

# Once Upon a *Storybook* Cottage

This cottage is one of 16 custom builds that comprise a magical storybook community in downtown Harbor Springs, Michigan.

BY AUTUMN KRAUSE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE GULLON  
OF PHOENIX PHOTOGRAPHIC

**STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN.** Because the stairs are visible from almost every room in some way, their style was particularly important. Kelly breaks down her decision, saying, "I didn't want the wood tone to be too strong, so I had the risers painted white, but I liked the subtleness of seeing some of the natural wood on the steps from the floors below."



**PRETTY ON THE OUTSIDE.**

Each of the 16 cottages that comprise the Bay Street Cottages features lots of flower boxes, a Dutch door and double-hung windows. "On this cottage, I chose to do black exterior windows only on the first floor, exposed rafters, horizontal clapboard siding and dark-gray shingles to differentiate it," Kelly says.

*Fairy tales do come true*—thanks to the wizardry of Cottage Company. This company built a storybook community comprising 16 cottages, making it the foremost place for clients seeking summer residences or overflow guest cottages.

The cottage seen here is a wonderful example of the design and architectural delights found in the community, called Bay Street Cottages, in the idyllic downtown of Harbor Springs, Michigan.

Kelly Konoske, head of interior design at Cottage Company Interiors, oversaw the interior design for this project, while Jill Nuding, Cottage Company of Harbor Springs' head of construction, oversaw the building aspects.

"The home was designed and built as a spec home, with prospective seasonal homeowners in mind," Kelly explains. "Therefore, the design goal was to allow for the efficient, yet creative, use of space to maximize functionality and aesthetic beauty."

The private spaces are clearly defined, but the floor plan still remains open and spacious. The kitchen, dining room and family room serve as common areas for family members to spend quality time together, so they were designed to be larger, more open, integrated and filled with natural light. Continuity was achieved through the combination of natural colors, natural materials and textured fabrics, which contributed to a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere—and just the place to kick off a personal once-upon-a-time.

**DUTCH DOOR.** Rob Mossburg, the owner of Cottage Company of Harbor Springs (and also Kelly's father), required all 16 cottages in this Bay Street Cottages community to have a Dutch door. Not only is this door style charming, it also acts as a window when the top half is open, allowing in light and air and the ability to talk to your neighbors through the front door. "That aspect gives an almost 'Pleasantville' feel," Kelly says. And, with the option of keeping the bottom half closed, it allows one to keep a young child or family pet inside.



**OPEN BOOK.** Strikingly, the upper stories of the cottage are visible from the downstairs. "It makes all the spaces feel larger and more integrated with each other," Kelly says. Another benefit of this layout is the ability to let loads of natural light into the space from carefully placed windows. Kelly adds, "Abundant windows allow you to take in the view, and the light helps blur the lines between indoors and out—which is key in any cottage."





**ROARING FIRE.** A fireplace is an important feature for a cottage, creating a cozy spot at night. The fireplace surround is a Calcutta cardia tile and is both elegant and inviting. "I chose it for its traditional 3x6-inch size and because it had both beige and gray veins that allowed me to incorporate a combination of warm and cool tones throughout," Kelly says.



**KITCHEN QUARTERS.** Due to the cottage's smaller footprint, Kelly carried through the same wall treatment seen throughout the home. She explains that "not introducing another material onto the walls makes the transition from one area to the other seamless and cohesive."

#### STATE OF MIND

Kelly says that "cottage style is more a state of mind rather than a specific design style. It evokes a feeling, whether that's warm and welcoming or family oriented and friendly."

She "bottles" that sentiment here, along with features that appeal to a modern family, such as forgiving finishes and fabrics, durable materials and timeless designs.

The cottage, itself, is a remarkable study in spatial illusion. Entering it, one is immediately swept away into a fantasy—one that belies the limitations of a snug, 1,700 square feet.

"I achieved this by maximizing the flex spaces so that the home would feel as if it lived larger than its actual footprint," Kelly says. "In addition, I opened up the staircase, upstairs landing and upper-level reading nook and used barn doors on one of the upstairs bedrooms to allow for privacy when in use. However, these can remain open for more spaciousness and natural light when they're not in use."

White walls and wood paneling help refract the light that pours in through the windows and give an unobtrusive, yet striking, background. The cottage is full of magic that lends whimsy and imagination to beautiful summer days.

# Make it Fashion

Here are Kelly Konoske's top tips to create a serene, yet stylish, interior that will keep you in the "cottage" frame of mind:

- **LIGHT IT UP.** Employ tricks to further diffuse natural light, such as a strategically placed mirror opposite windows. Additionally, layering shades of white will spread and amplify light, rather than soak it up.
- **PRETTY PANELS.** Add fashion-forward cottage style with decorative wood paneling. It creates an interesting, timeless backdrop for any cottage design, so it's a no-brainer for adding character to a bare wall or "blah" cabinetry.
- **MULTIPURPOSE.** Think about designing a space that can be comfortable for 10 people, as well as intimate for two. "This can be done through flexible furniture layouts and versatile pieces that wed functionality to beauty and comfort," Kelly says.
- **AU NATURALE.** From jute to sisal, seagrass, wool, wood or bamboo, using organic materials for rugs, furnishings, lighting and accessories helps bring warmth, authenticity and texture into any space.
- **EASY-PEASY.** "Ensure everything is low maintenance," Kelly says. "Use forgiving fabrics, durable materials and flexible furniture, all of which are more conducive to the lifestyles we all actually want to live."
- **OPPORTUNITY STRIKES.** Kelly suggests using storage to help solve a problem. For example, do you need additional seating but feel limited by a room's existing size or layout? Do you need more organized storage for unsightly items you don't want to see every day? Answer these questions, and make your plan of attack!
- **LOCATION.** Kelly suggests using built-ins in areas that are in an unobstructed view so that it adds something special aesthetically or solves a need that couldn't otherwise be done in a less-expensive manner.
- **TECH.** "Don't forget about technology!" Kelly says. "I like to put combo outlets (USB/plug) in the backs of cabinetry drawers (where one might want to charge their phone or other electronic items) or outlets in vanity cabinets."
- **FINISHING TOUCHES.** Don't forget about the cabinet hardware—both aesthetically and functionally: Make sure a pull is large enough for the size of the door/drawer or that the style adds a decorative element (or is like the "jewelry" for the overall design).
- **DURABILITY AND VERSATILITY.** Another consideration Kelly always weighs is whether a storage space will always be used for the same purpose or might be used in another way in the future. Is it durable? Will it live up to its intended purpose?



**TIME TO DINE!** By choosing to design a built-in banquette, Kelly was able to maximize seating; and the round dining table makes it easier to maneuver around. Also, it provided an opportunity to hide additional storage space underneath the seats for items used less frequently.

“Cottage style is more a state of mind rather than a specific design style. *It evokes a feeling*, whether that’s warm and welcoming or family oriented and friendly.”

“The home was designed and built as a spec home, with prospective seasonal homeowners in mind. Therefore, the design goal was to allow for the efficient, yet creative, use of space to maximize *functionality* and *aesthetic beauty*.”



**THE PLAN IS GLAM.** Kelly likes primary bedrooms to make one feel relaxed and peaceful ... but also a little romantic. She achieves this with touches of glam, as seen in the sparkly light fixture.



**ABOVE, LEFT | WINDOW TREATMENT.** This room can be a flex space (office or bedroom), but Kelly chose to furnish it as a guest bedroom. She selected extra-large twin beds so that even taller adults (not just children) can sleep comfortably. “The room does overlook the living room, which I wanted it to do, because when the barn doors are open, it makes both the living room and bedroom feel larger than they are,” she points out.

#### FURNITURE FILES

A unique aspect of the job was something near and dear to Kelly’s heart: She designed the backdrop of the cottage to complement furniture pieces from her new line.

“That was the most ambitious aspect for me—designing the home while working on the furniture pieces for my own private label line, Cottage by Kelly, to be used in the home,” she says.

The two pursuits dovetailed into one, beautiful whole. She knew the cottage would be the perfect project to evaluate some of the furnishings, specifically due to the neutral color scheme and the fact that the pieces were cottage-appropriate in scale, casually elegant in design and coastal at heart.

“I wanted my furniture line to evoke the lakeshore, dunes, bluffs and beaches that so beautifully define coastal living while also designing a home with prospective buyers in mind,” she points out.

With the cottage in mind, she designed furniture pieces that were open and allowed light and air to easily pass through. It was particularly meaningful to see her furniture in the home, because such pieces make a house a home.



**BELOW | STORAGE STORY.** The primary bathroom is full of character, as well as practicality. “I sought to maximize storage here,” Kelly points out. “Because I didn’t know who was going to purchase the house and how they liked to use it, I chose to do cabinets under the sinks that featured outlets in the back (in case someone wanted to hide and/or charge their electric toothbrush, razor or makeup mirror, for example).”





## COLOR PLAY

"I selected a neutral color scheme for the cottage, because I usually design homes that are pretty colorful; and because I didn't have a specific client, I wanted to show that neutrals aren't boring. I knew it wouldn't deter any buyers," Kelly explains.

Wood tones are used as a striking accent.

"Because I knew I wanted to use a neutral color palette, I used mixed materials for texture to create interest and depth, along with natural materials to bring warmth and dimension into the space," Kelly says.

Handrails bring the wood tone up to help draw the eye higher and add an element of warmth that breaks up the visual plane of the white wood paneling. A charming, rounded front

door also carries the wood tone through. Everything combines to please the senses in a gentle and cozy way that has plenty of emotional room for the homeowner's own twists.

"I believe that simplicity in design leads to an ease of living and a calm and comfortable atmosphere. I always want to leave room for my client's (or, in this case, prospective client's) history, personality and personal treasures!" Kelly says.

Through Kelly and Jill's expertise, the Bay Street Cottage community is an escape in every sense of the word—one that's full of beauty, heart and summery happily-ever-afters. **CB**

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 126

**[ABOVE, LEFT] SHOWERED IN STYLE.** Kelly didn't want to introduce a new material into the guest bathroom and had decided to use wood tile planks on the floor. As a result, she came up with the idea of putting them on the shower walls as well. "It makes for a seamless and clean transition between the spaces," she says.

**[ABOVE, RIGHT] WALLFLOWERS.** A soothing wallpaper is neutral in color, yet it packs a big style punch. Kelly chose it because she "was just obsessed with it and had had this patterned grass cloth wallpaper in my 'love' drawer for a while." It was the perfect chance to give this space interest and texture, because she didn't have to worry about steam from the shower.

**[OPPOSITE] SERENE SLEEP.** "I wanted this guest room to function as a second primary room so that anything you might want would be here," Kelly says. She selected this light fixture to help balance the angle found in the roofline and, because it sits so high in the ceiling, she picked a fixture without glass that dust could collect on and would require cleaning.