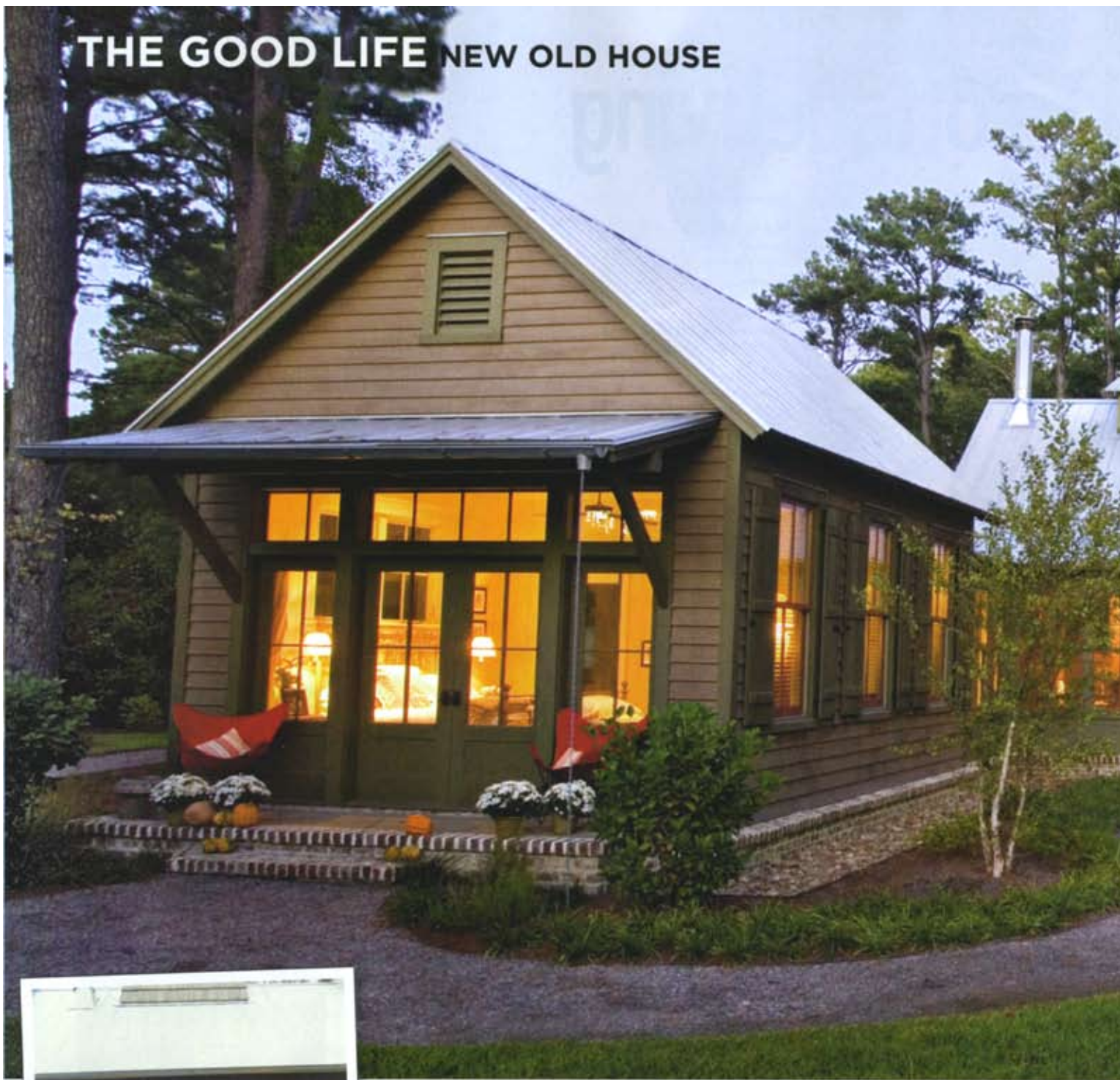


THE GOOD LIFE NEW OLD HOUSE



“It’s airy like a barn
and cozy like a cottage”

