



OPEN HOUSE

Wood walls and floors create an easygoing ambience.

By GLADYS MONTGOMERY Photos by GRIDLEY+GRAVES



With its unfussy attitude, its ability to take on sandy feet and its colorful palette—evoking sea glass, sorbet and other summery delights—this welcoming bungalow in WaterColor, Florida, combines all that is best about life at the beach. Built in 2003 and a mere 200 steps from the sea, the 1920s-style cottage was deliberately designed to be timeless.

“When I was a young man, I used to visit a friend’s beach house in Savannah. With this place, I wanted to recapture the feeling of what it was like to go there. There is a lineage of this type of house in every coastal state. They are not real fancy,” says Jim Strickland, founder of the architectural firm Historical Concepts, which creates new buildings in traditional styles. Strickland also is the co-author, with Susan Sully, of a new book: *Coming Home: The Southern Vernacular House* (Rizzoli, 2012).

COOL EFFECT (left) Similar to traditional “Southern cracker” houses, this bungalow has a center hall, with doors at the front and rear to promote airflow. The open doorway and the transom above it also enhance ventilation and create a sense of spaciousness. **DECO DESIGN** (above) Built in 2003, this beach house captures the feel of a 1920s bungalow, thanks to brackets under its front dormer, louvered shutters on the porch and proportions that recall a bygone era.



AGING GRACEFULLY

ADDING CHARACTER TO NEW CONSTRUCTION

Create a new home that is rooted in history, or imbue a nondescript house with old-fashioned charm, by using an historical American building style—Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Carpenter Gothic, Arts & Crafts bungalow—as a reference point.

OPT FOR design and décor drawn from one style or period; or, aim for the feel of a house that's evolved over time.

COMBINE retro style with 21st-century amenities, be they walk-in closets, jet tubs or central air conditioning.

SHOP FOR architectural salvage pieces to enrich your interiors: mantels, weather-beaten shutters to put on a wall or enclose built-in shelving, old windows with wavy glass (with the right care and a good storm window, they might offer a better R-value than new vinyl windows).

Minimizing Maintenance

Because beach season is short, life at the shore is about making the most of precious days. In keeping with that idea, this home maximizes space while helping to minimize maintenance time. The bungalow can sleep 16 people comfortably. Totalling about 2,100 square feet, it comprises an open gathering and cooking space downstairs, a living room, four upstairs bedrooms, four-and-one-half baths, and a front porch fitted with shutters and a pierced rail to provide privacy for additional overnight guests.

Interior features include large windows that fill the house with sunlight and create a sense of expansiveness, transoms that allow salt-scented ocean breezes to circulate, doors on barn sliders,

ACTION CENTRAL (left and below) A large kitchen provides ample space for dining and hanging out. Large windows welcome in sunlight and salt-air breezes, while flooring of distressed heart pine stands up to wear-and-tear. Overhead, vintage gas fixtures wired for electricity (from sandyspringsgalleries.com) create a sense of heritage, but stainless appliances and ample cabinetry fit modern living.





RESTFUL ROMANCE The living room décor combines flea market finds with accents that add jolts of color. Comfortable sleep sofas from Crate & Barrel accommodate overnight guests; their slipcovers can be whisked off and washed in a flash.



Make it: BOTTLE LAMP

EASY

Select a sturdy glass vessel that narrows at the neck. At a hardware store, pick up a lamp adapter kit. It should contain a socket, cord set, harp, finial and hardware. From there, you have two options: Set up the wire assembly and hang wire outside of glass; or, drill the glass so wire can be threaded through. To drill glass, stabilize the bottle in a vice, mark the spot to drill, put on safety glasses and gloves, and then proceed slowly, spritzing the area every few seconds with water to keep the glass and bit cool. When hole is complete, sand any sharp edges and install socket, wire and harp.

EASIER

Buy an adapter kit that is already fitted to a cork stopper, for wine bottles, or a Mason jar lid. Just add a bulb and shade and you're done!



SECRET COMPARTMENT (this page and top right, opposite) A double bed—tucked into a dormer and on a base with drawers for storage—is flanked by two additional beds. Reminiscent of sleeping compartments on a train, it makes a perfect spot when grandchildren gather for beach vacations.



HISTORICAL HUES (left) Wooden wallboards, vintage light fixtures and two old-time metal washbasins converted to sinks and painted a bright yellow imbue a bathroom with singular personality. **RETRO CHIC** (bottom) Green, white and yellow, deployed selectively on the wood flooring, walls and trim, continue the 1920s color theme in this bath, with its claw-foot tub and new pedestal sinks.



and platform beds tucked into dormers as well as into the slope of the upstairs ceilings.

Slipcovered couches and flea market furnishings are easy to care for. Cleaning time is kept to a minimum, too: “The dogs can lay around, and the children can jump on anything. There are no worries here,” Jim says, “When there’s sand on the floors, we get it out with a blower.”

Getting a Feeling of “Heritage”

Instead of relying upon nautical clichés such as lighthouses, and blue-and-white striped and anchor-patterned fabrics, interior designer Ruth Edwards, based in Hilton Head, South Carolina, helped Jim and his wife, Linda, achieve what Jim calls “the feeling of heritage.” Here, the beach theme appears in objects such as old lithographs of sea creatures, canoe paddles and fishing tackle hung on the wall. As in an authentically old beach cottage, wood walls and ceilings, and rough-edged heart pine floorboards create an easygoing ambience. “The floorboards are patched in places,





so you'd swear they're old. We have old rim locks on the doors, and lighting includes old gas factory fixtures wired for electricity," Jim says.

Faded quilts and old wicker add to the bungalow's charm, while a color palette combining white, sea glass green, sunny yellow and tomato red recalls hues popular in the 1920s. A wall of vintage photos celebrates family, contributing to the home's patina and sense of history.

"One day, our 2-year-old granddaughter locked herself in a bathroom. We had to cut a chunk out of the door to unlock it," Jim recalls. "Until we could repair it, we patched it with a bit of paper. Her cousin wrote on it: 'Don't peek.' If this happened in our main home, we'd be mortified. But here, we thought it was great." The paper patch is now part of the character of the bungalow, whose legacy is sure to last many generations to come.



"What I love about our bungalow's style is the feeling of heritage that we created in a new home." – JIM STRICKLAND

DRESSED FOR REST (above left) The bungalow's master bedroom has a deliberately faded palette. Lighting, here as elsewhere in the house, includes vintage gaslights wired for electricity. **SUMMERTIME BLUES** (above right) The porch is a cozy, breezy retreat, where a mix of old and new wicker ensures relaxation. Shutters keep it cool and afford privacy.