

The Harbor Springs home intermixes light and white architectural details with more substantial elements, like stone. This fireplace adds a rustic touch to the space, but the coffered ceiling, built-in shelves and white crown molding keep the rooms light and airy.



# The Cottage *Effect*

A VACATION HOME IN  
HARBOR SPRINGS, MICHIGAN,  
IS THE PICTURE OF COTTAGE  
COUNTRY CHARM.

By Victoria Van Vlear  
Photography by Beth Singer

**HOW DO YOU CREATE A COZY, INTIMATE SETTING** in a large vacation home? That was the challenge Vee Mossburg of The Cottage Company faced when she was designing the interior of a new vacation home in Harbor Springs, Michigan. Between the timeless architecture, patterned wallpaper and elegant furniture, she was able to make this lakeside home a cozy country retreat.

## COTTAGE ARCHITECTURE

For Vee, it starts with the interior architecture. "I can put great furniture anywhere, but it's the architecture that makes it authentic," she says. In this home, architectural details such as built-in cabinets, coffered ceilings, trim and wainscoting made it a perfect backdrop for cottage country style.

"I'd rather see someone spend money on interior architecture than on furniture," Vee says. "If you didn't do the ceilings or columns or beadboard on the wall, it wouldn't feel like a cottage." Alongside general cottage details, this home boasts square columns, which are a local specialty. "Square columns are a northern Michigan thing," Vee says.

Once the architecture was in place, Vee turned to functionality for the family, which includes six kids. "The big focus here was that we needed to have lots of bedrooms and community areas," she says. For a family of eight to vacation comfortably alongside the inevitable visits from extended family and friends, the home needed to have enough chairs, tables and linen closets to accommodate a large group. "How do you seat all these people? The tables have to extend," Vee says. "The dining table normally seats eight but needed to seat up to 12 people." By placing extra chairs in unobtrusive places that could serve as both sitting- and dining-room chairs, Vee was able to make the spaces work for the large family.



Coordinated wallpaper works well in the Harbor Springs house, which is a historic resort destination for the Midwest and has a French influence. "The wallpaper itself has that feel," Vee says. "The French used to paint that kind of pattern on the wall."

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#### COUNTRY INTERIORS

The style of the home is classic cottage country, with bright, fresh spaces. “They wanted a classic look, something that felt like it had period architecture,” Vee says. “They liked the Dorothy Draper effect, with bright colors and an over-the-top feel.” To get the look, Vee used wallpaper in almost every room. “What we did was incorporate that wallpaper but tone it down a bit, then give the interiors a more updated feel elsewhere,” she says. The color scheme in the house incorporates greens, pinks, blues and yellows. “We used the colors in the wallpaper to bring out a sense of nostalgia,” she says.

With the elegant but durable furniture, pastel colors and timeless architectural details, this vacation home is the perfect countryside retreat from the cares of daily life. 🍃

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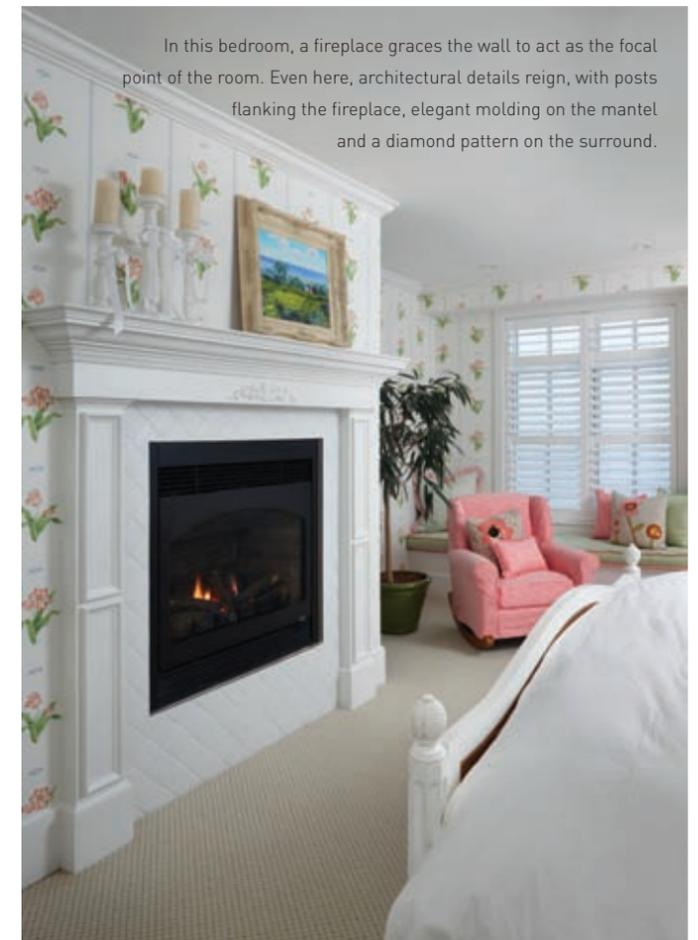
Vee capitalized on northern Michigan's French influence to choose the furniture. "There's a French presence up here, so you see lots of the French effect, like the dining chairs," she says. "The tones and textures have that cultural aspect."



Bedrooms are a big part of the Harbor Springs house. "There are four bedrooms on the second floor," Vee says. "In the basement, there are another two bedrooms with bunkbeds." Despite the need for so many living quarters, each bedroom feels light and airy, thanks to the pastel color scheme and minimal furniture.

## Top 3 Cottage Country Architectural Details

- 1. Trim.** The more trim, the more cottage country. Add baseboards and crown molding, trim around the windows and doors, and even molding on accents such as fireplaces and built-in cabinets.
- 2. Ceiling details.** The ceiling is one of the largest blank spaces in your rooms, so don't forget about it. Coffered ceilings, cove ceilings and exposed ceilings create classic cottage charm. "Coffered ceilings have a real cottage feeling," Vee says. For a quick and easy fix, add a ceiling medallion to create interest on a normal flat ceiling.
- 3. Wood paneling.** From beadboard to clapboard and shiplap, wood paneling is the detail most of us think of when we hear the term "cottage architecture." New tongue-and-groove boards in your hallway or living room will create that cozy, homey look you love, and they're not difficult to install.



In this bedroom, a fireplace graces the wall to act as the focal point of the room. Even here, architectural details reign, with posts flanking the fireplace, elegant molding on the mantel and a diamond pattern on the surround.