

CountryLiving

perfect paints
for walls, ceilings,
doors, and more!

**More
Kitchens
Than...
Maybe Ever?!**
So. Many
Ideas.

THE *Easy, Breezy* **HOW-TO ISSUE!**

Budget Buys That Look Luxe

Stress Baking Beyond Banana Bread

Smart Tricks for Small Spaces

Secrets to a Happier Home Office

Fun Stuff for Back-to-Schoolers

Shortcuts to Better Bookshelves

*How wide? How high?
How much?*

**Answers to all your
design questions**

COUNTRYLIVING.COM \$4.99



Higher Learning IN THE Low Country

A Designer Spills Her Secrets



TO HELP A SOUTH CAROLINA RIVER HOUSE REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL, DESIGNER HEATHER CHADDUCK HILLEGAS LOOKED TO THE LOW-COUNTRY LANDSCAPE.

written by CAROLINE COLLINS MCKENZIE
photographs by DAVID HILLEGAS *produced by* HEATHER CHADDUCK HILLEGAS



INSPIRED BY NATURE

The cottage's predominantly brown, blue, and green color scheme speaks to its surroundings.

CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT (1) Stacked art and a wood hat rack add layers of texture to the living room's planked walls. (2) The cottage's exterior exudes the trademarks of low-country architecture: a standing seam metal roof, lap siding, and board-and-batten shutters (painted Black Forest by Sherwin-Williams) paired with iron shutter dogs. (3) Solid wood interior doors are painted a slightly darker shade (Natural Linen; sherwin-williams.com) than the walls and trim (Alabaster; sherwin-williams.com) to better showcase the handsome lines of the five-panel design. (4) Pleated-top curtains, hung near the ceiling to increase the room's visual height, create a cozy sitting nook in the guest bedroom. Use elbow connectors (a type of drapery hardware that allows a ninety-degree fit from both sides) to help achieve the wraparound look. (5) The Freys' view of the Okatie River. (6) In lieu of a box spring in the main bedroom, the bed skirt is hand-sewn to a custom bed frame, giving more storage space underneath.



Homeowners Gerard and Shelia Frey with their rescue pup, Tippi



On the screened-in porch, vintage demijohn bottles were custom wired and topped with outdoor-friendly shades. Lamp conversion kits help get a similar look (lehmanns.com).

W

hat would it hurt to go look?" Those were the fateful words Shelia Frey said to her husband,

Gerard, when they heard a home in picturesque Oldfield, a small community on the banks of South Carolina's Okatie River, was about to hit the market. The couple, who was vacationing there at the time, had been seriously toying with the idea of relocating to the idyllic Southern enclave. And so, they found themselves with noses pressed to the glass, peering through windows of said cottage when the current owner caught them red-handed—or at least a little red-faced. The house, designed by Jim Strickland of Historical Concepts (historicalconcepts.com), had a laid-back river-house feel that instantly connected with the couple. "As with all Historical Concepts projects, the aesthetic is rooted in the past but very much functions for modern life," says Shelia. While the bones were there—heart pine floors, wood-paneled walls—the cottage was also showing its "beach-house rental" roots. "We wanted a house that felt sophisticated. We didn't see it as a vacation home but a new forever home," says Shelia. Enter interior and textile designer Heather Chadduck Hillegas (heatherchadduck.com), who connected with the Freys' traditional-meets-comfortable style. "The house needed to become what it was always intended to be: clean, collected, and teeming with Southern warmth," says Heather.

Pick a pattern "maker."

When scheming out a room, Heather determines which item will feature a bold fabric and then builds out from there. In the living room, a sofa covered in a floral ("Coromandel"; thibautdesign.com) takes center stage among more solid and subdued elements like the large blue ottoman and muted rug. Meanwhile in the guest suites, curtains usher in an expanse of meandering motifs, juxtaposing quieter elements such as sisal rugs and primarily neutral bed linens.

Scale up lighting.

"What can I say? I love big light fixtures," admits Heather, who thoughtfully introduced new fixtures to the Freys' home. (It was already blessed with a number of handmade lanterns by Eloise Pickard of Georgia's acclaimed Sandy Springs Galleries.) "Amping up the scale of a light fixture brings a bold, architectural element to the room," she says. In the living room, she removed a puny ceiling fan in favor of a whopping 73-inch-wide bronze chandelier (lowcountryoriginals.com). In the breakfast nook (page 72), Heather's favorite pendant (continued on pg. 73)



Alabaster Sherwin-Williams

A single frond or branch—like these clipped straight from the Freys' yard—adds maximum impact for minimal effort.