In South Carolina’s lush and languid Lowcountry, residential designer Terry Pylant finds inspiration for a new cottage in the region’s historic barns

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SOMETIMES THE SIMPLEST WAY TO FIND OUT what someone truly wants is to ask instead what they *don't* want. Take the case of Terry Pylant, a partner with the Atlanta-based architecture firm Historical Concepts, who was hired to design a cottage for a family of four in the barrier island community of Okatie, South Carolina. "Although the family didn't have a firm grasp of what they wanted to build, they knew exactly what they didn't want, which was another typical Low-country cottage," Terry says.

So Terry and his design team asked their clients to create an "inspiration file" composed of magazine and book images that appealed to them. After sifting through the family's mound of photos, Terry discerned a common theme: barns. "One image of an old barn that had been remodeled into a house had a Post-it attached with a handwritten note that read, 'Fun! Not sure I want to live in a barn, but I love the idea of adapting one into a house,'" he recalls. "The family really enjoys riding horses, so it made >

The cottage has two distinct parts: living areas bisected by an open-air dogtrot, and a master wing (above, left) with bedroom, bath, and private porch.

At the front entry (left), concrete floors allow the kids to "literally hose off after playing outside," says Terry.

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perfect sense that barn architecture struck a chord with them.”

A barn-inspired cottage fit not only the homeowners’ personality but also this locale. Their lot on Spring Island, a cottage community committed to maintaining its natural setting, is within walking distance of the neighborhood’s stables. It’s also surrounded by miles of hiking and horseback riding trails that cross the undeveloped nature reserve in the center of the island. Nearby remains of historic farm buildings like grain bins and stables convinced Terry that a new barn built to look like an old one (and converted into a family home) would fit right in.

While basing the design on a nonresidential structure answered the homeowners’ call for something atypical, it also presented Terry with a significant challenge: how to incorporate playful details that would clearly reference the barn inspiration without making the house feel cartoonish or themed. “We wanted the house to >



“The key to making new bricks look old is the masonry work,” Terry says. Bricklayers applied indigenous white mortar, historically made from ground oyster shells, unevenly to make the fireplace and surround (top) and breezeway walls (above) look ages old.

GLOSSARY

DOG TROT a covered, open-air passage/porch joining two parts of a house



A metal drum that's been converted into an oversize hood provides a focal point in the open kitchen and living room. "We left it unfinished to age and rust naturally," says Terry.

A bank of a dozen individual casement windows bathes the dining room in natural light and offers views of the pond (and an occasional alligator!) behind the cottage.

be whimsical but didn't want to go overboard," he says. "It was important to the homeowners that the cottage feel comfortable for all generations, from their children to frequently visiting grandparents."

The solution to satisfying everyone's needs lay in taking a more classic approach to designing the cottage's interior. "We limited the use of barn iconography to architectural features of the house—and mostly exterior details—to achieve that subtle suggestion of a barn without shoving it down visitors' throats," explains Terry. Inside the cottage, rustic accents like planked walls and rough-hewn timbers mix with industrial touches, such as waxed concrete floors and traditional furnishings updated with modern lines, to break the building out of the farmhouse mold. "It's really a Carolina family cottage that's wrapped in the shell of a barn," Terry says.

The designer took a cue from Lowcountry vernacular architecture and included a central dogtrot (see Glossary, page 16), which separates the children's bedrooms from the main living spaces, in an L-shaped floor plan. Relics from the pre-air-conditioned days of the 19th and early 20th centuries, central dogtrots were often used in Southern homes to allow cool breezes to filter through to adjoining rooms.

