

# smooth SAILING

An interior designer lovingly—and patiently—restores a Chesapeake Bay cottage into a getaway fit for her family’s summer adventures.

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## Mike and Tracy Schlegel were a young couple expecting their first child

when they purchased this cottage off the Chesapeake Bay in Pasadena, Maryland. The 1,800-square-foot home had everything on the Schlegels’ checklist and then some: It’s just an hour’s drive from their home in Washington, D.C., and sits hilltop on a scenic 1-acre peninsula with its own beach and dock. “We’re outdoors people,” Tracy says. “We wanted a base for keeping our sailboat—a weekend and summer place to be on the water boating, crabbing, and swimming.”

But the 1930s fixer-upper wasn’t without its challenges. The structure felt gloomy and cramped with dark brown wood paneling, walled-off rooms, and low ceilings. Tracy, an interior designer, worked

on the renovations with her sister and partner at Waterlily Interiors, Kelcey Huff. “It was important for us to keep the cottage’s original charm while updating it over time,” Tracy says. They vaulted many of the home’s 7-foot-high ceilings, removed nonstructural walls (including those in a sunroom that once blocked the living room from the waterfront), and added large windows and French doors. To further enhance the

*Above:* “From the first time we saw this cottage, it was love,” says homeowner and designer Tracy Schlegel of the 1932 waterfront home. She and husband Mike kept its shingled exterior as is but painted the trim crisp white for contrast. *Opposite:* A screen porch offers protection from sun and insects. The original heart-of-pine flooring was stripped of old paint, then sanded and stained to match the flooring inside. The new ceiling’s beaded board is painted Benjamin Moore Fresh Mint. Furnishings are white wicker, with pops of citrus in the form of ceramic stools and accent pillows.





new open layout, the duo painted the walls and trim a bright white.

When the Schlegel family later grew to include two children (CJ and Lucie, now ages 17 and 15), a second remodel expanded the cottage from two rooms to four by converting the attic into a spare bedroom and a bunk room for hosting the kids' friends.

The upstairs spaces have a nautical theme: Yellow walls are complemented by navy blue and wood trim. The downstairs decor has a more coastal style, featuring a palette of sea glass, teal, and white. "Our aim was to make it airy and light," Tracy says. Transitional-style furnishings throughout the home are both pragmatic (all indoor-outdoor fabrics) and sophisticated (upgraded lighting and chic textiles).

"We're deeply connected to our cottage," Tracy says. "Our kids have grown up playing in the water, learning to sail, hanging out by the fire at night. It's where we've celebrated all our most important events." □

*For resources, see page 95.*



*Opposite:* During the renovation, Tracy and her sister and partner at Waterlily Interiors, Kelcey Huff, vaulted the ceilings and removed the floor's linoleum to reveal the home's original heart-of-pine floors. "We decided to paint them black and white in a large-scale harlequin pattern," Tracy says. The effect makes the galley kitchen seem wider than it is. A mix of old and new cabinets are painted Benjamin Moore Hannity Green for a cheerful, vintage-inspired look. *Left and above:* The dining room features a pair of whimsical beaded chandeliers and a built-in display cabinet (crafted by Mike) with open shelves, aqua beaded-board backs, and a solid wood top to serve as a buffet. An antique dining table and armless faux-wicker chairs offer plenty of seating.





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*Opposite:* By integrating a former sunroom and adding French doors and picture windows, Tracy expanded the living room’s footprint and connected it to the exterior. “We also layered in new beaded board and trim to work with the existing paneling, making it impossible to tell what is ‘old’ or ‘new,’ and then painted everything crisp white,” she says. *Above:* Transitional furnishings include swivel armchairs on either side of the sofa; they can turn to face the exterior scenery or the stone fireplace. *Right:*

With an oar-and-cleat railing and striped runner, the staircase to the converted attic hints that the kids’ space has a more nautical look than the rest of the home.





*Top:* The primary bedroom has water views on two sides, easily visible from its new casement windows. *Left:* Tracy added a wall to separate the large attic into two rooms. She also added window seats, including one that is the length of a daybed and has drawers for storage below. *Above:* In contrast to the main living areas, the beaded-board walls in the primary bedroom are painted a soft blue. A navy-and-white striped rug strikes a subtle nautical note. *Opposite:* An outdoor shower is a must-have in a cottage with only one full bathroom. “We use it all the time,” Tracy says. “It’s right below the bathroom, so when the kids were younger, we could shower them and hand them up through the window. No sandy feet!”