Relaxed roman shades add softness without overwhelming. A delicate, hand-dyed linen is Heather's fabric of choice for the perfect swoop.

The home features a host of lightweight accent chairs that can be easily moved around as socializing requires.



Lullaby
Sherwin-Williams

Heather added new fabric ("Eastlake" by Jasper Fabrics; ladesignconcepts.com) and a skirt to Shelia's existing dining chairs. The latter detail keeps the breakfast nook from being too "leggy."



To give air to the itty-bitty kitchen, Heather painted the lower cabinets a happy hue but matched the uppers to the wall.

Debonair
Sherwin-Williams

("Modern Schoolhouse Lantern"; circa Lighting.com) steals the show. In the bedrooms, lanterns hover above beds in lieu of flush mounts. (When placing lights above tables or beds, Heather recommends 30 to 36 inches of clearance.)

Set a breezy tone with bamboo blinds.

"Chik" blinds, made from razor-thin strips of bamboo and used in India for centuries, filter the sunshine that pours into the breakfast nook. The casual rolled style and imperfectly aligned arrangement reinforces an effortlessly layered look, which nicely offsets the more buttoned-up upholstered pieces. Heather's go-to source for this blinds style is Gilas Design split chik blinds in "Natural" (through heatherchadduck.com).

Don't pass up a pedestal.

The Freys' cottage instantly felt like home because it's brimming with family antiques. "There's a comfort that comes from surrounding yourself with items that tell your story," says Heather, who gravitates to English chests of drawers and pedestal tables for their versatility in eating areas, bedrooms, entryways, and more. Of the latter, Heather adds: "It's a decorating triple threat: a ladylike silhouette, compact footprint, and plenty of work surface." When scouring online auction houses, you can also try the phrase "tripod tilt-top" table.

When in doubt, skirt it.

In small spaces, hefty stainless steel appliances tend to overpower the room. An easy fix (for mini fridges, washing (continued on pg. 74)



Classic Light Buff
Sherwin-Williams

A vintage landscape fills the trapped white space, creating a "window" where one wasn't possible.

machines, or a sink needing hidden storage): a simple skirt, like the blue-trimmed one in the guest suite, which you can easily replicate with just a yard of fabric and a tension rod.

Treat the ceiling like a wall.

Heather considers ceilings to be the “fifth wall” of a room, and she frequently paints them a color or even adorns them with wallpaper. In the Freys’ home, blue was a no-brainer. “I was inspired by the Southern tradition of painting porch ceilings ‘haint blue’ [said to ward off evil spirits]. With wooden ceilings throughout the home, I decided to treat them as I would an exterior space.” (Tip: Pick a slightly more saturated blue than you want it to appear to avoid it looking washed out at peak daylight. Lullaby and Sea Salt by Sherwin-Williams are two of Heather’s favorites.)



Swap the standard hook for vintage antlers!

Herbal Wash
Sherwin-Williams



MAKE A BED LIKE A STYLIST

Designer Heather Chaddock Hillegas shares the step-by-step secrets of her signature layering.

1

Start simple. Try a cream or white quilted linen coverlet (you can bleach the latter), along with matching standard shams, as your base. You’ll want two shams for a queen bed (Heather suggests two 22”-by-33” shams for a king). Before placing on the bed, iron on low for a crisp finish.

2

Add contrasting trim. To give white sheets and pillow cases a customized look, pull from the room’s color scheme. (Heather cites Peacock Alley’s “Boutique” collection for a range of custom-embroidered colorways.)

3

Swap throw pillows for a single bolster. Heather prefers one oversize pillow with a less expected shape over a hoard of fussy throw pillows. Bonus: At night, you can use it to divide the bed into “your” side!

4

Add a cozy fringed throw at the foot. Try a cashmere or chunky cotton in a barely there shade for softness and subtle color.

For the Finishing Touch...

Look closely. You’ll spot a **round mirror** above each bed. “Artwork should be at eye level, which is hard to do above a bed. But a mirror adds a touch of sparkle day or night,” she says.

ILLUSTRATION, MELINDA JOSIE.



Over-the-bed sconces maximize the surface area of bedside furnishings, a necessity in a small room like this one.

In compact spaces, a dresser ekes out far more storage than a run-of-the-mill nightstand.

Serged-edge sisal carpets bring instant coziness. Leave 6 to 10 inches of flooring exposed on all sides for a perfectly snug fit.