

A generous porch runs the length of the front of the cottage to take advantage of Gulf breezes. Original shutters were repaired and painted turquoise. The hot pink chevron rug pops against the painted concrete floor.

bungalow *reborn*

A fun and funky upgrade turns a dated cottage along Florida's Gulf Coast into a seaside free spirit that makes the most of every square inch.

Writer and producer: ELEANOR LYNN NESMITH Photographer: JEAN ALLSOPP



The open and airy main living space is sectioned into four distinct gathering areas. A jute rug anchors the central lounging area. A daybed tucked in a corner provides extra sleeping space or a spot for an afternoon nap.





T

There's a lot to love about the 20-mile

stretch of beach known fondly as Scenic 30A. Tammy and Jan Perkins certainly think so. Four years ago, when a neglected little Florida house on a large lot with Gulf views came on the market, the savvy couple saw potential. “We had often walked past the cottage,” Tammy says. “Its location was perfect as a vacation rental and, when the time was right, the lot could easily accommodate building our dream house.”

As the owner of the popular WaterColor Store, Tammy has a knack for business and an eye for color and display. But the renovation called for professional help. Tammy turned to her friend and designer Luanne Kelly, who had worked on the store's interiors. The goals were straightforward: maximize sleeping space, open the layout, be playful, and stay within a tight budget.

“First, we pulled up old carpeting, upgraded electrical and plumbing, and removed a freestanding bar in the living room that had been used more for cleaning fish than serving cocktails,” Kelly says. The cottage was in decent structural condition, so the duo focused on updating the kitchen and bathroom and making cosmetic changes for big impact at a reasonable cost. They painted walls and ceilings throughout bright white, and floors—concrete in the living area and hardwood upstairs—a medium gray. A classic white stencil pattern enlivens the kitchen's old red tile.

“Next we layered touches of sandy beige with natural rugs, white linen curtains with jute threading, and my personal favorite, the sand dune fencing on the spiral staircase,” Kelly says. Against this neutral backdrop, Kelly and Tammy embraced color, beachy motifs, DIY projects, and flea market whimsy. “We decided to have some fun inside and out,” Kelly says.

A large living room divides into a main conversation area, game nook, daybed corner, and dining area. The capiz shell chandelier was crafted from a kit; the dining table is a castoff from a neighbor. “The Maitland-Smith mirrors were a real find at a local thrift store,” Kelly says, “so we didn't mind painting them Kelly green.”

In a back bedroom, Kelly and Tammy used vintage pony-ride carnival fencing they unearthed at a local antiques store. “We crafted it into two double headboards, painted each bright yellow, and hung green faux taxidermy pony heads above,” Kelly says.

The result is a renovated bungalow that meshes comfort with creativity and sentiment with eccentricity.





OPPOSITE: Upholstered host chairs and painted bamboo armchairs complement the modern white dining table. Accents of Kelly green, hot pink, and turquoise enliven the space. **ABOVE LEFT:** Colors draw the eye strategically through the room. Turquoise unifies the living room around the fireplace. **ABOVE MIDDLE:** The kitchen's original red tile floor was updated with a white-on-gray stencil. **ABOVE RIGHT:** To avoid congestion in the relatively small kitchen, designer Luanne Kelly placed the kitchen sink, dishwasher, and open storage in a nearby nook. **BELOW LEFT:** Old-fashioned wooden sand fencing wraps the existing spiral staircase in beach style. **BELOW MIDDLE:** An old picture frame becomes a shadow box for a vintage bathing suit. **BELOW RIGHT:** A glass-top table offers an airy spot for games or coffee.







LEFT: The master bedroom and sitting area were originally one large open space at the top of the stairs. Four doors purchased at the local Habitat ReStore were hinged together to create a movable wall. **ABOVE:** In a playful spirit, the guest room exhibits green faux horse heads and headboards crafted of tube fencing from a carnival pony ride. **BELOW:** Platform bunk beds squeeze into a former closet for extra sleeping quarters. The colorful three-leg tables and art on the windowsill were crafted by local artists.

