added crown moldings.





Perfect Pairings

As an interior designer, Andrea Kerrison spends her days studying how other people live and formulating designs to help them better enjoy their spaces. In her home, she pairs architectural features, lighting, furnishings, and accessories. We asked her about her approach and how it helps her get the look she wants.

There are lots of pairs in your living spaces—two chairs, two ottomans, and two sconces. What's the logic behind that?

A. Symmetry is an old design trick. What the eye sees once, it wants to see again. It's one of the first things I learned in school. It provides order and balance and gives a sense of calm.

Beyond buying two chairs, what are some other ways homeowners can translate this?

A. As you are decorating, you can use it in lots of ways. A centerpiece on a dining room table, for example, works well in pairs. Or group three vases, but the center vase could be in a different style and filled with a different flower. Then, somewhere else in the room, repeat that flower and vase for balance.

While the solitude of the property was a draw, there was little else to recommend the building. Built in 1912, the 1½-story cottage was a mishmash. The outside—without a single deck, patio, or porch—was conspicuous by its lack of style. Inside, pink wallpaper covered the galley kitchen, and the only full bathroom was upstairs. A second bedroom left space for a twin bed and little else, and downstairs the details—different windows, faux wood floor, crown molding installed upside down—bore the careless hand of previous renovations. Finally, most of the home's systems, including an ancient boiler and knob-and-tube electrical wiring, were about to go bust.

None of that mattered, especially to Andrea, an interior designer. "I immediately realized its potential," she says. "When I looked at the home the first time, I thought it would be easy to make this place special."

Above The couple do much of their spring, summer, and fall living on the screen porch, which offers connections to the back deck and the lake. **Opposite** Andrea and husband Mike rely on a mostly blue, white, and beige color scheme for textural fabrics, such as mohair and linen, and upholstered furniture, finishes, accents, and wallpaper, including the patterned version in the home's spacious dining room.



The couple—Mike in his 50s with four adult children and Andrea in her 40s—lived in the house for a few years, getting a feel for what the spaces could be, what their needs were, and how they wanted to live on the property. Some of the home’s failings were immediately obvious, but how to give it a presence and imbue it with a style was a bit of a conundrum.

Fortunately, the fix turned out to be easy. Both Andrea and Mike are history and East Coast buffs: They love the charm of the region and details of its houses, particularly the signature Cape Cod, shake-shingle cottages. The couple decided their renovated home would be the perfect place to showcase those passions. “I believed we could just very gently tweak the house to give it the style we were attracted to,” Andrea says.

Andrea gave the main-level layout just a nudge but opened the spaces up and added details such as molding, a new fireplace surround, an airy staircase, and columns to lend quality and elegance previously lacking. Upstairs, the half story became a full upper level, with a large master suite, a second full bath, two more spacious bedrooms, and a charming den with a sleeping nook. Outside, Andrea added two decks—one lakeside, the other streetside—and a secluded screen porch to one side. In front and back, columns, windows and window



Above Each room, including the kitchen, follows a blue, white, and beige color scheme to lighten and brighten the spaces. The house dates to about 1912; although Andrea essentially gutted the cottage, she made few changes to the home’s layout on the main level. **Opposite** Andrea tucked a small eat-in space, including a banquette, into one end of the kitchen. The bench lifts up, creating convenient storage. The walls provide display space for some of her ever-growing collection of 18th-century plates. An open cabinet stores serving trays.



BEST IDEAS

45

Throughout the home, white, beige, and blue are used to evoke sand and water; the first two warm the blue's cool disposition.

46

Displaying beloved items, such as the homeowners' collection of 18th-century plates, gives this home a distinct personality.

47

The homeowners liked the charm and character of existing door and cabinet hardware, so they had it all replated.

48

A roomy back deck and side screen porch open the home to the wonders of Lake Minnetonka, a large lake in Minnesota.

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Widened doorways and hallways and, in a few places, increased ceiling heights open transitions between this home's rooms.



boxes, shake shingles, and a muted gray-and-white color scheme add architectural detail very much in character with the homes that dot the Atlantic seaboard.

The bright color scheme and carefully edited collections complement the home's new historic bent and reflect the couple's pursuits. The comfortable, sophisticated effect is two-fold: light and airy in the warm, relaxed summer; bright and welcoming during the cold hibernating months of winter.

While it came of age during the summer-only golden era of lakeside cottages, the restyled home has embraced its year-round life. In winter, exterior spaces go dormant and Andrea and Mike retreat inside. Once the lake thaws, they spend as much time as possible on the decks and screen porch, where they start the day with coffee and the paper and end it with wine and friends. "The lake has a life of its own," Andrea says. "It has energy and people and all these things happening, and our home gives us a front-row seat. It really is a special place."

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Voice of Experience

"My own personal design philosophy is that you take what you have and work with the structure. We asked, 'What is the home?' and that fed into our interests and passions. We wanted to have the idea of living on the lake influence people's experience of the home, and we wanted

it to be casual and comfortable. Every chair you sit in is comfortable but sophisticated. It's a year-round home, not just a beach house. In the winter, it lives differently, but the lifestyle on a lake in winter is different."
Homeowner and interior designer Andrea Kerrison

This Photo On the upper level, Andrea added a full bedroom and bathroom. The master suite got a new fireplace and large walk-in closets. *Opposite* A delicate pattern on the master bedroom's wallpaper and draperies adds a soft touch to the sturdy black wood bed frame.



The Plans, *Before & After*

Before the renovation, the Kerrisons liked how their main-level spaces worked together—but not how the rooms felt oddly cut off from the pretty lakeside view. To solve that, they made big changes to the home's back side as well as enlarging and opening up the upper level.





Coastal Look on the Lake

1. Aged bronze, lantern-style fixtures lend distinct coastal character to the lakefront home. 2. Exposed rafters above the master bedroom windows accent the muted gray shake shingles, a common Cape Cod detail. 3. Swooping columns sheathed in small rounded stones support the expansive rear deck; a trellis offers shade during summer's intense sun. 4. The back facade of the Kerrison home opens to the expanse of Lake Minnetonka.

