

Better Homes & Gardens.

cottage STYLE

PRETTY
ROOMS
for easy living

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This photo: "We designed this whole shelving area so Johnny would have a place to store his vinyl," homeowner Anna Sherwood says of her husband's beloved collection. "We made sure it's a few inches off the ground because it's not good for vinyl to collect dust." *Opposite:* A new skylight pours sunshine into the family room, where original knotty pine walls now don't crisp white.



loving legacy

Renovating her great-grandmother's cottage, a homeowner carries the best of the past into her young family's future.

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This photo: "We call this the sand room," Anna says of the back entry. Light-tone engineered flooring is an effective foil for a gazillion grains of sand traipsed in from the beach just seven houses down. To the right sits a handy laundry room. In the corner, Anna requested "some 'everything' drawers and a place for the girls' cute artwork they're always bringing home."



Left: The kitchen's easy-care quartz countertops look like marble yet readily forgive whatever homemade pizza nights dish out. Below: White paint transformed the cottage's original baby blue exterior. Bottom: A 7-foot dining table and bench make it easy to squeeze in more friends. Under the stairs, two hidden doors push open to reveal storage and a children's secret hideaway.

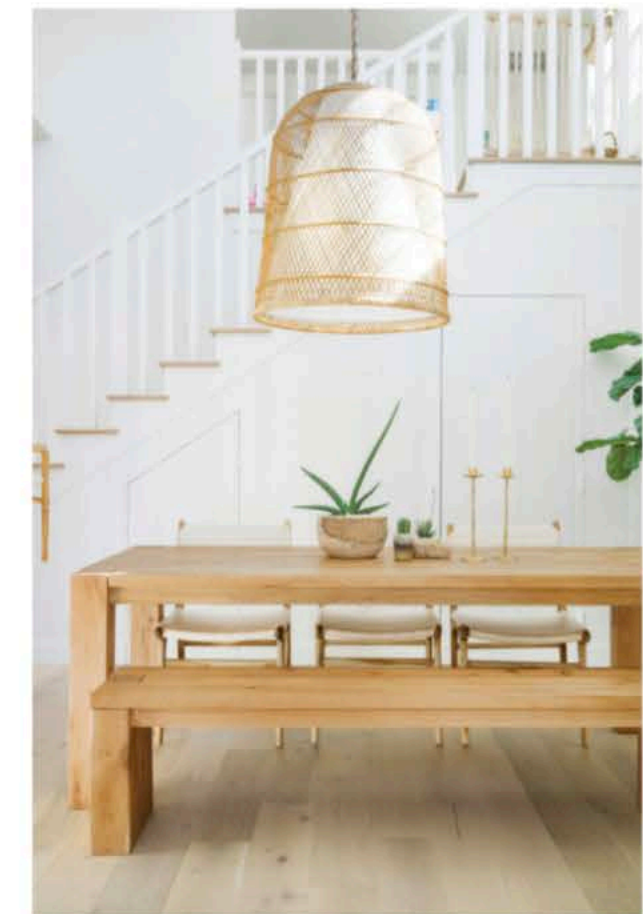


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The scent of salt water and the faint sound of barking seals drift through the Dutch door of Johnny and Anna Sherwood's cottage as Anna chats in the living room with her mom. "We were just discussing green shag carpet," Anna says. "When my grandparents lived in this house, I remember sorting my Halloween candy on that shag. My mom remembers sitting in the very same spot and watching the Beatles on Ed Sullivan for the first time."

When you live in the 1939 beach cottage your great-grandmother, grandparents, and parents inhabited before you, memories reach into every nook like grains of sand. Especially when that cottage is on California's charming Balboa Island.

To preserve the home's classic character when renovating to gain space for their two young girls, Johnny and Anna joined the original cottage with a rear apartment and garage rather than starting from scratch. The results? A lofty new dining room and kitchen with the girls' bedrooms, bath, and open playroom above. "One of the biggest goals was to make the spaces feel light, bright, and open," designer Mindy Gayer says, referencing the pitched ceilings.





Timeless elements fit the age of the home as well as the young family. Pale white oak floors and neutral walls warmed by the earthy, organic textures of rattan and wood capture the beach cottage feel, “but also look like they could have come from Indonesia,” Gayer says, referencing Johnny and Anna’s year spent abroad as newlyweds. “Their travels influenced a curated, collected look.”

Filled with meaningful pieces like coral from Indonesia’s Gili Islands and a painting passed down through the family, the house has soul, Anna says. “And I think you can feel that.”

Passersby seem to notice as well. “I see people stop all the time,” says Gayer, who lives just a few houses down. “Their Dutch doors are open most days, and their girls are playing outside. There’s something very approachable about their house.”

People come by, stand, and just look. “A lot of people have been coming to the island for years and are sad to see so many of the older homes going away,” Anna says. “When they saw that we were refurbishing and not just knocking the house down, they would actually come to the door to say thank you.” □

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Above: Johnny and Anna focused largely on the addition, making just minor updates to the existing master area. In the bath, which also serves as a powder room, the freshened-up vanity sports new paint, hardware, and a quartz countertop. A back door formerly served as an entrance from the beach, with exterior cleats to hang wet towels and bathing suits. *Right:* Anna polished the entry’s original light fixture to bring back its copper shine. *Opposite:* “It’s snug, but it feels very proportionate to the space,” designer Mindy Gayer says of the 10×10-foot master bedroom layered with gentle patterns. Plants in hanging pots breathe life into the room. “The girls help take care of them, and when there’s new growth, it makes us happy,” Anna says. “It’s a nice reflection of our home that things are thriving.”



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Above left: Four-year-old Piper drifts to sleep in Johnny's great-great-grandmother's bed. Anna chose linens from Furbish Studio, an online store with diverse global offerings, to achieve a one-of-a-kind look. Above: Placing the girls' dual bath where the former apartment kitchen once stood took advantage of plumbing already in place. Left: Located on the stairway landing, the play area lets the girls feel connected to action below. "The artwork displays some of Johnny and Anna's favorite cities from their year of travel," Gayer says. "I think it's sweet that now their little ones get to play in this room filled with places their parents hope they'll also get to see someday."