Here, the dogtrot can be left open for summertime enjoyment or sealed off during cooler months, serving the dual purpose of bringing the family together at the center of the cottage and giving the children a place to themselves. "Separating the kids' bedrooms from the main house gives them a sense of autonomy for now and some space to grow into down the road when they come home with families of their own," says Terry. "People tend to design for where they are right at that moment, but I always tell clients to consider what the future will bring." >



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Notice the Details

1 Upstairs: One of four shed dormers that pop up from the cottage's roof brings light into the bunkroom, which is painted white to reflect the sunshine.

2 Master bath: Café curtains offer privacy yet still allow light to flood through windows above the clawfoot tub.

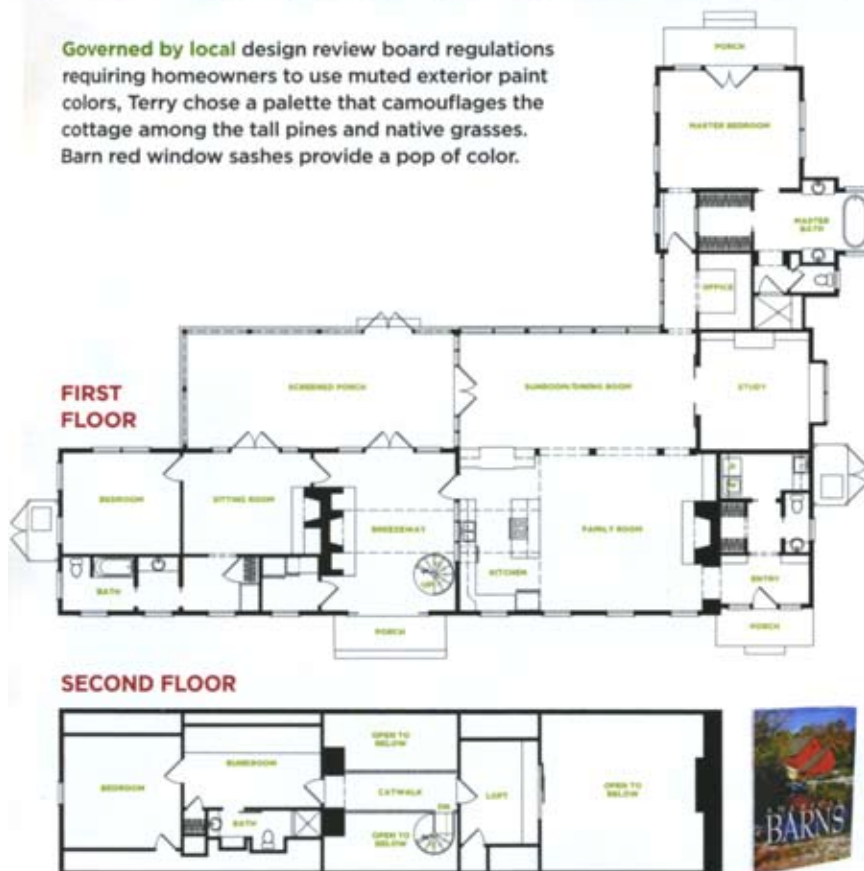
3 Barn doors: Echoing the front entry, these wide rolling doors save space on a narrow corridor and slide closed to bring peace and quiet to the study.

4 Shutters: Frequently called Bermuda or Bahama shutters, these top-mounted, board-and-batten versions are a nod to the old barns that inspired the house's overall design.





Governed by local design review board regulations requiring homeowners to use muted exterior paint colors, Terry chose a palette that camouflages the cottage among the tall pines and native grasses. Barn red window sashes provide a pop of color.



The Plan

First floor The limited use of space-hogging hallways and the combination of snug bedrooms with more graciously sized living areas help the 2,900-square-foot cottage live large.

Second floor An open-air catwalk spans the breezeway and brings light from the lofts to the main floor.

For an in-depth look at the inspiration for this cottage, check out *American Barns: A Pictorial History* by Jill Caravan (Courage Books, 1995); amazon.com. ■